

Rowan University

## Rowan Digital Works

---

Theses and Dissertations

---

5-31-2005

### What effect might the No Child Left Behind Act have on administrators' and teachers' decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student in the elementary grades?

April M. Maska  
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Maska, April M., "What effect might the No Child Left Behind Act have on administrators' and teachers' decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student in the elementary grades?" (2005). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1040.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1040>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact [graduateresearch@rowan.edu](mailto:graduateresearch@rowan.edu).

WHAT EFFECT MIGHT THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT HAVE ON  
ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS' DECISIONS TO PROMOTE OR  
RETAIN THE LOW ACHIEVING STUDENT IN THE ELEMENTARY  
GRADES

By  
April M. Maska

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 1 2005

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved May, 2005

## Abstract

April M. Maska

“What effect might the No Child Left Behind Act have on Administrators and Teachers’ decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades”

2005

Dr Louis Molinari  
Elementary Education

This study attempts to determine how this Act impacts professional educators in their decisions regarding promotion or retention of the low achieving student. Regular Educators in the West Deptford School District were asked to participate to show whether NCLB impacts the professional educators within this district when deciding whether to promote or retain the low achieving student. A Likert survey was designed and distributed to 51 professional educators within the district. Of the educators asked, 21 responded. The survey results were graphed and analyzed. The scores of the West Deptford School District participants were compared to a hypothetical school district of professional experts.

Comparison of the groups measured by the results of this survey showed a significant difference existed between the experts and educators resulting in the rejection of the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between professional educators and experts decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student when factoring in the No Child Left Behind Act.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to thank the Administrators and Teachers of the West Deptford School District who took the time out of their busy schedules to assist me in my project and complete the research survey. Without their professional input and opinions, this research project would not have been possible.

I would like to acknowledge the kindness, guidance and advice of Dr. Louis Molinari. This research project would not exist without his patience and professional leadership.

To my husband and daughter who have supported me throughout this research project. Your patience, assistance and unconditional love are greatly appreciated.

## Table of Contents

### I. Chapters

Chapter One – The Problem.....	1
Significance of the Study.....	1
Summary.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Specific Hypothesis.....	5
Method of Study.....	6
Design.....	6
Instrumentation.....	6
Limitation of the Study.....	7
Definition of Terms Used.....	7
Organization of Thesis.....	8
Chapter Two - Review of the Literature.....	10
Introduction.....	10
No Child Left Behind Act.....	10
Teachers’ Opinion of No Child Left Behind.....	17
Retention.....	21
Summary.....	25
Chapter Three – Design of the Study.....	27
Introduction.....	27
Setting.....	27
Description of Instrument Used.....	27
Validity and Reliability.....	28
Relationship of the Instrument to the Null Hypothesis.....	28
Procedure.....	29
Time Period for Data Collection.....	29
Chapter Four – Analysis of the Data.....	31
Description and Analysis of the Data.....	31
Data Presentation.....	32
Data Analysis.....	49
Summary of the Findings.....	52

Chapter Five – Summary, Conclusion and Implication.....	53
Introduction.....	53
Summary of the Problem.....	53
Summary of Procedures and Results.....	54
Conclusions and Implications.....	55
Recommendations for Future Study.....	55
II. References.....	57
III. Appendix A: Thesis Project Revised Survey.....	64
Appendix B: Thesis Project Original Survey.....	69

## Charts and Tables

Table 1 – Sub hypothesis one results on participants’ knowledge of of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on the West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained.....	34
Table 1A –Survey results on 6 questions or statements on Sub Hypothesis of participants’ knowledge of No Child Left Behind Act, its Implications on West Deptford School District and whether the goals of NCLB can be attained.....	35
t-test for Independent Samples – Survey results from the group of professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two.....	36
Table 2 – Sub hypothesis two results on participants’ response to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.....	41
Table 2A – Survey results on 11 questions or statements on Sub Hypothesis pertaining to participants’ opinions pertaining to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.....	42
t-test for Independent Samples – Survey results from professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two.....	43
Table 3 – Sub hypothesis three results on participants’ opinions on how the No Child Left Behind Act may influence their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.....	45
Table 3A – Survey results on the three statements or questions pertaining to how participants felt the No Child Left Behind Act influences their decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student.....	47
t-test for Independent Sample –Survey results from professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two.....	48
Table 4A – Survey results on the 20 questions of the hypothesis of the study.....	50

t-test for Independent Sample – Survey results from professional  
experts' test results of group one compared to West Deptford  
School Districts test results of group two.....51





## Chapter 1 – The Problem

### Significance of the study

“The No Child Left Behind Act is potentially the most important education reform since the nation embraced mandatory schooling” (How to Rescue Education, 2004). Signed into law on January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush has developed the most dramatic educational changes since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was approved by Congress in 1965. The No Child Left Behind Act “contains the President’s four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work” (No Child Left Behind In New Jersey, 2004). As the President signed this act into law he said “Today begins a new era, a new time for public education in our country. Our schools will have higher expectations-we believe every child can learn. From this day forward, all students will have a better chance to learn, to excel, and to live out their dreams” (Friedrich, 2002).

The concept is positive and promising with the ultimate goal of No Child Left Behind having all students achieving at proficient levels in reading and mathematics by 2014. “No Child Left Behind represents far-reaching, unprecedented education reform in the United States. It’s the result of a long public policy debate that has involved teachers, administrators, parents, and lawmakers, all of whom put forth significant time and effort with the intent of building a system that works” (Friedrich, 2002). We must now decide

how much we really know about this act, how it affects the educator and is it really helping the low achieving student. Since its inception in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act has become the buzz word in the world of academia. The Federal Government is looking at each state to make sure that they are following the No Child Left Behind mandated guidelines, States are looking to their school districts and expecting them to show adequate yearly growth, Districts are looking to their administrators in each school and demanding that they meet high academic standards, Administrators are looking at their teachers to ensure that they are considered “highly qualified” and teaching the required curriculum that will help students do well on standardized testing. Finally, teachers are looking at their students to see how their progress is going and if their low achieving students are making the progress prescribed to ensure adequate progress.

The NCLB Act has been in place for 2 years so it is only natural that teachers are now asking themselves whether the guidelines set by No Child Left Behind is working and how is it affecting the teachers in the classroom. The pressures put on the classroom teacher to meet the needs of all of their students are greater than ever before. Gone are the days when a teacher would teach to the middle of the class. Accountability is such today that all students must make adequate progress by the end of each academic year. What will that mean for the classroom teacher if one or more of their students do not make adequate progress? Are teachers today changing their opinions as to what to do with their low achieving students? Are they feeling pressured to make decisions regarding the future of their students because of the ramifications of the No Child Left Behind Act which may go against what they believe is better for the student? Federal funding has been allotted to each state to help them be successful and achieve the goal

that all students become proficient by 2014. However, reports have admitted that the Federal government has not fully funded the Education budget with states receiving only a third of the promised funding. Programs needed to help the low achieving students are not available because the funding isn't there. "Although the NCLB law would allow for increases in certain programs, those funds have not yet been provided. In fact, the president for FY 2003 would underfund NCLB by some \$7 billion" (Ferrandino and Tirozzi, 2002). In New Jersey, U.S. Representative Robert Andrews has "alleged that President Bush had failed to seek or approve \$8 billion in funding needed to make the No Child Left Behind program work in practice" (Cahir, 2003). Ultimately, it falls on the teacher to make the necessary changes to help the low achieving student see success. We need to ask ourselves if these changes are making a difference and are our students making progress in the classroom. If not, then what are the options that the classroom teacher has? They must decide whether to promote the low achieving student and hope that progress is made or hold that student back in hopes that another year in the same grade will help. "The No Child Left Behind Act increases the pressure on schools to raise test scores by any means necessary, and one way to do that is to hold back the students who do not test well. Given the number of problems facing public schools in disadvantaged communities, it is unreasonable to expect significant and steady improvement from year to year – especially where norm-referenced (percentile based) testing is relied on. Thus, holding back low performing students becomes an attractive solution" (Marshall, 2002). However, studies have shown that most of all retained students continue to struggle in school and that retention did not help. Yet, what happens to the low achieving students if they are sent on making minimal progress? Classroom

teachers are faced with the decision that would be best for the student but also shows that the teacher has used appropriate teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment and still show adequate yearly progress.

### Summary

Teachers have always done what they have felt is best for their students. That is a characteristic of teachers that will never change. When addressing the low achieving student, teachers are inclined to do what they feel will be best for that child. However, teachers must now take into account what the No Child Left Behind Act implies and how they interpret the success or failure of their low achieving student. In the West Deptford Township School District, there are three elementary schools. These schools are situated in different socioeconomic neighborhoods. The teachers in these three elementary schools follow the same New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, District curriculum and instruction and similar teacher interventions as set by the district for their low achieving students. The decisions made in each of these elementary buildings regarding their low achieving students have an impact on each schools “adequate yearly progress’ and on the standardized testing results required by the State of New Jersey.

With the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act and the demand for “highly qualified” teachers in each classroom, the question to be answered is whether the decisions made regarding the promotion or retention of the low achieving student is being affected by the No Child Left Behind Act.

## Purpose of the Study

Studies have proven repeatedly that retention is not the answer to helping the low achieving student. Many experts believe that with early intervention strategies in place such as “extended learning programs offering additional instruction before and after school, on Saturdays, or for extended periods during the school day; classes on study skills, and corresponding programs to help parents encourage study skills at home; one on one tutoring with a teacher, or cross-age tutoring with an older student; changes in teacher or classroom assignment and alternative instructional strategies, such as small group instruction” (Alternatives to Social Promotion and Grade Retention, 1999), the low achieving student will succeed in school with self confidence and a positive attitude.

The purpose of this study is to discover if the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act has impacted administrators and teachers when providing a positive learning environment, addressing the needs of their low achieving students and preparing these students to move on to the next grade level with the proper early interventions in place.

This study will also investigate if administrators and teachers have made any changes in their classrooms to implement appropriate learning environments and aid their low achieving student to meet success in each grade level but by not rely on retention as an answer to helping these students.

## Specific Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was presented for investigation:

There will be no significant differences between administrators and teachers in the West Deptford School District and Professional experts’ decision to promote or retain

the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades with the importance placed on the No Child Left Behind Act.

### Method of Study

Through a combination of research and the varying socioeconomic neighborhoods in West Deptford Township School District, a survey will be developed and given to the total of 51 administrators and teachers within each of the three elementary buildings. The results of this survey will be compared to a hypothetical school district of professional experts and analyzed.

### Design

The study is designed to prove that the participants of the survey will show no difference in how they perceive the appropriate educational approach for the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act when compared to a hypothetical school district of professional experts.

### Instrumentation

A survey of 20 questions will be asked of each participant. The scoring will be from 5 to 1 with 5 being “strongly agree” to 1 being “strongly disagree”. Participants will be expected to answer each of the questions based on their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act and their educational beliefs on achieving academic success for their low achieving student whether that is through promotion or retention.

## Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to a timeframe. Participants in this study will be from three elementary schools in one school district. The participants will be given a two week period to complete the survey and return the completed results to the researcher. The study is restricted to one school district with the same Superintendent and Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction for all three schools. The participants are all teaching from the same curriculum and methods of instruction as set by West Deptford Township School District.

## Definition of Terms Used

**No Child Left Behind Act:** This act was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This act focuses on four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

**Adequate Yearly Progress:** The amount of improvement each student makes each year toward an academic goal.

**Elementary and Secondary Act:** This act was enacted in 1965 to provide guidance and funds to K – 12 schools.

**Highly qualified teacher:** A teacher who holds a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure and prove that they know each subject that they teach.

**Retention:** To retain or hold back a student who has not mastered the learning requirements in a given grade.



Promotion: To advance a student to the next grade level who has mastered the learning requirements in a given grade.

Standardized Tests: is any test that is used across a variety of schools or other situations. Designers of such tests must specify a discrete correct answer for every question. This type of test includes both achievement (which measures knowledge already known) and aptitude (which attempts to predict future performance or potential) tests given to grade-school students.

Curriculum: All the courses of study offered by an educational institution.

New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards: In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, an ambitious framework for educational reform in the State's public schools. New Jersey's standards were created to improve student achievement by clearly defining what all students should know and be able to do at the end of thirteen years of public education.

Local Educational Agencies: Any local educational agency as defined in section 198 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 3381).

### Organization of Thesis

This study will be completed in three stages. First, the research will be conducted on the No Child Left Behind Act, effects of retention versus promotion, and the qualifications of a "highly qualified" teacher. Second, this research will be compiled into a survey to be taken by 51 participants in the West Deptford Township School District. Third, the data taken from this survey will support the hypothesis

that there will be no significant difference between teachers and administrators in the West Deptford School District and Professional Experts decision to promote or retain the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act.

## Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature

### Introduction

This study looks at the impact the No Child Left Behind Act has on one school district, its teachers and administrators, and the implications it has on our low achieving students. As we move forward to discover any implications, we need to understand the law itself and how it has been working over the past three years. We will also look at whether educators have been struggling to show adequate yearly progress, improved standardized test scores and providing the additional help needed for the low achieving or at risk student. The review of the literature has been done in three parts: First an in depth look at NCLB and how it has been received by school districts and parents, second is teachers opinion of NCLB and third, the history of retention and its success rate for the low achieving student.

### No Child Left Behind Act

Hailed as one of the most important reforms in public education today, one must look at how it has affected our schools and the difference it has made on our educational progress. “Since 1965, when the federal government embarked on its first major elementary-secondary education initiative, federal policy has strongly influenced America’s schools” (No Child Left Behind, 2004). The idea and purpose behind NCLB has many merits. If implemented correctly this act could help students

across the nation achieve to the best of their ability. “The federal government’s landmark and bi-partisan 2001 legislative renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, will have a profound impact on every school district, school building, and classroom in the country. While the actual legislation is some 1,400 pages in length, the key provisions appear to boil down to a few critical components, notably:

- \* Every child in the country at specified grade levels must achieve state-determined and tested levels of proficiency in math and language arts by the 2004-05 school year. They will then need to reach predetermined proficiency levels in science starting in 2007-08. Proficiency will be defined on a state-by-state basis.

- \* Every school must come up with a plan for adequate yearly progress (AYP), which will provide annual benchmarks for ongoing improvement in performance of all students.

- \* The AYP benchmarks will need to be met, not only by the total student population, but also by nine subgroups, broken down in the categories of gender, racial/ethnic minority (four groups), disability, limited English proficient, low income/economically disadvantaged, and migrant.

- \* All schools must employ highly qualified teachers.

- \* Ten percent of all Title I funds must be spent on professional development.” (Daggett, 2004). Over the years many improvements have been written which were added to the original act of 1965 to help students achieve across the nation. “NCLB is the most far reaching social policy enacted in the last 35 years. The effects of this

policy have been largely ignored by both political parties as the debate in an election year has focused almost entirely on whether it has been adequately funded. Results for America is calling for a more open and full debate by all parties on the real effects this policy is having on kids, their learning, the teaching profession and families” (Leskin, 2004). So what is the effect that NCLB is having on school districts across the country? A press release last December stated that “No Child Left Behind is designed to change the culture of America’s schools by closing the educational achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options and teaching students based on what works” (Aspey and Webb, 2003). However, this new policy comes with added pressures to our school districts. “Under the act’s strong accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gaps and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. In addition, they must produce annual state and school district report cards that inform parents and communities about state and school progress” (Aspey and Webb, 2003). During this same month, when reviewing the mandated standardized testing, “Reading School District in Pennsylvania sued over its low performance rating, saying its Spanish-speaking students could not read the tests. About two-thirds of the districts 16,000 students are Hispanic; 15 percent have limited English proficiency” (Almond, 2004). Is NCLB working? Are school districts seeing a difference in their students? Are teachers and administrators embracing NCLB or are they feeling pressured by unrealistic goals? What about the low achieving student? Are they making the improvements under NCLB as prescribed? The NEA has much to say on this issue. “The National Education Association has

consistently sought to guarantee every child an equal opportunity to succeed in our nation's public schools." (NEA:No Child Left Behind, 2004). "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 presents real obstacles to helping students and strengthening public schools because it focuses on: punishment rather than assistance, mandates rather than support for effective programs, privatization rather than teacher-led family oriented solutions" (NEA: No Child Left Behind, 2004). Yet others have a different perspective on what the President is trying to accomplish. This past summer, Sol Stern wrote an article on how President Bush should be labeled as the education president. "For NCLB's reading initiative alone, Bush richly deserves the title education president. But in addition, NCLB, though not perfect, is a powerful instrument of reform in other ways" (Stern, 2004). Stern went on to write that "the educrats have ample reason to be upset. Before NCLB, the public schools' failure to educate poor minority kids resulted in ever-increasing streams of federal money to local districts-more than \$200 billion over the last four decades, disbursed with no questions asked. Now along comes Bush, requiring state and local districts to prove that programs that federal dollars pay for have a solid scientific basis and actually work" (Stern, 2004). President Bush had stated during his first campaign, before NCLB was enacted that "We will start by funding only what works in education-only those methods and ideas that prove their power to close the achievement gap. We need good, reliable, scientific information on the best methods of teaching. What the federal government sponsors, however, is often sloppy and trendy, focusing on self-esteem over basic skills. My administration will require every federal program – in teacher training, curriculum research, school safety – to prove results. If it can't, we

will shift that money into a program this is using it wisely. No federal education program will be reauthorized merely because it has existed for years. It is more important to do good than to feel good” (No Child Left Behind, 1999). These are powerful implications in NCLB that would mean great and positive changes in education however that is not always the case. Richard Guida, a lawyer for the Reading School District feels that “It’s a wonderful title, No Child Left Behind. Who could ever disagree with that? But kids are all different and, unfortunately, this calls for a cookie cutter approach to education that doesn’t take difference into account. Some kids will be left behind” (Almond, 2004). New Jersey Education Association President Edythe Fulton had spoken before a joint meeting of the Assembly Federal Relations and Education committees on the impact of NCLB. She has strong opinions of NCLB and its impact on schools and the community. She says that “NCLB does little to help students because it: relies on punishment rather than assisting students and schools with the greatest needs, relies on privatization rather than teacher-led, family-oriented solutions. NCLB evaluates schools bases on yearly standardized tests for students in grades three through eight. Many schools are cutting curriculum not related to the test, and teachers are forced to teach to the test. The rigid regimen fits all students into a cookie-cutter model, despite how they learn. Instead, students should be judged by all their work, including homework, attendance, participation and oral presentation, not just one test. Additionally, teachers and school employees traditionally have helped children succeed in whatever areas the student has ability or talent – academics, music, art, athletics, etc. NCLB insists there is only one single standard of success – narrow academic rote learning.” (No Child Left Behind:

Rhetoric V. Reality, 2004). Besides the rigid testing and accountability, districts have to face whether funding and proper programming will be available to help their low achieving students. “The premise of the No Child Left Behind Act is admirable but the practice is severely lacking. While the program is under funded and awkward in its adherence problems it is also sucking up supplemental monies that provide life skills programs and creative material that is necessary to a well rounded education. There is a huge gap between getting a great education and having the life skills to use that education in real life. Academics are only part of the equation when we are speaking of the success of the next generation” (No Child Left Behind Holds Every Child Back, 2004). Public Schools have been working with this Act in our districts for 3 years now and now it is time to look back and see what has been accomplished. According to the Editor of the NJEA Reporter “Our first four years under President Bush has been difficult for public education. This cornerstone of his education policy – The so-called No Child Left Behind Act – boasted bi-partisan support when it was passed. However, it has turned out to be a grossly under funded mandate intent on destroying public confidence in our nation’s public schools. Negative labels and unprecedented standardized testing and private school vouchers are just two features of this law. The president has already said he is unwilling to make changes to NCLB. As a matter of fact, in his speech before the Republican National Convention, he called for even MORE standardized testing” (Hiltner, 2004). So, if there are problems with NCLB, what are school districts going to do? If their funding is cut, how will they be able to offer programs and sufficient support for the low achieving student? “NCLB’s unfounded mandate to eliminate all test-score gaps in 12 years assumes that



schools by themselves can overcome the educational consequences of poverty and racism. Not only has the federal government failed to meet the social, economic, and health-related needs of many children, but NCLB itself does not authorize nearly enough funding to meet its new requirements. The Bush administration has sought almost no increase in ESEA expenditures for the coming year. The current education appropriations bill before Congress would under fund the already inadequate authorized spending levels by nearly \$8 billion. Meanwhile, states are suffering their worst budget crises since World War II and cutting education as well as the social programs needed by low-income people” (Neill, 2003). Besides lack of funds to aid school districts, we are still facing AYP through standardized test scores.

Under NCLB, schools must show AYP or face being labeled as “needing improvement” or “failing”, risk losing what federal funding they receive and possibly look at being restructured in the future. Is testing the appropriate way to assess how children are learning in schools? “Even if the testing were appropriate, the plan starts it too late. Too late, at least, for eliminating the rich-poor achievement gap. Currently, it is too late once the child is born. Poor mothers often do not receive the pre-natal care they need, especially in the first trimester, and as a direct consequence, some children are born with conditions that later impair their intellects. No wonder that a U.S. Department of Education study found that children from low-income families were mentally well behind their middle class peers-in kindergarten. A program that doesn’t get any formal information about children’s functioning until the end of third grade is doomed” (Bracey, 2001). School districts are faced with the very real problem of showing that all children regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds

will progress as proven by standardized testing. “Bush’s plan is fragmented, incoherent and poorly thought out. It has been flung together with clichés, buzz phrases, and piecemeal ideas. It bears all the hallmarks of haste, of ideological rather than logical and systemic thinking. It reveals an extremely limited understanding of how schools work, what education means or how children learn. No workable bill can emerge from it” (Bracey, 2001).

It is the opinion of many that teachers and administrators have taken their responsibilities seriously when it comes to the academic success of their students. “Teachers want to achieve the No Child Left Behind Act’s goals of closing the achievement gap and helping all students achieve to high standards. And yet, they are pragmatic about what it will take—more than rhetoric and political posturing. It will take resources for things that work” (New NCLB survey: teachers want reform that makes sense, 2004). Has there ever been a time where educators did not do the best that was available for the low achieving student? “Education reform was already underway in most states and that, in many cases, the No Child Left Behind Act has interfered with those efforts” (New NCLB survey: teachers want reform that makes sense, 2004).

### **Teachers’ Opinion of No Child Left Behind**

The implementation of NCLB depends on how teachers and school districts interpret the law and what steps must be taken to see that all schools show academic growth and improvement each year. “At a legislative hearing held by State Assembly member Loni Hancock, D-Berkeley, the educators shredded the No Child Left Behind Act, saying that the law will actually damage the quality of K-12

education”(Chen, 2003). Another reports states that “Teachers want to achieve the No Child Left Behind Act’s goals of closing the achievement gap and helping all students achieve to high standards. And yet, they are pragmatic about what it will take – more than rhetoric and political posturing. It will take resources for things that work” (Listening to Teachers: Classroom Realities and No Child Left Behind, 2004). Teachers have been vocal on their opinions of NCLB. In a recent article “The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences reports that most FCS teachers say the new initiative has not been very effective. Slightly more than 68 percent of the teachers indicated test scores or student performance had not improved in their classes since implemented, while almost 32 percent felt they’d seen improvement. Similar findings were reported for the question, ‘Do you think NCLB enhanced or will enhance the education of children in America?’ of the teachers responding, 62 percent said they did not think NCLB had enhanced or would enhance the education of American children and , slightly more than 37 percent responded positively” (Do NCLB Results Match Promise? FCS Teachers Poll Says No, 2004).

A survey that was conducted by the Civil Rights project at Harvard University states a “study found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, education reform was already underway in most states and that, in many cases, the No Child Left Behind Act has interfered with those efforts” (New NCLB survey: teachers want reform that makes sense, 2002 – 2004). “In a talkback forum, a number of teachers posted comments suggesting that socioeconomic factors play too great a role in student performance for educators to be held solely accountable for getting 100 percent of students to meet progress goals. Sheri McLeod-Rose characterized the accountability

requirements for student achievement as ‘absurd, I have never met one educator that was not in support of the success of every student. But ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act assumes the responsibility is only up to the education system” (Stone, 2003). One writer states that “education in this country is a mess. With the NCLB Act, Congress and President Bush are telling educators to clean up that mess. No one has said ‘or else’, but the implication is there. Who will do it if educators don’t? And what valuable stuff will our students lose if that happens? Many of the teachers I know are worried about the implications of NCLB. They’re worried that federal interference in education will squash their creativity, override their judgment, and turn them into assembly line workers, producing reading-and math-literate students (perhaps), who are knowledgeable about facts but educated only in the art of test taking.” (Starr, 2002). Others have said that “No Child Left Behind is not the best accountability system ever invented. But, most policy makers and educators say, it has the right idea”. Mathews continues to say that “learning should be measured with tests. Standardized test are in many ways better then the teachers’ tests that have ruled schools up to now, because teachers can quietly decide not to test concepts that they have failed to teach well. Other forms of assessment, such as collections of work and conversations with teachers, have potential, but nobody has yet shown a way to make them work well with elementary school children from low-income homes” (Mathews, 2004).

Comments on another aspect of NCLB called AYP, teachers participating in a Harvard University Project had this to say, “They did not believe that identifying schools that had not made adequate yearly progress would lead to school

improvement. They viewed the transfer option quite negatively but were somewhat more positive about the potential of supplemental educational services to improve schools. Teachers strongly believed that the NCLB sanctions would unfairly reward and punish teachers. Many of the teachers in schools that were identified as needing improvement do not plan to be teaching in them five years in the future. Teachers also believed that NCLB sanctions would cause teachers to transfer out of schools not making adequate progress. These results suggest that there is a very serious problem in getting teachers to make a long-term commitment to teach in poorly performing schools and that designating schools as ‘in need of improvement’ under NCLB may make things worse” (Kim, Orfield, Sunderman, and Tracey, 2004). This report went on to say that the “Teachers confirm that the NCLB accountability system is influencing the instructional and curricular practices of teachers, but it is producing unintended and possibly negative consequences. They reported that, in response to NCLB accountability, they ignored important aspects of the curriculum, de-emphasized or neglected untested topics, and focused instruction on the tested subjects, probably excessively. Teachers rejected the idea that the NCLB testing requirements would focus teacher’s instruction or improve curriculum” (Kim, Orfield, Sunderman and Tracey, 2004). Finally, “committed but dispirited, most teachers say they are unfairly blamed for shortcomings, undermined by parents and distrustful of their bosses” (The Bush “No Child Left Behind Law” Means Most Schools Will Fail by 2009, 2003).

## Retention

With the NCLB Act in place, administrators and teachers must decide what to do with their low achieving student. To make AYP, decisions must be made regarding the below average student, and the effects their academic progress has on the teacher, school, and the district. Are educators thinking about what is best for the student or for the school because of the implementation of the NCLB Act? Should students be retained for another year if they have not mastered the required curriculum?

“The whole idea of grade retention-holding kids back-is tremendously popular because it sounds like common sense. If students aren’t achieving, you hold them back a year and they do better. Research shows it doesn’t work that way” (Holding back students no help, 2004). Retention has always been deemed the answer to the low achieving student. Many districts across the nation have done just that to help the low achieving student meet success. But does it work and what are the long term effects? “Research examining the overall effects of 19 empirical studies conducted during the 1990’s compared outcomes for students who were retained and matched comparison students who were promoted. Results indicate that grade retention had a negative impact on all areas of achievement (reading, math and language) and socio-emotional adjustment (peer relationships, self esteem, problem behaviors, and attendance)” (Position Statement on Student Grade Retention and Social Promotion, 2003). Can there be any positive results to retaining the low achieving student?

“Initial achievement gains may occur during the year the student is retained. However, the consistent trend across many research studies is that achievement gains decline within 2-3 years of retention, such that retained children either do no better or

performed more poorly than similar groups of promoted children. This is true whether children are compared to same-grade peers or comparable students who were promoted” (Position Statement on Student Grade Retention and Social Promotion, 2003). Linda Darling-Hammond, Executive Director of Columbia University’s National Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching “concedes that grade retention might benefit some students short term but in the long term, holding students back puts them at risk. More often the students who are retained never catch up academically. Many eventually drop out and some end up in the juvenile justice system” (Black, 2004). If the results regarding retention are negative, why do so many districts do it?

“Under the laws, the school is penalized for poor test scores, but not for holding children back-if it were, you might see a lot more effort placed on individual tutoring and remediation. A child who is denied promotion to the next grade based on a test score is, indeed, a child who has been left behind. Study after study shows that retention, for most children, does more harm than good. High stakes standardized testing places increased burdens on the student, and forces teachers and struggling students to devote time to practice and preparation for the artificial environment of testing rather than working on strengthening basic skills. Testing should be used as a means of qualifying students for additional support and help, not as an additional barrier laid before the students who already must work the hardest to progress” (Marshall, 2002). Shane Jimerson of the University of California, Santa Barbara feels that before making any decisions on whether to promote or retain a low achieving student that teachers should be aware of the following research “Retaining

elementary-age students may provide an achievement ‘bounce’, but gains tend to be slight and temporary; once the bounce tapers off, students either level off or again fall behind their classmates. Retaining kindergarten and first grade students as a preventive intervention is no better for students than retaining them in upper grades and retaining students without providing specific remedial strategies and attending to students’ risk factors has little or no value” (Black, 2004). In a recent article, it was stated that “Teachers may believe retention does no harm, but (Beckie) Anderson says researcher’s interviews with children who were held back in elementary school tell a different story. More than 25 percent of the children were too ashamed to admit that they had failed a grade. Almost without exception, the retained children said staying back made them feel “sad”, “bad” and “upset,” and they thought repeating a grade was “punishment.” (Black, 2004).

In the New York City school district, retention is being used for the low achieving student. “The city’s Department of Education released the so-called holdover numbers. After last year’s standardized exams taken by about 80,000 third-graders in the spring, there were 939 third-graders who had already been held over at least once and who scored poorly on one or both of the tests. Some left the city’s school system, and 907 entered the summer school program. Eighty-two percent of those students, or 746, were promoted to the fourth-grade after passing the failed exam or through their in-class portfolios, according to the department. For those who were held over again, city officials said they are being monitored, among other ways, through so-called personal intervention plans. The plans are an evaluation of support services for struggling third and fourth graders who scored poorly on citywide exams.” (Cruz,



2004). Another article stated that “in the short term, retaining kids this year will make next year’s AYP scores look better. But what about the long term consequences? The relationships between retention, race and dropout rates are amply documented in research on retention. Hold ten students back a grade and only three will be around on graduation day; hold those students back twice and none will complete school. And African-American and Latino students are retained at twice the rate of white students” (Ohanian, 2003). “Critics of the retention plan have cited research showing that holding children back leads to greater dropout rates, causing more harm than good; supporters, including New York City Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein, have attributed the city’s dropout rate to a history of promoting students despite poor performance, only to be lost in high school” (Gootman, 2004). More research states “schools often retain on the basis of a shortsighted belief that repeating a grade will give kids a boost that will last through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It’s true that retention reaches far into students’ futures, but often the long-term effects are devastating. Jimerson’s studies show that students who are retained once are 40 to 50 percent more likely to drop out than promoted students. Retaining students twice doubles their chances of dropping out raising the risk to 90 percent” (Black, 2004). Lorrie Shepard, Co-editor of a book on retention in 1989 states that “one factor contributing to the widespread support for tough promotion policies is that teachers feel pressured to retain students by their colleagues in the next grade. It’s very hard for a teacher to examine her own beliefs about whether retention is a good thing or not, because she has to fight her colleagues. Another problem is that most alternatives to retention cost money, which must be requested in a district’s budget on a line-item basis. In

contrast, the cost of retention is hidden in a school system's general education budget and billed to the state in the form of per pupil costs." (Olsen, 1990). Another reason mentioned in the literature as to why teachers retain is that "teachers promote retention because they believe it is an effective remedial strategy. To the extent that retention, at least in the early grades, shows some short term benefits for students, teachers' conclusions are understandable. Teachers in the early grades are not able to follow their students over time to see the effects of their decisions on students' later development."(Roderick, 1995).

And to sum up this debate, "Neither social promotion nor grade retention is an effective remedy for low student achievement. Instead, schools must ensure that all students have opportunities for learning as well as support and assistance when needed. Through the use of school structures and policies that support intensive learning, professional development for teachers, prevention and intervention strategies, and assessments that inform teaching, schools can help children reach their full academic potential and achieve success both in school and in life" (Alternatives to Social Promotion and Grade Retention, 1999). NCLB does not demand retention for low achieving students however with the AYP, retention is one possible way to raise district scores.

### Summary

The No Child Left Behind Act started out as a good idea with many possibilities. However, strict mandates, under funding, labeling of schools and standardized tests have made this Law difficult for many administrators and teachers. Stan Scheer, Superintendent of Littleton Public Schools in Colorado feels that "while there is a

place for the Federal government to be involved (in education), it is not at the level we now have with NCLB. It is a state responsibility and more importantly, a local responsibility through local governance in concert with state expectations. In addition, it is the state that creates the consistent on-going revenue streams that are essential for the stability of the local systems. The soft-money from the Feds will never be a good source for supporting reoccurring expense that tends to inflate every year. The fact is, if you want to serve others at a level where you truly are going to serve all kids and leave no child behind, it is labor intensive and cannot be done just because of slogans based on good intentions” (Scheer, 2003). Have we as educators had to embrace NCLB too quickly? “NCLB may well have been too fast out of the gate and too crude in how it rates schools. Even after a built-in yearlong delay, the law’s school rating system sets an extremely high standard for academic achievement, compared to what most schools have experienced in the past, and relies on a simplistic thumbs-up, thumbs-down approach instead of giving schools letter grades or numerical scores” (A Failing Grade, 2003). Finally, teachers and administrators need to look at how they can better serve the low achieving student in their schools without the constant worry of consequences set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act.

## Chapter 3 – Design of the Study

### Introduction

The major purpose of this study is to determine whether the No Child Left Behind Act has any influence over decisions made by administrators and teachers regarding whether to promote or retain the low achieving student.

### Setting

The study was completed by the teachers and administrators in the Greenfields, Oakview and Red Bank Elementary Schools in the West Deptford School District in West Deptford, New Jersey. West Deptford is located in the northwestern part of Gloucester County in Southern New Jersey. The majority of the families in the district can be considered to be from mixed socioeconomic classes. The educators asked to participate in this study were the Superintendent, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, the three building principals and 43 regular education teachers (5 male and 43 female) who ages range from 25 to 58 years of age. The teachers instruct in grades from Kindergarten to Fourth Grade.

### Description of Instrument Used

The instrument used in this project was a Likert survey developed by the author of this study consisting of 20 questions pertaining to the No Child Left Behind Act, the participants' knowledge of this act and the effect that this act may have on

the educators decision to promote or retain the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades. The questions were to be answered using values from 5 to 1 with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Participants were encouraged to offer comments to explain a point or opinion given by each participant. The survey was developed by the author of this study and is being used to gain insight from the opinions of educators, their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act and how this act may have affected them in the classroom since its inception.

### Validity and Reliability

The survey was given to four elementary teachers and one child study team member in the West Deptford School District who agreed that the survey was valid. The survey was proven reliable when given to these same five individuals on two separate dates.

### Relationship of the Instrument to the Null Hypothesis

The hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference between the opinions of professional educators and experts in their decision regarding the low achieving student when factoring in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the concept and implication of the No Child Left Behind Act on the decisions made by professional educators.

Further analysis will reveal whether there is a difference in the retention and promotion policy implied in the No Child Left Behind Act. This will be determined by the statistical analysis of the results of the survey.

## Procedure

Administrators and teachers were sent an e-mail within the district introducing the purpose of the study and the significance of the survey. Beginning on January 31, 2005 and continuing until February 11, 2005, teachers and administrators were given letter of agreement and guarantee of anonymity to be signed by each participant along with the survey. Each participant had been told as to how the results would be used and included in this study. All completed surveys were then collected by each building principal within 5 days of the participants' receipt of the survey. All of the completed surveys were sent by the building principals to the Oakview School building principal for collection and for protecting the privacy of each educator's participation. The Oakview principal then gave completed surveys to this author for study and analysis.

### Time Period for Data Collection

The Administrators were asked to distribute and collect the letters of agreement and surveys within a two week period. The participants were instructed to complete the letters of agreement and surveys within a 5 day time period. This time period gave all administrators and teachers a reasonable amount of time to complete the survey and have the results returned to this author to study and analyze.

The survey was well received by many of the participants who were asked to be included in this study. The educators who responded felt that they did so honestly and were willing to comment on many of the questions that were asked of

them. Several of the teachers expressed interest by e-mail in the outcome of the study and asked to be informed as to the results found in the analysis.

## Chapter 4 – Analysis of the Data

### Description and Analysis of the Data

The main purpose of this study is to discover whether the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act has made an impact on professional educators in the classroom especially in decisions made regarding the low achieving student. To accomplish this, a survey was given to administrators and teachers in one school district where the No Child Left Behind Act is to have impacted educators in the classroom. The final outcome is to prove the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between administrators and teachers' in West Deptford School District and Professional experts' decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student when factoring in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The researcher of this study developed a survey of 20 questions which addressed the No Child Left Behind Act, professional educators understanding of this act, and how it affects these educators in the classroom. The survey further asks participants whether the No Child Left Behind Act has had any influence over their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.

This survey's (Appendix B) 20 questions were randomly listed on the three sub hypotheses of this study. This was done deliberately to assure that the participants were answering each question separately and not as a topic. A second survey (Appendix A) was developed by grouping the same questions by topic to aid



the reader when reviewing the data and results of this study. The survey was distributed to 43 Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> grade regular education teachers, 3 principals and 2 administrators in the West Deptford School District. Of these 48 educators, 21 professionals agreed to participate. The results of this survey will help determine whether the null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected which states that there will be no significant difference between experts opinions compared to administrators and teachers decision to promote or retain the low achieving student when factoring in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The survey used in the project was developed on a Likert Scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being strongly agree to 1 being strongly disagree. The survey asked questions pertaining to the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers' reactions and understanding of this act and how this act affects them in regard to their low achieving student. For the research to be accurate, an understanding of the participants' opinions toward the No Child Left Behind Act and how it affects them was important to this study.

To determine the results of this survey, graphs were developed to demonstrate the results of the three separate topics of questions. The questions were discussed and results were evaluated as a result of these graphs. Finally, a mean and a t-value of Independent samples was determined using Stat Pak to test the Null Hypothesis of each part of the survey as well as the complete survey.

### Data Presentation

The survey (Appendix A) contained questions on three separate parts of the study. In the first part of the study, participants were asked to answer six

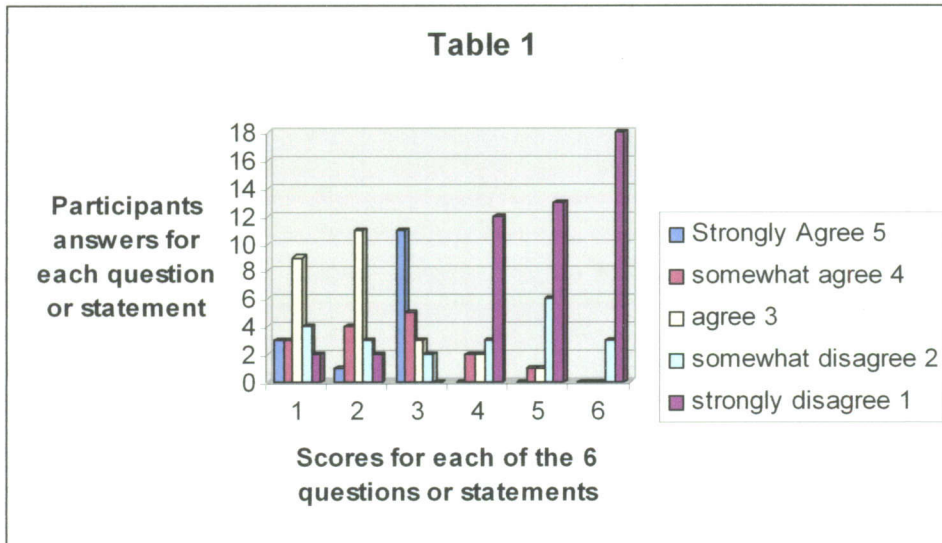
statements or questions pertaining to their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on the West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained.

As table 1 shows, the professionals surveyed had strong opinions of NCLB. Questions 1 asked teachers how well versed they are on the No Child Left Behind Act. 72% of the respondents felt that they had some understanding of NCLB. Question 2 then asked participants whether they felt that West Deptford has made positive changes in policies and programs as a result of NCLB. 76% of the respondents felt that West Deptford has stepped up policies and programs as a result of NCLB. Questions 3 asked educators whether schools were being punished by being listed on the early warning or needs improvement lists when students standardized test scores do not reflect 95% student success as outlined in NCLB. 94% of participants agree to strongly agree that schools are being punished by being listed on early warning or needs improvement lists. When asked on question 4 whether West Deptford is receiving the funding it needs to help meet the needs of the low achieving students in the district, 71% somewhat to strongly disagreed that West Deptford is receiving the funding it needs to help meet the needs of the low achieving students in the district.

The final two questions on this topic, numbers 5 and 6 respectively asked whether the requirements of the NCLB Act are realistic and attainable for all students regardless of their academic abilities and whether it is conceivable that all students will achieve 100% proficiency by 2014 as outlined by the NCLB Act. 90% of the participants somewhat to strongly disagreed on question 5 which states that the

requirements of NCLB are realistic and attainable for all students regardless of their academic abilities. The professional educators do not feel that this is attainable for all students. On question 6, 100% of the participants responding somewhat to strongly disagreed that all students will be able to achieve 100% proficiency by 2014 as outlined by the No Child Left Behind Act. The professional educators do not believe this is possible for all children.

Table 1 – Sub hypothesis one results on participants’ knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on the West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained.



t-test for Independent Sample

Survey results for the first sub hypothesis on the six statements or questions pertaining to participants’ knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained were then entered into Stat Pak where a mean and t-value were calculated to test the Null Hypothesis of this section of the survey. The

independent scores of the participants from the West Deptford School District were compared to the same number of answers from professional experts in a hypothetical school district of professional experts.

Table 1A

Survey results on 6 questions or statements on the sub hypothesis of participants' knowledge of No Child Left Behind, its implications on West Deptford School District and whether the goals of NCLB can be attained.		
Totaled professional experts scores of hypothetical school district of professional experts		Totaled West Deptford Educators scores
1.	100	67
2.	100	37
3.	100	43
4.	100	60
5.	100	53
6.	100	53
7.	100	37
8.	100	47
9.	100	60
10.	100	47
11.	100	40
12.	100	50
13.	100	57
14.	100	53
15.	100	50
16.	100	47
17.	100	47
18.	100	50
19.	100	40
20.	100	47
21.	100	43

## t-test for Independent Samples

Survey results from the group of professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two

Group 1 ~ Professional experts totaled survey scores

Group 2 ~ West Deptford School District totaled survey scores

Computed t-value is 29.92 with 40 degrees of freedom

### Group 1

Number of scores in group one	21
Sum of scores in group one	2100.00
Mean of group one	100
Sum of squared scores in group one	210000.00
SS of group one	0.00

### Group 2

Number of scores in group two	21
Sum of scores in group two	1028.00
Mean of group two	48.95
Sum of squared scores in group two	51546.00
SS of group two	1222.95
t-value	29.92
degree of freedom	40

Based on the statistical data for this first section of the survey as to there being a significant difference between the participating professional educators and a hypothetical group of professional experts' opinions regarding their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act and the impending success of NCLB, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Analysis of the completed data as showed by the above graph and the results of the t-test proves that there is a significant difference between the educators' opinion regarding their knowledge of NCLB and its impending success.

For the second part of the survey (Appendix A), participants were asked to respond to statements or questions pertaining to implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.

As this second graph shows, the professional educators of West Deptford are mixed as to how the NCLB Act affects them. Question 1 asked participants whether West Deptford has made positive changes in curriculum as a result of NCLB. 71% of the responses agree to strongly agree that the school district has been proactive in this area. Question 2 asked educators whether they feel that their teaching methods have come under scrutiny because of NCLB. 67% of the participants somewhat to strongly disagree that their teaching methods have come under scrutiny because of NCLB. However, 33 % of the responses agree to strongly agree that their teaching methods are being looked at because of the impact of NCLB. There are many teachers in the classroom who are affected by the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act and these responses should not be ignored. For Question 3, participants were asked whether the achievement of the low achieving student is a reflection of

their teaching methods since the inception of NCLB. 52% of the responses somewhat to strongly disagree that the success of the low achieving student is a reflection of their teaching methods yet, 48% agree to strongly agree that the results of their low achieving students are a reflection of their teaching methods since the inception of NCLB. There is enough of a significant division between the West Deptford Teachers feelings on this topic to show that NCLB does seem to have an impact in the classroom. When asked to respond to question 4 where professional educators were asked whether they felt the need to adjust their teaching beliefs when it comes to educational decisions on behalf of the low achieving students because of the implementation of NCLB, 52% somewhat to strongly disagreed that they needed to adjust their teaching beliefs where 48% agree to strongly agree that they have adjusted their educational beliefs on behalf of the low achieving students since the inception of NCLB which again shows this districts educators divided on this topic. Educators are mixed as to the pressures put upon them by the enactment of this act. Question 5 asked professional educators whether they have made any significant changes in their educational methods to help the low achieving students because of NCLB. 62% of the participants agree to somewhat agree that they have made some significant changes in their educational methods because of NCLB which indicates that this act does impact the teachers in the classroom. Question 6 asks participants whether the NCLB Act has made them find different approaches from what they were already doing to help the low achieving student meet success in the classroom. 52% responded that they agree to strongly agree that they have tried to find different approaches to help the low achieving student meet success in their classroom because

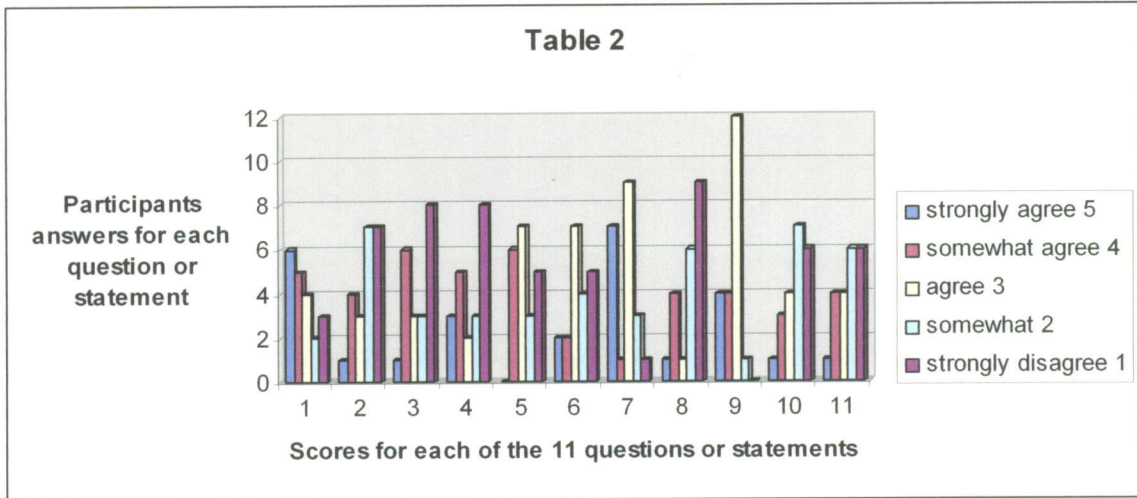
of the implications of NCLB. However 48% of the participants' somewhat to strongly disagree that they have tried to find different approaches to aid the low achieving student in their classroom because of NCLB. The results of this question again suggests that the professional educators are divided on this topic and NCLB has impacted the teachers in the classroom in regard to the low achieving student.

Questions 10 and 11 asked participants whether they have made significant changes in their educational methods to help the low achieving student because of the NCLB act and are they finding different approaches to help the low achieving student meet success. More participants somewhat agree or agree that they have made significant changes in the classroom because of NCLB as well as finding different approaches to aid their low achieving student because of NCLB. It is evident that NCLB has made a difference in the classroom when aiding the low achieving student. Question 7 outlines what a highly qualified teacher is under NCLB and 80% of the responses agree to strongly agree that the guidelines are sufficient in proving that the teaching staff is highly qualified. Question 8 asks the participants' whether their educational credentials might come into question if the low achieving student in their classroom does not meet enough success as outlined in NCLB. 71% of the responses somewhat to strongly disagree that their educational credentials will be a factor should the low achieving student in their classroom does not meet enough success as indicated in NCLB. When the participants were asked to respond to question 9 which states that their peers are responding to the needs of the low achieving students in compliance with the NCLB Act, 95% agree to strongly agree that their peers have responded to the needs of the low achieving student in compliance with the NCLB



Act and many comments have indicated that their peers always have met the needs of the low achieving student. When asked to respond to question 10 which states that adjustments are needed to be made in the teaching methods of this district to meet the needs of the low achieving student because of the NCLB Act, 62% of the participants somewhat to strongly disagree that adjustments are needed to meet the low achieving students needs where 38% of the responses indicate that they agree that more needs to be done to aid the low achieving student since the inception of NCLB. There is enough responses to show that many educators feel that more needs to be done to meet the needs of the low achieving student. The final question in this section, #11 asks the participants whether they feel that the NCLB Act has had any effect on their teaching methods in the classroom regarding the low achieving student. 57% of the responses indicate that educators' somewhat to strongly disagree that the NCLB Act has had any effect on their teaching methods in the classroom regarding the low achieving student however 47% agree to strongly agree that the NCLB Act has had an effect on their teaching methods. These results indicate that the teachers are divided on this topic and NCLB has had an impact on many professional educators in the classroom regarding the low achieving student.

Table 2 – Sub hypothesis two results on participants’ response to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.



t-test for Independent Sample

Survey results for the second sub hypothesis on the eleven statements or questions pertaining to participants’ response to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom were entered into Stat Pak where a mean and t-value were calculated to test the Null Hypotheses of this section of the survey. The independent scores of the participants from the West Deptford School District were compared to the same number of answers from professional experts in a hypothetical school district of professional experts.

Table 2A

Survey results on the 11 questions or statements of the sub hypothesis pertaining to participants' opinions pertaining to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.		
	Totaled professional experts scores of hypothetical school district of professional experts	Totaled West Deptford Educators scores
1.	100	78
2.	100	35
3.	100	49
4.	100	44
5.	100	51
6.	100	73
7.	100	24
8.	100	49
9.	100	47
10.	100	51
11.	100	36
12.	100	58
13.	100	60
14.	100	84
15.	100	60
16.	100	49
17.	100	65
18.	100	55
19.	100	78
20.	100	65
21.	100	35

### t-test for Independent Samples

Survey results from professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two

Group 1 ~ Professional experts totaled survey scores

Group 2 ~ West Deptford School District totaled survey scores

Computed t-value is 13.27 with 40 degrees of freedom

Group 1

Number of scores in group one	21
Sum of scores in group one	2100.00
Mean of group one	100
Sum of squared scores in group one	210000.00
SS of group one	0.00

Group 2

Number of scores in group two	21
Sum of scores in group two	1146.00
Mean of group two	54.57
Sum of squared scores in group two	67464.00
SS of group two	4925.14
t-value	13.27
degree of freedom	40

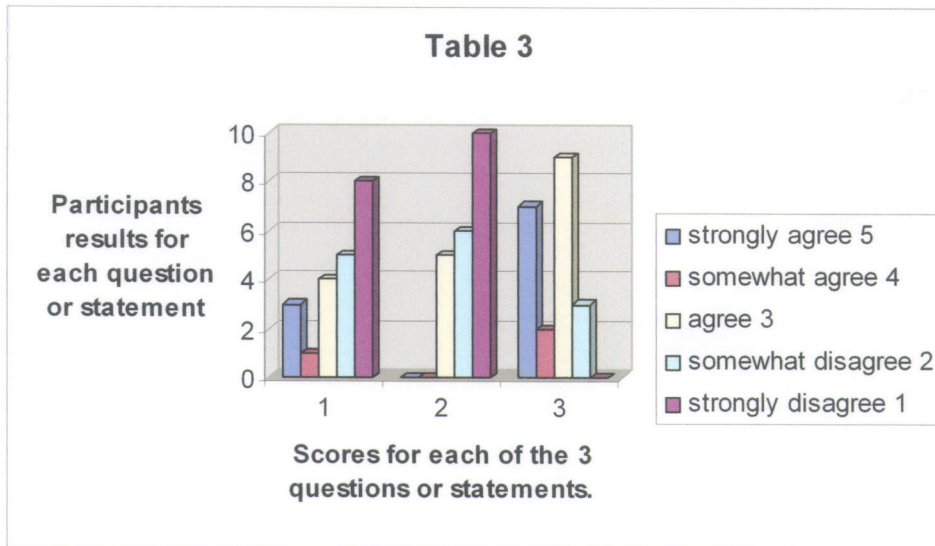
Based on the statistical data for this second section of the survey as to there being a significant difference between the participating professional educators and a hypothetical group of professional experts' opinions regarding participants' opinions pertaining to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Analysis of the completed data as showed by the above graph and the results of the t-test proves that there is a significant difference between the educators' opinion pertaining to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on teachers of the West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.

The final three questions of the survey (Appendix A) dealt with retention and how the participants felt the No Child Left Behind Act influences their decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student.

This final graph shows the participants' responses to the questions that culminate the survey. Question 1 asks the professional educators whether they feel pressured to compromise their educational beliefs when deciding to promote or retain the low achieving student because of the NCLB Act. 62% of the participants strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed with this question where 38% agreed to strongly agreed. More educators participating in this study feel that NCLB does not affect how they feel when deciding whether to promote or retain the low achieving student yet, the number of participants who do feel it act affects them again shows that NCLB has had an impact on some educators in the classroom regarding the low achieving student. Questions 2 and 3 ask participants whether they are more compelled to retain

their low achieving student because of the fear of not showing adequate progress in the classroom because of NCLB and whether these decisions are respected by the administration. 76% of the professional educators responded that they somewhat to strongly disagree that they are more compelled to retain because of the fear of showing adequate progress in the classroom when factoring in the NCLB Act and 86% feel that their decisions regarding the low achieving student is respected by the administration. The No Child Left Behind Act does impact on participants when making decisions regarding the low achieving student.

Table 3 – Sub hypothesis three results on participants’ opinions on how the No Child Left Behind Act may influence their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.



### t-test for Independent Sample

Survey results for the third sub hypothesis on the three statements or questions pertaining to retention and how participants felt the No Child Left Behind Act influences their decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student were entered into Stat Pak where a mean and t-value were calculated to test the Null Hypothesis of this section of the survey. The independent scores of the participants from the West Deptford School District were compared to the same number of answers from a hypothetical school district of professional experts.

Table 3A

Survey results on the three statements or questions pertaining to how participants felt the No Child Left Behind Act influences their decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student		
Totalled professional experts' scores of hypothetical school district of professional experts		Totalled West Deptford Educators scores
1	100	73
2	100	60
3	100	47
4	100	33
5	100	33
6	100	47
7	100	53
8	100	53
9	100	60
10	100	33
11	100	67
12	100	60
13	100	67
14	100	60
15	100	60
16	100	40
17	100	40
18	100	53
19	100	53
20	100	53
21	100	47



### t-test for Independent Samples

Survey results from professional experts test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two

Group 1 ~ Professional experts totaled survey scores

Group 2 ~ West Deptford School District totaled survey scores

Computed t-value is 19.07 with 40 degrees of freedom

#### Group 1

Number of scores in group one	21
Sum of scores in group one	2100.00
Mean of group one	100
Sum of squared scores in group one	210000.00
SS of group one	0.00

#### Group 2

Number of scores in group two	21
Sum of scores in group two	1092.00
Mean of group two	52.00
Sum of squared scores in group two	59446.00
SS of group two	2662.00
t-value	19.07
degree of freedom	40

Based on the statistical data for this final section of the survey where participants' responses were to show that there are no significant differences between a hypothetical group of professional experts and West Deptford's professional educators, the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Analysis of the data as shown by the graph above and the results of the t-value prove that there is a significant difference between participants' opinions on how the No Child Left Behind Act may influence their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.

### Data Analysis

Upon completion and collection of the surveys, the information was entered into the Stat Pak program where a mean was calculated and a t-value of Independent samples was determined to test the Null Hypothesis of the complete survey.

To calculate the mean and t-value of the completed survey, scores were taken from each of the independent surveys taken by participants of the West Deptford School District and were compared to professional experts' scores of the same number of participants in a hypothetical school district. The scores were then calculated and analyzed for the purpose of this study.

Table 4A

Survey results of the 20 questions on the hypothesis of the study		
Totalled professional experts scores		Totalled West Deptford Scores
1.	100	63
2.	100	49
3.	100	47
4.	100	47
5.	100	36
6.	100	74
7.	100	39
8.	100	58
9.	100	63
10.	100	51
11.	100	56
12.	100	50
13.	100	57
14.	100	72
15.	100	59
16.	100	57
17.	100	37
18.	100	51
19.	100	52
20.	100	49
21.	100	30

## t-test for Independent Samples

Survey results from professional experts' test results of group one compared to West Deptford School District test results of group two

Group 1 ~ Professional experts totaled survey scores

Group 2 ~ West Deptford School District totaled survey scores

Computed t-value is 19.64 with 40 degrees of freedom

### Group 1

Number of scores in group one	21
Sum of scores in group one	2100.00
Mean of group one	100
Sum of squared scores in group one	210000.00
SS of group one	0.00

### Group 2

Number of scores in group two	21
Sum of scores in group two	1097.00
Mean of group two	52.24
Sum of squared scores in group two	59789.00
SS of group two	2483.81
t-value	19.64
degree of freedom	40

The survey conducted for the purpose of this study showed that there is a significant difference between experts and professional educators of the West Deptford School District and their decisions regarding their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers' opinions regarding this act and the decisions regarding promotion or retention of the low achieving student when factoring in the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Based on the results of the survey and the analysis of the data, the Null hypothesis can be rejected.

### Summary of the Findings

As can be seen from the data presented when calculating the results of the survey, the professional educators in the West Deptford School District overall have very strong opinions on the No Child Left Behind Act and its implications regarding their decisions pertaining to the low achieving students.

Analysis of the data clearly shows that there is a significant difference between the experts and West Deptford professional educators' opinions regarding the No Child Left Behind Act and their decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student when factoring in the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act.

## Chapter Five – Summary, Conclusion and Implication

### Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act was developed to reach the goal that all students will achieve at the proficient levels in reading and mathematics by the year 2014. Educators today are expected to embrace this educational reform and apply its four basic principles in the classroom when making educational decisions for their students. Much research has been done in reference to the No Child Left Behind Act and the expectations that are to be met regarding the future of all students in school. The goal of this project was to determine how the professional educators of the West Deptford School District are responding to the No Child Left Behind Act and how it impacts the teachers' decisions in regard to the low achieving student.

### Summary of the Problem

This study was done to determine how the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act has influenced professional educator's decisions regarding promotion or retention of the low achieving student. This topic was broken down into three sub topics to which 3 sub hypotheses were formed: 1. The participant's knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on the West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained. 2. The participants' response to the implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on the teachers of West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom and 3. The participants'

opinions on how the No Child Left Behind Act may influence their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.

### Summary of Procedures and Results

A review of related literature was conducted. Research was completed on the Internet to compile articles and documents pertaining to the topic of this study. Scores came about for the Professional Experts from the research that was compiled during the course of this study. A hypothesis was developed and then divided into three sub hypotheses. A Likert scale was developed by the researcher and distributed to 51 administrators and K to 4 regular education teachers in the West Deptford School District. Of the educators asked to participate, 21 professionals returned completed surveys.

Upon collection of the surveys, an analysis of the scores was completed to determine how participants responded to the questions asked on the three sub topics of the survey. Each question was then discussed with results shown for the reader. The final results were then entered into a t-scale where the scores of the professional educators in the West Deptford School District were compared to a hypothetical school district of professional experts with perfect scores. A t-scale was also done on each of the sub hypotheses to show the comparison of the professional experts and the West Deptford educators on each topic. The test was done at the .05 level of significance for a test which showed that there were significant differences between the two groups which showed that the null hypothesis could be rejected.

## Conclusions and Implications

The study showed many opposing opinions regarding how the professional educators reacted to the No Child Left Behind Act, their knowledge of the Act, how it affects the decisions made in the classroom as well as decisions made as to whether to promote or retain the low achieving student.

The final result of this study determined that 1. There is a significant difference of opinion between the experts and the professional educators regarding their knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act and its impending success, 2. There are some differences of opinion regarding how NCLB affects their teaching methods used in the West Deptford School District when compared to a hypothetical school district of professional experts when meeting the needs of the low achieving student and 3. that there is significant difference between professional experts and West Deptford School District professional educators' decisions regarding how the No Child Left Behind Act may influence their decision to promote or retain the low achieving student.

## Recommendations for Future Study

After completing this study, the following recommendation is made. The study given to the administrators and teachers in the West Deptford School District should be given to several school districts that come under the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind Act. The districts should be broken into 6 regions of the United States and results should be calculated comparing the six different regions. This would give a more accurate account of how the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act has influenced



professional educator's decisions when considering promotion or retention of the low achieving student.

## REFERENCES

- A Failing Grade. (2003, September 2). Retrieved November 29, 2004 from  
[http://www.motherjones.com/news/daily\\_mojo/2003/09/we\\_538\\_02a.html](http://www.motherjones.com/news/daily_mojo/2003/09/we_538_02a.html).
- Amond, A. (2004, November 3). Educators predict lawsuits challenging No Child Left Behind. Retrieved November 3, 2004 from  
[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2004/11/03/educators\\_predict\\_lawsuits\\_chall...](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2004/11/03/educators_predict_lawsuits_chall...)
- Alternatives to Social Promotion and Grade Retention. (1999). Retrieved April 1, 2002 from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/timely/spover.htm>.
- Aspey, S& Webb, J. (2003, December 18). New Resource Provides superintendents with Key Information About No Child Left Behind. Retrieved November 3, 2004 from  
<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/12/12182003.html>.
- Black, S. (2004). Second Time Around. If repeating a grade doesn't help kids, why do we make them do it? Retrieved November 16, 2004 from  
<http://www.asbj.com/current/research.html>.
- Bracey, G. W. (2001, May 12). Analysis of the Proposed Bush Education Plan. Retrieved November 29, 2004 from  
<http://www.americatomorrow.com/bracey/EDDRA/EDDRA21.htm>.

- Cahir, B. (2003, October 9). Andrews Turns on School Reform Law. Retrieved September 14, 2004 from <http://www.BillCahir@newhouse.com>.
- Chen, R. (2003, November 17). Local Teachers Criticize No Child Left Behind Act. Retrieved November 3, 2004, from <http://www.dailycal.org/article.php?id=13546>.
- Creez, W. (2004, November 23). City's third grade, double holdover stats revealed. Retrieved November 29, 2004 from <http://www.nynewsday.com/news/education/nyc-skull1124,0,578345.story>.
- Daggett, W. R. (2004). Why No Child Left Behind Matters. Retrieved November 29, 2004 from <http://www.icle.net/pdf/NCLBWhitePaper.PDF>.
- Do NCLB Results Match Promise? FCS Teachers Poll Says No. (2004, October 18). Retrieved November 3, 2004 from [http://www.onlypunjab.com/real/full\\_story-newsID-7638.html](http://www.onlypunjab.com/real/full_story-newsID-7638.html).
- Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.* (2001, January) retrieved October 21, 2004 from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/execsumm.html>.
- Ferrandino, V. & Tirozzi, G. (2002, November 20). Getting ahead of No Child Left Behind – 11/20/02. Retrieved November 6, 2004 from <http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=742>.

Friedrich, S. (2002, November). No Child Left Behind – What It Means to Teachers.

Retrieved November 6, 2004 from

[http://www.nctm.org/news/articles/2002-llnb\\_nochild.htm](http://www.nctm.org/news/articles/2002-llnb_nochild.htm).

Gootman, E. (2004, November 24). For 157 Students, It's Third Grade for the Third

Time. Retrieved November 29, 2004 from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/24/nyregion/24school.html?...&partner=rssnyt>.

Hiltner, D. (2004, December). *Four more years of "failing schools"?* NJEA Reporter,

Vol. 48, No.5, p.4.

Holding back students no help. (2004). *Arizona Daily Star*. Retrieved November 29, 2004

from <http://www.azstarnet.com/dailystar/printDS/17137.php>.

How to Rescue Education Reform. (2004, October 10). Retrieved October 13, 2004 from

<http://www.nytimes.com/issues>.

Kim, J., Orfield, G., Sunderman, G., & Tracey, C. (2004, September). Listening to

Teachers: Classroom realities and No Child Left Behind. *Cambridge, MA: The*

*Civil Rights Project at Harvard University*. Retrieved November 28, 2004 from

<http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu>.

Leskin, S. (2004, September 24). "No Child Left Behind": Boon or Bust? Retrieved

November 3, 2004 from

<http://www.pnnonline.org/article.php?sid=5480&mode=thread&order=o&thold=o>.

Listening to Teachers: Classroom Realities and No Child Left Behind. (2004, September 13). Retrieved November 3, 2004 from

[http://www.massteacher.org/issues/esea/esea\\_harvard.cfm](http://www.massteacher.org/issues/esea/esea_harvard.cfm).

Marshall, A. (2002, August 20). The Leave More Children Behind Tests: More Barriers, Less Understanding. Retrieved November 28, 2004 from

<http://www.dyslexia.com/testing.htm>.

Mathews, J. (2004, October 19). How No Child Left Behind Helps Principals. Retrieved October 21, 2004 from

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A44499-204Oct19?language=printer>.

NEA: No Child Left Behind (2004). Retrieved November 3, 2004 from

<http://www.nea.org/esea/>

Neill, Monty. (2003). Don't Mourn, Organize! Making Lemonade from NCLB Lemons. Retrieved November 3, 2004 from

[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special\\_reports/bushplan/nclb181.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/bushplan/nclb181.shtml).

New NCLB survey: teachers want reform that makes sense. (2004). Retrieved November 3, 2004 from <http://www.nea.org/esea/teachervoicesurvey.html>.

"No Child Left Behind". (1999, September 2). Retrieved October 11, 2004 from

<http://ctr.umkc.edu/~acline/c2004/gwbl.html>.

No Child Left Behind. (2004). Retrieved October 21, 2004 from

<http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/overview/intro/presidentplan/page.html>.

No Child Left Behind Holds Every Child Back. (2004, October 21). Retrieved October

21, 2004 from <http://www.emediawire.com/releases/2004/10/emw169630.htm>.

No Child Left Behind in New Jersey. (2004). Retrieved September 24, 2004 from

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/grants/nclb/>

*No Child Left Behind: Rhetoric v. Reality.* (2004, October).

NJEA Reporter, Vol. 47, No. 3.

Ohanian, S. (2003, December 1). Bush Flunks Schools. Retrieved November 28, 2004

from [http://www.susanohanion.org/show\\_commentary.php?id-210](http://www.susanohanion.org/show_commentary.php?id-210).

Olson, L. (1990, May 16). Education Officials Reconsider Policies on Grade Retention.

Retrieved March 21, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/vol-09/09400044.h09>.

*Position Statement on Student Grade Retention and Social Promotion.* (2003, April 12).

Retrieved November 28, 2004 from

[http://www.nasponline.org/information/pospaper\\_graderetent.html](http://www.nasponline.org/information/pospaper_graderetent.html).

Roderick, M. (1995, December). Grade Retention and School Dropout: Policy Debate

and Research Questions. Retrieved March 19, 2002, from

<http://www.pdkintl.org/edres/resbull5.htm>.

Sheir, S. (2003, December 17). NCLB Atrocities. Retrieved November 6, 2004 from

[http://www.susanohanian.org/show\\_nclb\\_atrocities.html?is-282](http://www.susanohanian.org/show_nclb_atrocities.html?is-282).

Starr, L. (2002, February 5). The NCLB Act: Oppression or Opportunity. Retrieved

November 3, 2004 from

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/issues269.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues269.shtml).

Stern, Sol. (2004). Yes, The Education President. Retrieved November 28, 2004 from

[http://www.city-journal.org/html/14\\_3\\_education\\_pres.html](http://www.city-journal.org/html/14_3_education_pres.html).

Stone, C. (2003, October). No Child Left Behind: What Educators Think. Retrieved

November 3, 2004 from *The Bush "No Child Left Behind Law" Means Most*

*Schools Will Fail by 2009*. (2003, June 4). AP,CNN Retrieved November 29, 2004

from <http://www.costanzo.org/Rex/commentary/education.htm>.

## Appendix A



Appendix A

Survey

Thesis Project  
Rowan University  
April M. Maska  
January 2005

"What effect might the No Child Left Behind Act have on Administrators and Teachers' decision to promote or retain the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades?"

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was signed into law on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This act contains President Bush's four basic education reform principles. These principles are:

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. Increased flexibility and local control
3. Expanded options for parents
4. Emphasis on proven teaching methods

Reflecting on your knowledge of the NCLB Act, please answer the following questions. Circle the answer that most describes your opinion using the scoring rubrics below. Feel free to include comments to any of the questions or statements.

The scoring will be as follows:

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section One – Knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act, its implications on the West Deptford School District and whether the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act can be attained.

1. You are well versed in the basic principles of the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

2. Your School District has made positive changes in its policies and programs as a result of NCLB.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

3. Do you perceive that schools are being punished by being listed on the early warning or need improvement lists when standardized test scores do not reflect the 95% student success as outlined in the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

4. Do you believe that your School District is receiving the funding it needs by the Federal Government to help you meet the needs of your low achieving student under the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

5. The requirements of the NCLB Act are realistic and attainable for all students regardless of their academic abilities.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

6. It is conceivable that all students will achieve 100% proficiency by 2014 as outlined in the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

Section Two – Implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on teachers in the West Deptford School District and their decisions made in the classroom.

1. Has your curriculum been updated in your School District because of NCLB?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

2. Have your teaching methods come under scrutiny because of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

3. When assessing the low achieving student, are you concerned that the Achievement of that student is a reflection of your teaching methods since the inception of NCLB?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

4. You have felt the need to adjust your teaching beliefs when it comes to educational decisions on the low achieving student because of the implementation of NCLB.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

5. Have you made any significant changes in your educational methods to help your low achieving student because of the implementation of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

6. Has the NCLB Act made you find different approaches to help the low achieving student meet success in your classroom?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

7. A highly qualified teacher under the NCLB Act must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure and prove that they know the subject they teach. NCLB requires states to adopt goals and plans to ensure all teachers are highly qualified, publicly reports plans and progress in meeting teacher quality goals and measure the extent to which all students have highly qualified teachers. States are further allowed to develop an additional way for current teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency and meet highly qualified teacher requirements by showing proof that consists of a combination of teaching experience, professional development and knowledge of the subject garnered over time in the profession. Knowing that 96% of Elementary School Teachers in New Jersey meet the federal guidelines as a highly qualified teacher under the NCLB Act, do you agree that these guidelines are sufficient in proving that you are a highly qualified teacher?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

8. Your educational credentials will come into question if your low achieving student does not meet enough success under the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

9. Your peers are responding to the needs of the low achieving students in compliance with the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

10. Adjustments are needed to be made in the teaching methods of this district to meet the needs of the low achieving student because of the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

11. Has the NCLB Act had any effect on your teaching methods in the classroom regarding the low achieving student?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

Section three – Implications the No Child Left Behind Act may have on teachers' decisions to promote or retain the low achieving student.

1. Are you feeling pressured to compromise your educational beliefs when deciding to promote or retain your low achieving student because of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

2. Many studies show that retention is not the answer to helping the low achieving student however, are you more compelled to retain a student as opposed to promoting a student because of the fear of not showing adequate progress in your classroom with the NCLB guidelines being implemented in your School District?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

3. Your decisions to promote or retain a low achieving student is respected by the administration since the inception of the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

## Appendix B

Appendix B

Survey

Thesis Project  
Rowan University  
April M. Maska  
January 2005

"What effect might the No Child Left Behind Act have on Administrators and Teachers' decision to promote or retain the low achieving student in the Elementary Grades?"

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was signed into law on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This act contains President Bush's four basic education reform principles. These principles are:

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. Increased flexibility and local control
3. Expanded options for parents
4. Emphasis on proven teaching methods.

Reflecting on your knowledge of the NCLB Act, please answer the following questions. Circle the answer that most describes your opinion using the scoring rubrics below. Feel free to include comments to any of the questions.

The scoring will be as follows:

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

1. You are well versed in the basic principles of the NCLB Act.

5    4    3    2    1

Comments:

2. Your School District has made positive changes in its policies and programs as a result of NCLB.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

3. Has your curriculum been updated in your School District because of NCLB?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

4. Have your teaching methods come under scrutiny because of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

5. When assessing the low achieving student, are you concerned that the achievement of that student is a reflection of your teaching methods since the inception of NCLB?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

6. You have felt the need to adjust your teaching beliefs when it comes to educational decisions on the low achieving student because of the implementation of NCLB.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:



7. Are you feeling pressured to compromise your educational beliefs when deciding to promote or retain your low achieving student because of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

8. Do you perceive that schools are being punished by being listed on the early warning or needs improvement lists when standardized test scores do not reflect the 95% student success as outlined in the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

9. Do you believe that your School District is receiving the funding it needs by the Federal Government to help you meet the needs of your low achieving student under the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

10. Have you made any significant changes in your educational methods to help your low achieving student because of the implementation of the NCLB Act?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

11. Has the NCLB Act made you find different approaches to help the low achieving student meet success in your classroom?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

12. Many studies show that retention is not the answer to helping the low achieving student however, are you more compelled to retain a student as opposed to promoting a student because of the fear of not showing adequate progress in your classroom with the NCLB guidelines being implemented in your School District?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

13. Your decisions to promote or retain a low achieving student is respected by the Administration since the inception of the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

14. A highly qualified teacher under the NCLB Act must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure and prove that they know the subject they teach. NCLB requires states to adopt goals and plans to ensure all teachers are highly qualified, publicly report plans and progress in meeting teacher quality goals and measure the extent to which all students have highly qualified teachers. States are further allowed to develop an additional way for current teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency and meet highly qualified teacher requirements by showing proof that consists of a combination of teaching experience, professional development and knowledge of the subject garnered over time in the profession. Knowing that 96% of Elementary School Teachers in New Jersey meet the federal guidelines as a highly qualified teacher under the NCLB Act, do you agree that these guidelines are sufficient in proving that you are a highly qualified teacher?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

15. Your educational credentials will come into question if your low achieving student does not meet enough success under the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

16. Your peers are responding to the needs of the low achieving students in compliance with the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

17. Adjustments are needed to be made in the teaching methods of this district to meet the needs of the low achieving student because of the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

18. Has the NCLB Act had any effect on your teaching methods in the classroom regarding the low achieving student?

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

19. The requirements of the NCLB Act are realistic and attainable for all students regardless of their academic abilities.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

20. It is conceivable that all students will achieve 100% proficiency by 2014 as outlined in the NCLB Act.

5      4      3      2      1

Comments: