**Urban Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation
of the Virginia *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards
and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers***

A Dissertation

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by
Bernadette Y. Smith
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Approved March 14, 2016

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my family. Thank you for the love, support, and encouragement that I received from each of you. I want to express my extreme gratitude and appreciation to David. Thank you for being the "drill sergeant" that I needed to remain focused and on task. A day would not go by without you inquiring about my progress. As I am writing now, I can hear you say, "Push harder, push harder," and I can hear you telling me to strive to complete my journey in a timely manner. Again, thank you for your love and support even though I might have caused some frustrations at times.

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Lastly, words cannot truly express what your love, support and encouragement has meant to me. Again, thank you!!!

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A special thank you to Dr. Jessica Hench whose assistance was instrumental to me as I completed my last two chapters. Again, thank you for all of your help and encouragement.

My dissertation committee consisted of Drs. James Stronge (chair), Michael DiPaola, and Megan Tschannen-Moran. Your assistance, guidance, and support were instrumental as I progressed on my journey to obtain a doctoral degree.

Lastly, the knowledge that I have gained over the course of my journey at William and Mary College will play an integral role in my future plans both professionally and personally.

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**Urban Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation
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Abstract

An emphasis has been placed on teacher evaluation to improve student achievement; therefore, states such as Virginia have had to revise their teacher evaluation systems. The most recent revisions in Virginia were implemented in 2012. A major component of the revision was the inclusion of student progress in teacher evaluation.

Since the inclusion of student progress into teacher evaluation, teachers, and administrators have had to make adjustments in their practices and procedures related to teacher evaluation. Consequently, the purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of a sample of teachers regarding the implementation of the revised performance standards and evaluation criteria in 2012. The perceptions of a sample of secondary teachers in a small urban district were examined to identify factors that might influence their perceptions of the performance standards and related topics. The literature review outlined transformations that have occurred in education and their impact on teacher evaluation. Participants were comprised of 12 teachers who were interviewed using a semistructured format as the primary data source. Another source of data was the reviewing of documents. The findings also indicated that teachers possessed primarily positive perceptions of the performance standards in their current teacher evaluation system. Recommendations included on-going professional development (e.g., expanding grade levels for teachers), interviewing administrators, and determining their perceptions of the performance standards.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education has undergone numerous transformational—or intended

transformational—reform efforts over the last 30 years. One catalyst for these efforts was

triggered by the actions of Secretary of Education Terrell Bell during President Reagan's

administration in the early 1980s. Secretary Bell inaugurated the work of the National

Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) to address the quality of the Nation's

schools (Gardner, 1983). In *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*,

Gardner (1983) identified problems in and solutions for the Nation's educational system.

Gardner's research served as a catalyst for educational reform on the local, state, and

federal levels.

As educational reform efforts moved into the 1990s and 2000s, stakeholders'

(e.g., teachers, administrators, and policymakers) beliefs shifted, regarding the measures

needed to assist the Nation's schools and students. Consequently, policies were changed.

Therefore, school administrators began to examine teacher evaluation as an effective

means to improve student outcomes. The ensuing interest, policy, and practice related to

teacher performance evaluation have created arduous and problematic processes in which

"school districts across the country have struggled to identify and to implement sound

evaluation systems" (Papay, 2012, p. 123).

In response to this focus on teacher evaluation the Virginia Department of

Education [VDOE] (2011) endorsed the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards*

and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers (*Guidelines for Teachers*; VDOE, 2012) effective

July 2012. The *Guidelines for Teachers* is comprised of seven performance standards by

which all teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia are measured. One standard in the

Guidelines for Teachers is student academic progress; this standard makes up 40% of a teacher's evaluation and performance rating. Student academic progress is determined by student growth data from the VDOE (2011) and by multiple measures of student learning and achievement. The remaining six standards of teacher practice in the *Guidelines for Teachers* are professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, and professionalism; each of these six standards account for 10% of the evaluation and performance rating of a teacher (VDOE, 2011).

Background

In 2009, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reported that 35 states and the District of Columbia did not require teacher evaluations to include a component related to student learning NCTQ (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). NCTQ (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013) described the major transformations that teacher evaluation had undergone in the subsequent 5 years. The most significant transformation was the increase in the number of states that have created or mandated that teacher evaluation systems include multiple measures to identify teacher effectiveness and to use data to provide feedback to teachers for improvement. The NCTQ (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013) indicated that 22 states had revised their teacher evaluation systems to include evidence of student learning and its connection to teacher effectiveness. This transformation has been fueled by educational initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education [US DOE], 2010). As states have competed for Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) funds and NCLB (2001) waivers, educational reform efforts

have placed a greater emphasis on teacher effectiveness in teacher evaluation to improve instruction (Lavigne, 2014; Porter-Magee, 2004).

The Teaching Commission (2004) reported in *Teaching at Risk* that teacher quality is a critical factor that influences the Nation's global competitiveness, security, and future. Teaching and learning are at the core of educational practice. Teacher quality is the most important school factor affecting student achievement (Hattie, 2009; Looney, 2011; Stronge, 2006). Aaronson, Barrow, and Sander (2007) found that high quality teachers have a powerful and lasting impact on student achievement. According to Ovando (2001), teacher evaluation systems have changed because of increased accountability of teacher quality; however, student performance data obtained from standardized tests ultimately determines the effectiveness of teachers in many teacher evaluation systems.

The concept and practice of using student performance to judge a teacher's effectiveness increased after the Obama Administration implemented Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010), an initiative that, in part, required states to improve teacher evaluation (Garrett, 2011). To address the heightened emphasis on teacher effectiveness and evaluation in federal guidelines and mandates, the Commonwealth of Virginia revised its teacher evaluation system to improve the practice and performance of teachers. As a part of this revision process, the Code of Virginia (2012a, §22.1–253.13:5) mandated that teacher evaluation be consistent with the objectives outlined in *Guidelines for Teachers* VDOE, 2011). Another major revision to Virginia's teacher performance evaluation system is the inclusion of student academic progress in determining teacher effectiveness. The Commonwealth of Virginia regards teacher evaluation as a state priority, as evidenced in state statute, Virginia School Board policy, and VDOE (2011) guidance.

Problem Statement

Stronge (2006) suggested that teacher buy-in to a new evaluation system would be critical for success. Teachers develop their own systems of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in relation to their jobs (van den Berg, Vandenberghe, & Sleegers, 1999). Consequently, the perceptions of teachers affect the success or failure of large-scale reforms, such as a teacher evaluation system, for it is a decisive part of the teacher's job. Peterson and Peterson (2006) indicated that, if teachers are involved in the evaluation process, they will gain respect for the process of teacher evaluation, nurture the quality of the evaluation, and more readily use the feedback received. An examination of teacher perceptions of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) is essential to the evaluation system's success.

Since the 2012 implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011), teacher evaluation has acquired a new meaning and application in Coastal City Public Schools (CCPS), a pseudonym for the school district included in this study. In this study, I will identify factors that influence middle and high school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) in CCPS.

Context

City Description

Coastal City is located in an urban area surrounded by three larger cities to the south, west, and east. The city has a land area of approximately 30 square miles and is home to a natural harbor because of its proximity to two major rivers. In addition, Coastal City's position on the Intracoastal Waterway, which runs from Boston to Florida, has had a dominant role in the history and economy of the city. The unique location of Coastal City provides access to two major railroads and shipping channels, which allows the

city's ports to support national and international commerce. The military has a strong presence in Coastal City because of its proximity to various modes of transportation.

Employers in Coastal City include a major shipyard, city government, city schools, and the military, with various installations. The economy has taken a downturn during the past several years; therefore, residents of Coastal City have endured many economic challenges. The U.S. Census Bureau (2012a, 2012b) indicated that the median household income was $46,269.00 with 17.5% of the population living below the poverty line. A unique demographic of the city is that less than 20% of Coastal City residents possess a bachelor's degree or higher, but approximately 82% of the city's residents possess a high school diploma.

According to the city's most recent demographic data, the population of Coastal City is slightly higher than 96,000 in accordance with U.S. Census Bureau demographic data for Coastal City (2012a, 2012b). The racial demographics of Coastal City residents are 53.6% Black, 41.9% White, and 4% Hispanic; the remaining residents are Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and those who identified as being two or more races. Coastal City is governed by the City Council, which creates the policies for the administration of the city. As required by the city's charter, the form of government used is the council–manager model.

Schools

CCPS is made up of three high schools, three middle schools, 13 elementary schools, four pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) centers, one alternative school, one adult learning center, and one Career and Technical Education Center. A teaching staff of 1,063, along with 1,003 support services personnel provides instructional services for CCPS students.

CCPS is located in the Commonwealth of Virginia where school accountability is determined according to student achievement on Standards of Learning (SOL; VDOE, 2000) assessments in the areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Therefore, the data obtained from student achievement on the SOL assessments determine the accreditation status of each school. At this time, CCPS has six schools that are fully accredited, 12 schools that are accredited with warning, and one school that is conditionally accredited. To be fully accredited in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a school must meet the following criteria according to student achievement: (a) a pass rate of 75% or higher in English and (b) a pass rate of 70% or higher in the areas of mathematics, science, and history. In addition, high schools must also have a graduation and completion index of 85% or higher for a school to be fully accredited. If schools fail to meet the aforementioned criteria, they are accredited with warning. When schools do not meet the requirements for full accreditation, the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE, 2012) mandated that they undergo academic reviews and that they create and implement improvement plans. According to the guidelines of the VBOE, a school cannot be rated as accredited with warning for more than 3 consecutive years. If a school has not met requirements for 4 consecutive years, it must be granted permission by the VBOE to be conditionally accredited. At this time, one school in CCPS has been conditionally accredited by the VBOE. To receive this status, the school district has received permission from the VBOE to reconstitute as an alternative to a memorandum of understanding.

The district's student enrollment is approximately 15,000 students. The student population is 70% Black, and 24.5% White, the remainder of the student population is

Hispanic, Asian, and those who identified as two or more races. Approximately 50% of the student population receives free or reduced-priced lunch.

Division Leadership

Since June 2014, the division leadership has undergone numerous changes because a long-term superintendent, interim superintendent, and other members of the superintendent's cabinet of CCPS have retired. The newly appointed superintendent started in mid-February 2015. Consequently, it is probable that the findings of this study might have been affected by the changing leadership of the division and new expectations and responsibilities set forth by the newly appointed superintendent and cabinet.

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Significance of the Study

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The purpose of this study is to investigate urban secondary teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the 2012 Virginia teacher evaluation system. The perceptions of secondary teachers in an urban school district in Virginia of the seven performance standards—(a) professional knowledge, (b) instructional planning, (c) instructional delivery, (d) assessment of and for student learning, (e) learning environment, (f) professionalism, and (g) student academic progress--will be analyzed. Years of teaching experience, years of experience in Virginia, gender, ethnicity, subject taught, grade level, and highest level of teacher education will be examined to determine their relationship to the teachers' perceptions of the teacher evaluation system prescribed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Throughout the process of statewide implementation of this evaluation system, a number of issues have emerged. One such issue, alarming for many teachers, is that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is determined on one standard in the evaluation, student academic progress. The level of apprehension surrounding this standard appears elevated

for teachers who have inclusion classes, work with at-risk students, and teach in urban areas that might lack sufficient instructional resources. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the student academic progress component of teacher evaluation is expressed as a percentage which indicates the amount of progress that a student has made when compared with students of similar achievement on previously given assessments. The percentage accompanies the student's scale score on the SOL assessments. A higher percentage indicates that effective instruction has taken place (VDOE, 2011). In selected grades, data for the student academic progress component in the evaluation system are collected for reading and math (Grades 4–8), and Algebra I (Grade 9). In other grades and subjects, alternative sources are used to document student academic progress. In all instances, the VDOE (2011) expects multiple measures be used in any determination of student academic progress.

As reform efforts have shifted to using teacher evaluation as a means to improve instruction, administrator and teacher stakeholders have had to alter their methods to meet local, state, and national standards. Consequently, teacher evaluation as it was known in the past is becoming obsolete.

In this study, I investigated factors that might influence the perceptions of teachers during the implementation of the performance standards. By analyzing the data gathered, I examined the relationships that might exist between the factors that influence teachers' perceptions regarding teacher evaluation. By examining the various relationships that might exist, I was able to identify factors that might have influenced teacher perception in a positive or negative manner.

Research Questions

1. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six process- based performance standards and related performance indicators?

2. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is determined by student academic progress as outlined in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011)?

3. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by the teachers' status as effective versus less effective teachers?

4. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether the teachers work in fully accredited versus not fully accredited schools?

5. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether the teachers teach in tested versus nontested grades and subjects?

Definition of Key Terms

Attributes: These characteristics of teachers include five factors: (a) experienced or inexperienced, (b) tested or nontested, (c) middle school or high school, (d) formally evaluated or not formally evaluated, and (e) level of education (bachelor, master, or doctor).

Effective teachers: Teachers who have received an overall rating on their summative evaluation as either exemplary or proficient are considered effective teachers.

Formative evaluation: This type of evaluation is an on-going process that occurs during the design, development, and implementation stage. Frequently, it is considered to be oriented toward improvement and less toward outcomes or accountability purposes.

Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, these guidelines (VDOE, 2011) are the foundation for teacher evaluation. They are comprised of seven teacher performance standards to assess the performance and instructional practice of teachers.

Implementation: The process of executing the seven research performance standards of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) is called implementation. They were approved for school districts in Virginia to use as a part of their teacher evaluation system.

Less effective teachers: Teachers who have received an overall rating on their summative evaluation as either needs improvement or unacceptable are considered less effective teachers.

Secondary schools: These schools enroll students in Grades 7–12 in the CCPS.

Student growth component: This percentage indicates the amount of progress that a student has made when compared to students with similar achievement across the state. It might also include student growth as measured by the use of the Student Achievement Goals (VDOE, 2011).

Student performance data: These data are obtained from the SOL assessments and other forms of assessments that might include student surveys, portfolios, and document logs.

Summative evaluation: This type of evaluation typically encompasses formative evaluation as an interim step and is used for accountability purposes to determine

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whether standards are being met. Frequently, it is considered to be cumulative or postevaluative.

Urban: An area is characterized by a higher population density.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Hattie (2009) provided a synthesis of meta-analyses pertaining to student achievement; Hattie found that a variety of factors influence achievement. When summarizing studies pertaining to contributions from a variety of teaching approaches, Hattie referenced studies conducted by Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) that examined the impact of formative evaluation on student achievement. An analysis of the data suggested that providing formative evaluation had a positive impact on student achievement, with a mean effect of $d = .90$. Consequently, one might surmise that formative applications of teacher evaluation might have a powerful and dynamic effect on teacher effectiveness. Therefore, in this review of literature, I will address teacher performance evaluation from multiple perspectives, beginning with an overview of the history of teacher evaluation in America.

Historical Perspective of Teacher Evaluation

Prior to the 20th century, the role of teacher evaluation was minimal. Teachers were given advice in daily newspapers, pamphlets, and eventually novels on how to be effective (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). The evolution of teacher evaluation began in the 20th century from an informal process focused on physical attributes and personal qualities to a formal process according to specific criteria. This evolution was influenced in part by industry practices. Noteworthy influences of industry's impact on education were described in the writings of Bobbitt (1912), who described the beneficial aspects of industry's management practices in education. Bobbitt thought that schools would generate foreseeable results and demonstrate steady growth and improvement if their administrators used management practices. Bobbitt explained that this process would

increase teacher efficiency because the teachers would be assessed. Bobbitt further maintained that this process would help to determine whether or not students were obtaining their learning goals.

Another significant stage in the evolution of teacher evaluation occurred with the discovery of the Hawthorne effect (Adair, 1984; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). The Hawthorne effect was thought to occur when a supervisor would provide more personal attention to his or her workers such that productivity would increase (Adair, 1984). Additionally, Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) described the reactions of study participants in the experiments. Roethlisberger and Dickson's findings on the Hawthorne effect assisted people in industry and education to understand that many variables could influence the productivity of workers. Consequently, a notable outcome of Roethlisberger and Dickson's studies on the Hawthorne effect on education was that they helped to spur a shift in teacher evaluation from a management approach to a human relations approach, which stressed interpersonal relationships. Roethlisberger and Dickson's findings on the Hawthorne effect drastically influenced research pertaining to teacher evaluation for approximately the next 30 years. The literature of this time was dominated by researchers' opinions, but research studies with empirical data were few. In the 1960s, the beliefs of educational researchers shifted toward the purpose and components of teacher evaluation; therefore, teacher performance became the focal point of the evaluation process.

Throughout the next 2 decades, the importance of teacher evaluation grew as a result of increased public demand for accountability in education. At this time, greater emphasis was placed on the quality of classroom teaching and student learning, instead of program management or a teachers' curriculum. The National Education Association

(NEA; 1962) affirmed this shift its survey, *Evaluation of the Classroom Teachers*. The results of the survey indicated that approximately half of the schools in the Nation used a formal system for teacher evaluation, and that the principal was responsible for the teacher evaluation process. In the late sixties, research by Stemnock (1969) verified the findings of the NEA (1962) survey, and showed that some type of formal teacher evaluation was being used in approximately 90% of schools. Stemnock (1969) illustrated that using a formal teacher evaluation was an accepted practice in the majority of schools (see also Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). Without a doubt, the research of the 1960s and 1970s reflected dramatic shifts in the transformations that were then taking place in teacher evaluation.

In the early 1980s, Secretary of Education Terrell Bell appointed the NCEE to identify factors attributing to the Nation's failing schools and students. Gardner (1983) conducted the study, *A Nation at Risk*, which revealed the impact of teacher performance on student learning. Subsequently, Gardner's report has served as the catalyst for reform efforts on the local, state, and national levels. Teacher evaluation literature during this time was highly influenced by the increase in school and teacher accountability. This trend is evident in McLean and Sanders' (1984) research, for which they used statistics to determine the correlation that existed between schools, teachers, and student gains, and performance measures over specific periods using norm-referenced achievement tests. McLean and Sanders' research was significant in the development of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Aaronson et al., 2007; Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). The major goal of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (Sanders & Horn, 1998) was to provide impartial measures of student academic progress to improve educational policies and programs of Tennessee

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school districts, schools, and teachers, which they hoped would result in increased student achievement (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). Webster and Mendro (1997), as cited in (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014) affirmed the correlation that existed between measures of student learning and evaluating teacher effectiveness. As the movement for increased accountability continued, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) created the *Personnel Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Systems for Evaluating Educators* to guide and assess personnel evaluations. The purpose of the standards was to improve the systems and practices pertaining to evaluation.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the research on teacher evaluation continued to reflect the increase in accountability. Noteworthy and influential educational initiatives were NCLB (2001) and Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010). President George W. Bush established that education would be a priority during his administration. Subsequently, the United States Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 as NCLB (2001), whose influence on education has been undeniable. President Bush held an underlying belief that all students had the right to the best education possible, which included being proficient in basic reading and mathematical skills. With the assistance of Secretary of Education Rod Paige, Congress enacted legislation that currently affects education. ESEA (1965, 2001) and NCLB (2001) ensure an increase in accountability for students, teachers, and schools by using standards. Thus, NCLB spurred today's standards movement.

Since the Reagan Administration, the U.S. Federal Government has had a significant impact on the reforms that have taken place in education. In his first term, President Barack Obama, with the assistance of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, continued the wave of reform efforts that had been initiated by the federal government

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with Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010). The purpose of Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) was to accelerate systemic reform and incorporate innovative approaches to teaching and learning in American schools. Under this program, states were to apply for competitive grants to receive funds as a component of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (Superfine, Gottlieb, & Smylie, 2012). The influence of Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) on teacher evaluation has centered on the correlation between teacher performance, student performance, and teacher quality to improve education for students.

As discussed above, evaluating teachers in the United States is not a new task. In fact, teacher evaluation has been through many trends and cycles as the role of teacher has changed. Values and beliefs about effective teaching and teacher responsibilities have changed according to the perceptions of how student's best learn, with an emphasis on societal demographics and teaching contexts (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). The increased interest in teacher evaluation comes from the need for accountability in schools. The reform efforts that have taken place in education are a direct result of influential initiatives that have been enacted. These initiatives reflect the sentiment of policy makers, administrators, and the public that drastic measures are needed to improve education. Table 1 shows the major movements influencing teacher evaluation, and the impact of each movement.

Table 1

Major Movements Influencing Teacher Evaluation

Movement	Description of movement	Impact of movement
Bobbitt's (1912) research	The influence of industry began to infiltrate the practices and procedures in the field of education.	Industry influenced education; therefore, teacher evaluation transitioned from an informal process to a formal process based

Movement	Description of movement	Impact of movement
		on specific criteria instead of physical attributes and personal qualities.
Studies on the Hawthorne effect (1924–1932) Adair, 1984; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939	The studies on the Hawthorne effect were experiments conducted to determine the factors that influenced worker productivity.	A major finding of the studies were that, when a supervisor provided more personal attention to his or her workers, an increase would occur in productivity. Therefore, the emphasis of teacher evaluation shifted from a management approach to a human relations approach.
NEA (1962) survey, *Evaluation of the Classroom Teachers*	From the 1960s–1970s, the public demand for more accountability in education caused teacher evaluation to be reexamined.	As the public demand for more accountability in education increased, teacher evaluation became a tool that was used to emphasize teaching and student learning.
Gardner (1983) *A Nation At Risk*	The National Commission on Excellence in Education released a report describing the impact of teacher performance and student learning.	The findings of the report served as a catalyst for reform efforts to occur on the national, state, and local levels which emphasized school and teacher accountability.
Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (Sanders & Horn, 1998)	Created by William Sanders (2000) to illustrate the correlation that exists between schools and student gains by comparing performance measures over specific periods of time using norm-referenced test.	It has become common practice to use student academic progress to improve educational policies and programs which result in increased student achievement.
Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988)	A varied group of professionals convened to create the *Personnel Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Systems for Evaluating Educators*.	The standards created have helped to improve the systems and practices pertaining to teacher evaluation.
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001)	President George W. Bush believed that all students were entitled to a quality public	The NCLB (2001) established an increase in accountability for students, teachers, and schools

Movement	Description of movement	Impact of movement
	education. Congress enacted the NCLB (2001) legislation.	through standards.
Race to the Top (US DOE, 2009)	President Barack Obama accelerated reform efforts in education such that states had to apply for grants to receive funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA; 2009).	To receive the funds, states had to revamp their systems of teacher evaluation. Greater emphasis was placed on the correlation between teacher performance, student performance, and teacher quality.

Note. NEA = National Education Association; US DOE = U.S. Department of Education.

Influence of the Federal Government on Teacher Evaluation

In the United States, education is typically a function of the state, and varies from state to state (Fuhrman, Goertz, & Weinbaum, 2007). Additionally, states tend to give individual localities control over education. Thus, to initiate change, the federal government has had to facilitate the reform movement in efforts to improve education throughout the United States. Since the 1950s, the influence of the federal government has significantly affected the roles and responsibilities of states regarding education (Superfine et al., 2012). This shift is a consequence of the landmark decision by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In the years following this decision, federal laws focused on funding and Civil Rights issues. Major acts of Congress that have influenced education include the National Defense Act of 1958 that advocated innovation in education through the sciences and foreign languages, and the ESEA (1965) which provided funding for economically disadvantaged students through programs such as Title I (Superfine et al., 2012). Superfine et al. (2012) contended that the ESEA (1965) has served as the "flagship federal education law" (p. 61).

As the reform movement in the United States began to emphasize greater accountability through standards, the influence of the federal government has helped to

transform education at the federal, state, and local levels. The dramatic shift started during the Reagan Administration in the 1980s and has continued into the 2000s during the Bush and Obama Administrations. Each administration has enacted a major initiative that has transformed education throughout the United States.

   A Nation at Risk. Although other initiatives have transformed education in the United States, education as we know it has been by dramatically influenced by Gardner's (1983) *A Nation At Risk*, NCLB (2001) and Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010). These initiatives have caused each state and locality in the Nation to alter how it handles education. In 1981, President Reagan gave Secretary of Education Terrell Bell the task of employing the NCEE to explore the increasing level of mediocrity in American schools (Gardner, 1983). The 18 members of the NCEE examined teacher quality and learning at the elementary and secondary levels and submitted its findings 2 years later in Gardner's (1983) monumental report, *A Nation At Risk*. This report has served as the impetus for change as policy recommendations for reform. One of the main reform efforts that emerged from the findings was using standards-based testing to assess student achievement as a means of measuring teacher quality. This initiative was the spark that ignited a Nation's concern for the importance of education to secure the future our country and its global competitiveness.

No Child Left Behind Act

   The ESEA (1965) was reauthorized in 2001, and President Bush signed it into law January 2002. When the Act was reauthorized, it became more commonly known as NCLB (2001). NCLB supports standards-based education by creating high standards and establishing measurable goals to increase student achievement. Key components of NCLB require states to (a) create assessments in basic skills on the state level,

(b) administer assessments to all students to receive federal funds, (c) mandate testing in all states in the areas of reading and mathematics in Grades 3–8 and once in high school, and (d) meet or exceed state standards in reading and math by 2014 (NCLB, 2001). As part of this process, states must demonstrate that their content standards and assessments are aligned to the criteria established by NCLB (2001; Porter, Polikoff, Zeidner, & Smithson, 2008). Additionally, NCLB (2001) required that states demonstrate adequate yearly progress if they are to continue receiving federal funds. If test scores are below acceptable measures, steps must be taken to assist the school and district in need of assistance.

At the core of NCLB (2001) is its emphasis on closing the achievement gap by providing all children with the opportunity to receive a quality education. To ensure that all students receive a quality education, NCLB is comprised of components (e.g., accountability, flexibility, research-based education, and school choice) to safeguard the interest of students. NCLB accountability measures mandated that states create assessments of basic skills to administer to all students' and to develop procedures to assist schools in need of improvement. NCLB also provided flexibility, which enabled states to create and implement their own standards. Additionally, states and school districts were afforded the opportunity to allocate federal funds to improve student achievement according to need. Research-based education emphasizes the best practices that have proven to be effective through scientific research. A school choice component allows parents the opportunity for their child to attend another school if their home school was underperforming. If parents chose to allow their child to continue attending the low-performing school, they are entitled to receive tutoring services through the school district or from a private agency (Grissom, Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Sclafani, 2003).

NCLB (2001) has had a tremendous impact on teacher evaluation. One of the basic tenets of NCLB is to increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals. To ensure accountability, NCLB called for states and divisions to develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation systems. In addition, NCLB established guidelines for teacher evaluation systems so that evaluations would be determined by multiple measures, acknowledge success, provide feedback, and inform staff development and staffing decisions (US DOE, 2009). Part of this process was to identify effective teachers and effective principals on the premise of student growth and other factors. Furthermore, evaluation systems were to facilitate professional development that would help teachers and principals improve student learning.

Race to the Top

In 2009, President Obama challenged the Nation to provide a high quality education for every child in the Nation. Stakeholders (e.g., governors, school boards, principals, teachers, businesses, nonprofits, parents, and students) were challenged to meet higher standards and to be assessed on more rigorous standards. Additionally, the challenge included placing exceptional teachers in each and every classroom. This challenge was part of the Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) grant funding, in which states could compete to receive a portion of the monumental $4.35 billion investment in education. This funding was a part of ARRA (2009) enacted by Congress. To receive funding from the Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010), states had to create rigorous plans that included (a) preparing students for success in college and the workplace; (b) building data systems that measure student growth and inform instruction; and
(c) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals (US DOE, 2012). Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) has been instrumental in recent reform

efforts pertaining to teacher evaluation, including (a) using teacher evaluation to provide professional development for teachers and principals, (b) informing the level of compensation received by highly effective teachers and principals, and (c) granting tenure based on rigorous standards and removing ineffective teachers and principals tenured and untenured (p. 19504).

Without a doubt, current teacher evaluation practice reflects the undeniable impact of the previously discussed educational initiatives. From Gardner's (1983) *A Nation At Risk* to Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010), the noteworthy influences have been reflected in teacher evaluation, including (a) using standards-based testing to correlate the relationship that exists between student achievement and teacher quality, (b) implementing teacher evaluation systems that measure teacher effectiveness by using multiple measures, (c) identifying effective teachers by using student growth and other factors, (d) using the outcomes of teacher evaluation to provide professional development, and (e) using rigorous standards for granting tenure and removing ineffective teachers. Regardless of the initiative, teacher evaluation now reflects an increasing level of accountability. As time has progressed, educational research demonstrates the impact and influence of a multitude of measures that have been used to promote and improve student success. At this time, teacher evaluation is used not only to identify effective teachers, but also to identify effective instructional strategies and practices. Therefore, the feedback gathered from teacher evaluation provides the data to guide professional development for teachers. The emphasis of the professional development is to provide teachers with the necessary resources to improve and accelerate their instructional delivery, which might result in increased student

achievement. Currently, teacher evaluation is the instrument being used to improve student success and achievement.

Contemporary Teacher Evaluation Systems

Since the inception of formal education in the United States, the role of teacher evaluation has gradually evolved (Marzano, 2012). Thus, teacher evaluation has been influenced by a variety of factors, including the industrialization of the United States, research conducted by various educators, and reform initiatives (Strunk, Weinstein, Makkonen, & Furedi, 2012). Consequently, no definitive meaning exists for the term "evaluation," for its meaning varies according to the evaluator. However, many evaluators agree that evaluation is a systemic process that is a planned and purposeful activity of collecting data. Evaluation is an essential tool that provides insightful data into the daily practices of educators, and that is used to make decisions. The data collected is influenced by the context of culture, society, and the work environment (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006).

Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

Researchers have stated that the two main purposes of teacher evaluation are to assess how effectively teachers are doing their jobs, and to provide data to guide the professional growth that should result in increased teacher effectiveness. To improve instructional practices, teacher evaluation systems are used either as a measuring tool to assess performance, or as a professional development tool to guide staff developmental needs (Marzano, 2012; Papay, 2012).

As a measurement tool, evaluators use either a standards-based or a value-added model (Papay, 2012). In a standards-based model, evaluation is based on rigorous and data-driven classroom observations conducted by expert evaluators. Evaluators must be

well-trained, knowledgeable of teaching practices described in the standards, and possess the ability to analyze observations to determine how well teachers are meeting the standards (Sinnema & Robinson, 2007). An effective evaluator must be able to provide meaningful feedback to the teacher according to their practice. Additionally, a standards-based model typically contains rubrics that define success on the standards. A standards-based model will not be the same in every division, and must be customized to meet the specific needs of a division.

A value-added model of teacher evaluation measures the teacher's contribution in a given year by statistically determining the impact of multiple factors on an outcome measure, such as student achievement on a standardized test (Everson, Feinauer, & Sudweeks, 2013). Value-added models take in to account how the roles of student, classroom, and school characteristics influence educational outcomes (Martineau, 2010). Meanwhile, school district officials must make decisions with an understanding of how the ratings will affect teachers and alter the types of incentives received by teachers. To ensure the fidelity of the data collected from value-added models, school districts must invest in costly data collection systems that are current and accurate (Zatynski, 2012). Furthermore, it is imperative that school districts provide personnel to help teachers comprehend how to implement the data to improve their instructional practice.

As a professional development tool, teacher evaluation should be assessed on its ability to raise instructional proficiency and student learning (Muijis, 2006). A school administrator can use evaluation data as a professional development tool by identifying areas of instructional strengths and weaknesses in the school to target resources appropriately. In addition, the administrator can develop professional learning communities in which teachers will be afforded the opportunity to share their knowledge.

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Therefore, teacher evaluation as a professional development tool has the ability to increase organizational capacity. Evaluation is a means to strengthen professional development (Sanders, 2000). Evaluation that leads to professional growth requires that teachers acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses (Howard & McCloskey, 2001).

Although teacher evaluation data can be used as a tool to guide professional development, the most critical role of teacher evaluation is to provide feedback to teachers about their instructional strengths and weaknesses by emphasizing areas of improvement and continued growth. Additionally, teacher evaluation can serve as the link between teacher and school performance. If schools are to meet the challenges of high-stakes accountability, principals must incorporate teacher evaluation into the school's strategy for continuous growth and improvement.

Applications of Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation is comprised of various applications (e.g., formative evaluation, summative evaluation, and, although somewhat overlapping, performance evaluation). Formative evaluation is an on-going process that takes place during the design, development, and implementation stages to improve quality of the training or intervention (Chevalier, 2004). The purpose of formative evaluation is to create a helping process which can provide data to teachers for making decisions about how they can best improve their own teaching techniques, styles, or strategies (Gullatt & Ballard, 1998).

Summative evaluation occurs during and after training, or any other performance improvement intervention (Chevalier, 2004). Summative evaluation is a judgmental decision of the quality and worth of an individual teacher over a specific period of time (Gullatt & Ballard, 1998). Additionally, summative evaluation is used for accountability purposes, and to determine whether a teacher meets minimum standards (Daley & Orso,

1991). The primary function of this type of evaluation is associated with dismissing teachers, granting tenure, granting merit pay, and placing teachers on probation.

Performance evaluation encompasses all aspects of formative and summative evaluation. The purpose of performance evaluation is to ensure the quality of instruction and to promote professional growth. To warrant accountability and improvement, documentation for teacher evaluation includes formal and informal observations, portfolios of teacher created artifacts, and teacher reflection in the form of a self-evaluation (Danielson, 2001).

Teacher Evaluation in Virginia

The influence of the federal government on education has been undeniable. Reform efforts initiated by the federal government have compelled states to adopt new laws, policies, and procedures to adhere to mandatory guidelines established because of federal legislation.

Historical Context of Teacher Evaluation in Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia has not been exempt from the influences of federal legislation on education. As the level of accountability increased, the legislative body of the Commonwealth of Virginia had to revise the Code of Virginia (2012) to meet the requirements mandated by federal legislation or current trends or influences that affect education at a given period.

The Code of Virginia (2012) provided teacher evaluation directives according to which school districts must abide. For example, the Code of Virginia (2012b, § 22.1–295) specified regulations regarding the employment of teachers. Key aspects of the code include: (a) that school boards must establish procedures for the division superintendent and building administrators to evaluate teachers; (b) that teacher evaluations are to

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address student academic progress, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge; and (c) that teachers are to be formally evaluated every 3 years. Additionally, the Code of Virginia (2012b, §22.1–253.13:5) described the mandates regarding the quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership. Major facets that comprise the code are (a) that the evaluations of teachers, principals, and superintendents "are to be based on the performance standards outlined in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents" (Guidelines for Teachers,* VDOE, 2011, p.4); (b) evaluations are to include student academic progress as a significant component; (c) teacher evaluation must consist of observations which illustrate evidence of the alignment of instructional standards with the school's curriculum; (d) evaluations are to include a summative rating for the overall evaluation; and (e) teacher evaluations are to indicate areas of strength, weakness, and recommendations.

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the role of teacher evaluation has evolved over time. The evolution of teacher evaluation in Virginia can be traced to the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act of 1999. This legislative act has greatly influenced teacher evaluation in the past and its impact is reflected in current teacher evaluation practices and procedures used in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Key components of this legislation in line with the *Guidelines for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000) included (a) school boards are required to develop procedures for principals, and superintendents to evaluate instructional personnel; (b) evaluation criteria must include instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge; and (c) evaluation criteria must include student academic progress.

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To comply with the mandated changes, the VDOE enlisted the services of consultants from The College of William and Mary and the University of Virginia to facilitate revisions for teacher evaluation practices and procedures for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The university consultants provided background information and research based strategies related to teacher evaluation. In addition, an Advisory Committee was created to assist with the revision process. Members of the Advisory Committee included district superintendents, teachers, and principals, professors of education, community members, and members of professional organizations that possessed a degree of expertise in teacher evaluation.

The Advisory Committee met during the summer and fall of 1999 to develop evaluation criteria by collaborating with the VDOE (2000) to revise teacher evaluation practices and procedures in Virginia. The product of the Advisory Committee was called *Guidelines for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000), and these guidelines were adopted in January 2000.

The *Guidelines for Teachers, Administrators and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000) were divided into five major categories which are as follows: (a) planning and assessment, (b) instruction, (c) safety and learning environment, (d) communication and community relations, and (e) professionalism. Furthermore, each category contains evaluation criteria according to role and responsibility. Teacher evaluation criteria are described in Appendix C corresponding to each major category.

Also, each major category has indicators which describe teacher behaviors if they are adhering to the revised teacher evaluation criteria stated in the *Guidelines for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000). Sample Indicators are described in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Indicators

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
Planning and assessment	
The teacher designs coherent instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	The teacher… ▪ Bases instruction on goals that reflect high expectations, conceptual understanding of the subject, and the importance of learning. ▪ Matches content/skills taught to overall curriculum scope and sequence. ▪ Uses assessment feedback to monitor and adjust instruction. ▪ Links objectives for instruction to prior student learning. ▪ Reflects the goals and needs of the school and community in planning. ▪ Uses available resources to link student learning to the community
The teacher plans instruction to achieve desired objectives that reflect the Virginia standards of learning and division curriculum guidelines.	The teacher… ▪ Selects appropriate student objectives for lessons consistent with division guidelines and the Virginia Standards of learning ▪ Designs appropriate learning activities that are clearly connected to instructional objectives ▪ Develops lesson plans that are clear, logical, and sequential.
The teacher diagnoses individual, group, and program needs and selects appropriate materials and resources to match the abilities and needs of all students.	The teacher… ▪ Plans instruction appropriate to the developmental level and needs of students. ▪ Demonstrates knowledge of resources and

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	methods appropriate to serving students with special learning needs.
	▪ Arranges/adapts classroom setting to accommodate individual and group learning needs.
	▪ Assist students in planning, organizing, and preparing for assignments, long-range projects, and tests.
	▪ Is sensitive and responsive to the diversity of individuals and groups within the classroom.
The teacher uses a variety of assessment strategies and instruments to make both short-term and long-range instructional decisions to improve student learning.	The teacher… ▪ Monitors student understanding on an ongoing basis and adjusts teaching when necessary. ▪ Uses multiple assessment practices congruent with instructional goals both in content and process. ▪ Effectively uses both teacher-made and standardized tests as appropriate. ▪ Uses student products as a source for assessment and instructional decisions. ▪ Demonstrates competence in the use of acceptable grading/ranking/scoring practices in recording and reporting student achievement. ▪ Maintains and uses organized records of student progress for instructional decisions.
The teacher identifies and communicates specific student performance expectations and documents student learning gains using appropriate assessment instruments.	The teacher… ▪ Communicates clear expectations for learning and behavior to students and parents. ▪ Uses preassessment data in developing expectations for students and as a basis for documenting learning gains. ▪ Provides prompt and meaningful feedback to

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	students about performance and progress.
	▪ Prepares tests that reflect the academic content studied.
	▪ Provides opportunities for students to contribute to the development of criteria and standards as appropriate.
	▪ Incorporates strategies to prepare students for SOL and standardized testing.
Instruction	
The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.	The teacher…
	▪ Communicates a belief that all students can learn.
	▪ Exhibits an understanding of the facility in explaining the subject area(s) taught.
	▪ Uses appropriate literature and current resources and materials in the subject area(s).
	▪ Encourages the academic curiosity and critical thinking of students.
	▪ Modifies instruction to make topics relevant to students' lives and experiences.
	▪ Demonstrates ability to engage and maintain students' attention and to recapture or refocus it as necessary.
	▪ Provides clear and concise explanations.
	▪ Checks for understanding with questions, review activities, and various assessment strategies.
The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and is able to differentiate instruction to meet diverse student needs.	The teacher…
	▪ Selects materials and media that match learning styles of individual students.

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	▪ Provides for the instructional needs of all students, including remedial and enrichment/extension activities as necessary.
	▪ Uses flexible grouping practices to respond to the diverse learning needs of all students.
	▪ Collaborates with resource teachers in the development activities for students with special learning needs.
	▪ Encourages students to build on strengths while developing all areas of competence.
	▪ Paces instruction appropriately with adequate preview and review of instructional components.
	▪ Uses a variety of teaching strategies, including cooperative, peer, and project-based learning, audiovisual presentations, lecture, discussions and inquiry, practice and application, and the teaching of others.
	▪ Demonstrates respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences of individuals and groups within the classroom.
The teacher uses comprehensive materials, technology, and resources that promote the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.	The teacher …
	▪ Evaluates curricular materials for accuracy, currency, and student interest.
	▪ Provides students with materials and media that are appropriate and challenging for their instructional level.
	▪ Encourages and guides the development of problem-solving skills and independent thinking in students.
	▪ Uses available technological materials and resources effectively to engage students in varied learning experiences.

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	▪ Provides opportunities for guided practice and hands-on technology application.
	▪ Demonstrates competence in the Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel.
The teacher selects, evaluates, and refines a variety of teaching methods and instructional strategies for the active engagement of students and improvement of student learning.	The teacher …
	▪ Solicits comments, questions, examples, and other contributions from students throughout lessons.
	▪ Uses questioning strategies effectively.
	▪ Provides opportunities for guided and independent practice.
	▪ Responds positively to student questions and active engagement.
	▪ Implements instructional opportunities in which students are interacting with ideas, materials, teachers, and one another.
	▪ Reteaches material and accelerates instruction based on assessment to pace instruction appropriately for interest and engagement.
	▪ Implements curriculum experiences to encourage students to reflect on and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
Safety and learning environment	
The teacher actively implements a discipline policy that fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff.	The teacher…
	▪ Establishes effective classroom rules and procedures.
	▪ Communicates clear expectations about behavior to students and parents.
	▪ Implements and enforces students in developing self-discipline and conflict resolution skills.

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	▪ Recognizes and celebrates the achievements of students and staff.
	▪ Is knowledgeable of and complies with local, state, and federal safety regulations.
	▪ Manages emergency situations as they occur.
The teacher manages classroom procedures to maximize academic learning time.	The teacher…
	▪ Plans purposeful assignments for teacher assistants, substitute teachers, student teachers, and others to ensure continuous student engagement in learning.
	▪ Structures transitions in an efficient and constructive manner.
	▪ Creates and maintains a physical setting that minimizes disruption and promotes learning and safety.
	▪ Handles administrative routines quickly and efficiently.
	▪ Has all material readily available to allow for the smooth flow of instruction.
The teacher establishes and maintains rapport with students.	The teacher…
	▪ Treats students with respect.
	▪ Communicates personal enthusiasm for learning.
	▪ Models caring, fairness, humor, courtesy, respect, and active listening.
	▪ Demonstrates concern for students 'emotional and physical well-being.
	▪ Seeks and uses information about student interests and opinions.
	▪ Develops and maintains positive interactions

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	with students in all school settings.
The teacher creates a supportive learning environment for all students that encourages social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	The teacher … ▪ Encourages students to respect themselves and others. ▪ Communicates clear expectations for appropriate interactions among students. ▪ Models enthusiasm for and engagement in learning. ▪ Encourages students to take pride in good work. ▪ Enhances students' feelings of self-worth. ▪ Incorporates principles of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination into classroom management. ▪ Provides equitable opportunities for student learning. ▪ Promotes multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of diversity within the classroom.
Communications and community relations	
The teacher uses effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster positive interactions in the classroom.	▪ The teacher… ▪ Uses precise language, correct vocabulary and grammar, and acceptable forms of oral and written expression. ▪ Articulates clear learning goals and instructional procedures to students. ▪ Gives directions that are clear and reasonable and contain an appropriate level of detail. ▪ Uses a variety of media communication tools to enrich learning opportunities. ▪ Models effective communication strategies in

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	conveying ideas and information.
	■ Provides support for student expression in speaking, writing, and other media.
The teacher forges partnerships with families to promote student learning at home and in the school.	The teacher…
	■ Responds promptly to parental concerns.
	■ Demonstrates flexibility in planning meetings with parents.
	■ Promotes parental involvement in the classroom and school.
	■ Shares major instructional goals for the year with parents.
	■ Initiates communication with parents or guardians concerning student progress or problems in a timely manner.
	■ Establishes regular channels of communication between school and home.
	■ Offers strategies for parents to assist in their children's education.
The teacher works collaboratively with staff, families, and community resources to support the success of a diverse student population.	The teacher …
	■ Is sensitive to the social and cultural background of students and parents.
	■ Uses multiple modes of communication to provide information to parents.
	■ Encourages parent and community involvement in classroom activities.
	■ Collaborates with staff, families, and community members to respond to identified needs of individual students and groups of students.
	■ Promotes the value of understanding and celebrating school/community cultures.

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	▪ Supports community partnerships and uses community resources to enhance learning.
	▪ Works with community members in carrying out school and community-sponsored functions.
Professionalism	
The teacher models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.	The teacher…
	▪ Relates to colleagues, parents, and others in an ethical and professional manner.
	▪ Represents the school/program favorably in the school district/community.
	▪ Uses acceptable written and oral language.
	▪ Resolves concerns and problems in constructive manner.
	▪ Maintains confidentiality appropriate to teaching assignment.
	▪ Maintains a professional demeanor and appearance.
	▪ Works in the best interest of the students, the school, and the community.
The teacher takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning.	The teacher…
	▪ Participates in professional growth activities including conferences, workshops, coursework, and /or membership in professional organizations at the district, state, and /or national level.
	▪ Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strength and weakness related to professional skills and their effect on student learning and set goals for improvement of skills and professional performance.
	▪ Maintains a high level of personal knowledge

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	regarding new developments and techniques, including technology, in the field of professional specialization.
	■ Comprehends and applies current literature that enhances knowledge of educational issues, trends, and practices.
	■ Collaborates with colleagues to improve and enhance instructional knowledge and skills.
	■ Maintains proper licensure and certification.
The teacher works in a collegial and collaborative manner with peers, school personnel, and the community to promote and support student learning.	The teacher … ■ Demonstrates flexibility and a collaborative attitude in supporting coworkers and work team. ■ Maintains effective working relationships with other teachers. ■ Works collaboratively with other staff members to plan for individual student learning and alignment of goals and standards across classrooms and grade levels. ■ Makes a positive contribution to the overall climate of the school and the division. ■ Supports school and division-wide programs and activities. ■ Considers the interests and needs of other teachers and community stakeholders in promoting and supporting district goals and services. ■ Shares ideas and information with other teachers, school personnel, and community stakeholders.
The teacher provides service to the profession, the division, and the community.	The teacher… ■ Serves on school, division, state, and /or national committees.

Evaluation criteria	Sample indicators
	▪ Maintains an active role in professional and community organizations.
	▪ Explore, disseminates, and applies knowledge and information about new or improved methods of instruction and related issues.
	▪ Contributes to and supports the development of the profession by serving as an instructor, mentor, coach, presenter, researcher, or supervisor.
	▪ Organizes, facilitates, and presents at local, state, and/or national conferences.
	▪ Supports and participates in efforts to align school and division goals and activities with community endeavors.

Note. SOL = Standards of Learning. From Virginia Department of Education, 2000, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*, Richmond, VA: Author.

Additional components of the document *Guidelines for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000) contained recommendations for implementation of the standards which provided guidance as school districts implemented the standards. Recommendations were also provided to illustrate how student learning was integrated into teacher evaluation.

As the era of increased accountability continues, teacher evaluation has moved to the forefront as a tool used to improve the quality of instruction received by students. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the VBOE (2011) used the services of the Virginia Teacher Evaluation Work Group (VTEWG) to develop a teacher evaluation tool. Members of the VTEWG included teachers, administrators, professional organization representatives, consultants, and Department of Education personnel. The VTEWG was tasked with revising the standards for teacher evaluation in the Commonwealth of

Virginia to improve teacher evaluation procedures and practices. This group of professionals collaborated to revise the *Guidelines for Teachers*; these guidelines were approved by the VBOE in 2011 and became effective in 2012. The *Guidelines for Teachers* consist of seven research-based performance standards those school districts use when implementing an evaluation system. Additionally, the *Guidelines for Teachers* provide school districts with templates and samples of forms that may be used in evaluations. Although school districts are not required to use these, the Board of Education recommends using them to enhance local teacher evaluations.

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Code of Virginia (2012) mandated that evaluations of teachers, administrators and superintendents be based on the *Guidelines for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000). In addition, student academic progress is monitored as a part of the evaluation process. The Code of Virginia (2012b, §22.1–253.13:5) stated that teacher evaluation in Virginia is based on the seven performance standards that comprise the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011). To ensure that the standards have been employed, evidence is documented through classroom observations, and by monitoring instruction to determine its alignment with the school's curriculum. The feedback received as a part of the evaluation process identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses for teachers. By analyzing the data collected, recommendations for professional development activities are provided to address the areas in need of improvement or reinforcement. In addition, the Code of Virginia (2012, §22.1–295) required that school boards across the commonwealth create and implement procedures for superintendents and building administrators to evaluate teachers.

The VBOE (2011) and the legislators of the Commonwealth of Virginia have a vested interest in the academic progress and success of Virginia students. Their actions

reflect steps taken by other states across the Nation to help improve the quality of education. For example as of September 2013, 35 states included student achievement as a significant component of teacher evaluation (NCTQ, 2013). This trend is in response to states competing for Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) funds and waivers from NCLB (2001). Although the VDOE (2011) did not compete for Race to the Top (US DOE, 2010) funding, it has applied and received NCLB (2001) waivers from the US DOE (VDOE, 2012). To receive the waivers from NCLB (2001), the VDOE (2011) implemented educational reforms, including (a) the Virginia College and Career Readiness Initiative that focuses on establishing standards in reading and mathematics that will enable students to demonstrate mastery on more challenging standards and assessments with more rigors; (b) the Virginia Accountability system that established annual measurable objectives to increase student achievement in lower performing schools; (c) Virginia's Teacher and Principal Evaluation System that requires that school districts implement the performance and evaluation standards approved by the VBOE (2012) and (d) school report cards that display the progress of all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups with an aim toward closing proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, and graduation index (VDOE, 2012).

Purposes of Teacher Evaluation in Virginia

The purposes of teacher evaluation in Virginia are to develop strategies to improve the quality of instruction, to implement a performance evaluation system, and "to focus on the relationship between teacher performance, and student growth" (VDOE, 2011, p. 3). The actions taken by the VDOE (2011), regarding teacher evaluation, reflect a movement that has been gaining momentum. A policy shift started in the 1980s in which the focus of teacher evaluation shifted from local division policies that evaluated

teachers as employees to state-mandated, on-the-job assessments, and evaluation of teaching for licensure (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). This shift was in response to mistrust of the content and job-related validity of paper-and-pencil tests, and a lack of evidence of how such measures were linked to student outcomes (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). By judging teachers on student outcomes, teachers will be distinguished not by the highest degree they have earned or number of years of experience they have, but rather by how effective they are in the classroom (Porter-Magee, 2004).

To determine their effectiveness, administrators observe teachers informally and formally and provide feedback. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, teacher evaluation is based on the seven performance standards identified in the *Guidelines for Teachers.*

Guidelines for Teachers. The VDOE (2010) began the process of revising the *Guidelines for Teachers, Principals Superintendents* (VDOE, 2000). The VDOE (2011) adopted and revised the *Guidelines for Teachers* and the Virginia *Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* in April 2011. The guidelines and standards became effective July 1, 2012. Consequently, as required by the Code of Virginia (2012), teachers, principals, and superintendent evaluations are to be consistent with the performance standards, but the VDOE (2010) does allow local school boards to develop and implement procedures for evaluating instructional personnel according to student academic progress.

The *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) are based on seven standards, as shown in Table 3: professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, and assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, professionalism, and student academic progress. Each standard accounts for 10% of the evaluation and performance rating within the model, with the exception of student academic progress,

which accounts for 40% (VDOE, 2011). The weighted components determine the overall

rating that a teacher receives on his or her summative evaluation.

Table 3

Performance Standards

Performance standard	Description
1. Professional knowledge	The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.
2. Instructional planning	The teacher plans using the Virginia SOL, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.
3. Instructional delivery	The teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs.
4. Assessment of and for student learning	The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.
5. Learning environment	The teacher uses resources, routines, and procedures to provide a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning.
6. Professionalism	The teacher maintains a commitment to professional ethics, communicates effectively, and takes responsibility for and participates in professional growth that results in enhanced student learning.
7. Student academic progress	The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable, and appropriate student academic progress**.**

Uniform performance standards for teachers. The seven performance standards are used "to collect and present data to document the performance that is based on well-defined job expectations" (VDOE, 2011, p. 7). The performance standards provide the framework and establish expectations that result in effective instructional practices. The main goal of the uniform performance standards is to monitor, analyze, and apply the data collected to provide teachers with meaningful feedback to facilitate continued growth and development as an educator.

Documenting teacher performance. Suggested methods to document the performance of teachers according to the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) include formal observations, informal observations, student surveys, portfolios and document logs, and self-evaluation. When formal observations are conducted, emphasis is placed on the seven performance standards in the classroom, and might include reviewing teacher artifacts and student data. Informal observations provide evidence of work in both classroom and nonclassroom settings and occur more frequently to document performance. Teachers create and administer student surveys to acquire information regarding their job performance according to the students' perceptions. Survey findings are included in the teacher's portfolio as evidence related to his or her job performance. Portfolios and document logs are evidence provided by the teacher to demonstrate their performance on each of the seven standards. Lastly, self-evaluations are used to assist teachers in identifying factors pertaining to their job performance to ensure that quality instruction is being providing to his or her students.

Performance Indicators

Another aspect of the recently implemented teacher evaluation system is the performance indicators that accompany each standard. Performance indicators are observable, tangible behaviors that indicate the degree to which teachers are meeting each standard and the type of performance that will occur if a standard is being fulfilled (VDOE, 2011, p. 8). Appendix D describes the performance indicators that accompany each standard.

Performance Ratings

The ratings of teacher performance are "exemplary," which describes a teacher whose behavior surpasses the established standard; "proficient," which describes a teacher whose behavior meets the standard; "needs improvement," which indicates that a teacher is performing below the established standard; and "unacceptable," which describes a teacher whose performance does not meet the required standard. Teachers with two or more "needs improvement" ratings on two or more standards or one or more rating of "unacceptable" on the standards, or as an overall rating will be placed on a performance improvement plan. Additionally, if a teacher receives an overall "unacceptable" rating, he or she might be recommended for nonhire (VDOE, 2011). Table 4 provides the definitions of the performance ratings scale.

Table 4

Definitions of Terms Used in Rating Scale

Rating	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The teacher performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that consistently and considerably surpass the established standard. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and done in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals.	Exceptional performance: ▪ Consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on learners and the school climate ▪ Serves as a role model to others ▪ Sustains high performance over a period of time
Proficient	The teacher meets the standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals.	Effective performance: ▪ Meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria ▪ Demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills ▪ Exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on learners and the school climate
Needs improvement	The teacher often performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Ineffective performance: ▪ Requires support in meeting the standards ▪ Results in less than quality work performance ▪ Leads to areas for teacher improvement being jointly identified and planned between the teacher and evaluator

Rating	Description	Definition
Unacceptable	The teacher consistently performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Poor-quality performance: ▪ Does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria ▪ May result in the employee not being recommended for continued employment

Note. From Virginia Department of Education, 2011, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, Richmond, VA: Author.

Performance Rubric

A performance rubric is a "behavioral summary scale which describes acceptable performance levels for each of the seven performance standards" (VDOE, 2011, p. 59). The performance rubric specifies the performance level, and includes a description of each rating. The performance rubric is used in conjunction with the previously mentioned indicators to determine the level of performance for each standard. The expected level of performance for each standard is proficient, as shown in Table 5. This summary scale is used when finalizing the summative evaluation. The scale helps to determine the overall rating for a teacher on their summative evaluation. Lastly, the performance rubric provides reliability among evaluators to assist teachers with improving their teaching practices (VDOE, 2011).

Table 5

Performance Rubric for Performance Standards

Performance standard	Exemplary	Proficient and expected	Developing and needs improvement	Unacceptable
1. Professional knowledge	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge of the subject matter and continually enriches the curriculum.	The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.	The teacher inconsistently demonstrates understanding of the curriculum, content, and student development or lacks fluidity in using the knowledge in practice.	The teacher bases instruction on material that is inaccurate or out-of-date and/or inadequately addresses the developmental needs of students.
2. Instructional planning	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher actively seeks and uses alternative data and resources and consistently differentiates plans to meet the needs of all students.	The teacher plans using the Virginia standards of learning, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.	The teacher inconsistently uses the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data in planning to meet the needs of all students.	The teacher does not plan, or plans without adequately using the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data.
3. Instructional delivery	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher optimizes	The teacher effectively engages students in learning by	The teacher inconsistently uses instructional strategies that	The teacher's instruction inadequately addresses students'

Performance standard	Exemplary	Proficient and expected	Developing and needs improvement	Unacceptable
	students' opportunity to learn by engaging them in higher order thinking and/or enhanced performance skills.	using a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs.	meet individual learning needs.	learning needs.
4. Assessment of and for student learning	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher uses a variety of informal and formal assessments based on intended learning outcomes to assess student learning and teaches students how to monitor their own academic progress.	The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.	The teacher uses a limited selection of assessment strategies, inconsistently links assessment to intended learning outcomes, and/or does not use assessment to plan/modify instruction.	The teacher uses an inadequate variety of assessment sources, assesses infrequently, does not use baseline or feedback data to make instructional decisions and/or does not report on student academic progress in a timely manner.
5. Learning environment	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher creates a dynamic learning environment that maximizes learning opportunities and minimizes	The teacher uses resources, routines, and procedures to provide a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered environment that is	The teacher is inconsistent in using resources, routines, and procedures and in providing a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered	The teacher inadequately addresses student behavior, displays a harmful attitude with students, and/or ignores safety

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Performance standard	Exemplary	Proficient and expected	Developing and needs improvement	Unacceptable
	disruptions within an environment in which student's self-monitor behavior.	conducive to learning.	environment.	standards.
6. Professionalism	In addition to meeting the standard, the teacher continually engages in high level personal/professional growth and application of skills, and contributes to the development of others and the well-being of the school.	The teacher maintains a commitment to professional ethics, communicates effectively, and takes responsibility for and participates in professional growth that results in enhanced student learning.	The teacher inconsistently practices or attends professional growth opportunities with occasional application in the classroom.	The teacher demonstrates inflexibility, a reluctance and/or disregard toward school policy, and rarely takes advantage of professional growth opportunities.
7. Student academic progress	In addition to meeting the standard, the work of the teacher results in a high level of student achievement with all populations of learners.	The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable, and appropriate student academic progress.	The work of the teacher results in student academic progress that does not meet the established standard and/or is not achieved with all populations taught by the teacher.	The work of the teacher does not achieve acceptable student academic progress.

Note. From Virginia Department of Education, 2011, *Virginia Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, Richmond, VA: Author.

Performance Rubric and Summative Evaluation

      After data are collected on the seven performance standards, an evaluator is able

to make a determination regarding the overall rating of a teacher's summative evaluation.

Standards 1–6 account for 10% each, and Standard 7, student academic progress,

accounts for 40% of the evaluation. To determine the rating, an evaluator uses a four-

level rating scale to evaluate a teacher's performance on all teacher expectations for the

summative evaluation (VDOE, 2011). The final summative evaluation is determined

using the following method, "1) Apply numbers one (unacceptable) through four

(exemplary) to the rating scale, (2) Calculate the weighted contribution to achieve each

standard to the summative evaluation; (3) Add the weighted contribution to achieve the

final summative evaluation." (VDOE, 2011, p. 67). In Table 6, an example of the

weighted calculations for teacher performance is described.

Table 6

Example of Weighted Calculations for Teacher Performance Evaluation

Teacher performance standard	Performance rating	Quantified performance rating	Percentage contribution to the summative rating	Weighted contribution = (quantified performance rating * percentage contribution)
Standard 1	Proficient	3	10%	0.3
Standard 2	Proficient	3	10%	0.3
Standard 3	Proficient	3	10%	0.3
Standard 4	Proficient	3	10%	0.3
Standard 5	Proficient	3	10%	0.3

Teacher performance standard	Performance rating	Quantified performance rating	Percentage contribution to the summative rating	Weighted contribution = (quantified performance rating * percentage contribution)
Standard 6	Exemplary	4	10%	0.4
Standard 7	Proficient	3	40%	1.2

Note. Sum of weighted contributions = 3.1. From Virginia Department of Education, 2011, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, Richmond, VA: Author.

Summary of Virginia Teacher Evaluation System

Presently, the teacher evaluation process in Virginia reflects the collaborative efforts of members of the VTEWG. This varied group of educators was commissioned to facilitate the revision of procedures and practices regarding teacher evaluation in Virginia in 2010. Their efforts are documented in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011), which became effective in 2012. This document is comprised of seven research performance standards to be used by school districts in Virginia to evaluate teachers. The performance standards include professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, and assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, professionalism, and student academic progress. According the Code of Virginia (2012), each standard accounts for 10% of a teacher's evaluation with the exception of student academic progress, which accounts for 40% of the evaluation.

Teacher evaluation is emerging as a tool used to improve student academic achievement; Virginia's teacher evaluation system is in line with this movement. The Code of Virginia (2012) mandated that the evaluation of teachers, administrators, and superintendents must be based on the *Guidelines for Teachers*. The law also requires

provisions for school boards to create and implement procedures to be used by superintendents and building administrators.

Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Systems

Teacher evaluation systems vary by Nation, state, and locality. Therefore, teacher perceptions of evaluation systems might be affected by a variety of factors. The successful implementation of a new evaluation system is dependent on the buy-in of the teachers (Stronge, 2006). Teacher buy-in is evident in their knowledge of the system, skill level, and attitude as it relates to their job performance (van den Berg et al., 1999). Consequently, during an examination of teacher perception, it is critical to ascertain how teacher perception affects the recipients (teachers and students) of a recently implemented teacher evaluation system (Charalambous, Komitis, Papacharalambous, & Stefanou, 2014). When teachers are involved in the evaluation process, they have a greater appreciation of the teacher evaluation process, resulting in higher quality evaluation and the use of feedback (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Researchers must clearly understand the importance of teacher perception because teachers develop an individual meaning of the evaluation as it relates to their job (Tuytens & Devos, 2014). A teacher evaluation system has the ability to improve teacher quality (Charalambous et al., 2014). Thus, it is vital to explore teacher perception to identify any challenges that might affect a teacher's attempt to modify his or her teaching to align with given evaluation criteria.

The perceptions of teachers might be influenced by a variety of factors. According to (Darling-Hammond, Beardsley, Haertel,& Rothstein, 2012),they might be influenced by reactions from Houston teachers who participated in the Education Value-Added Assessment System made comments such as this comment:

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I do what I do every year. I teach the way I teach every year. [My] first year got me pats on the back; [my] second year got me kicked in the backside. And for year three, my scores were off the charts. I got a huge bonus, and now I am in the top quartile of all the English teachers. What did I do differently? I have no clue. I went to a transition classroom, and now there's a red flag next to my name. I guess now I'm an ineffective teacher? I keep getting letters from the district saying, 'You've been recognized as an outstanding teacher' . . . this, this, and that. But now because I teach English language learners who 'transition in,' my scores drop? And I get a red flag next to my name for not teaching them well? (Amrein-Beardsley, A., & Collins, C.,2012, as cited in Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, p. 11–22).

Thus, the process of teacher evaluation is complicated and often leaves teachers in a state of flux.

Summary

Education has entered an on-going reform movement. Depending on the cycle of reform, emphasis will be placed on student achievement, teacher quality, or teacher evaluation. Currently, teacher evaluation is on the center stage as the catalyst that can be used to improve student learning and teaching. The many facets that make up teacher evaluation are directly affected by the most important school level factor, the teacher. Although the teacher might not recognize the power that he or she possesses, a teacher has the ability to leave a lasting positive or negative impact on a child. The influence of the teacher might also have a positive or negative impact on the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system. The tone of his or her influence will be based largely on the emotion and ownership that a teacher associates with his or her job, as well as the relationship that exists with his or her administrator.

Often, the response of a teacher is a direct relation to whether the school administrator is perceived in a negative or positive manner. However, it is vital that all stakeholders remember that schools exist to teach children so that they can learn; therefore, teacher evaluation is the catalyst that can promote improved teaching and

learning. The majorities of teachers want to deliver high quality instruction, and they will take the necessary steps, along with their school administrator, to improve their art of teaching.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The success or failure of a recently implemented teacher evaluation system is dependent on whether the teacher bought in to the new system (Stronge, 2006). Currently, limited information exists regarding teacher perception of the recently implemented performance standards and teacher evaluation system in Virginia. The purpose of this study was to examine urban teacher perception of the recently implemented seven performance standards for teacher evaluation outlined in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011). In addition, I explored the impact of teacher perception on the process of teacher evaluation.

Research Questions

I examined the perception of secondary teachers in an urban school district in southeastern Virginia on the seven performance standards outlined and described in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011). I investigated teacher perception of the recently implemented performance standards and their impact on teacher evaluation. The study was based on these five research questions:

1. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six process- based performance standards and related performance indicators?

2. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is based on student academic progress as outlined in the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers*?

3. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers* as determined by the teachers' status as effective versus less effective teachers?

4. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers* as determined by whether the teachers' work in fully accredited versus not fully accredited schools?

5. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers* as determined by whether the teachers teach in tested versus nontested grades/subjects?

Methods

In this study I used a qualitative research design. Qualitative studies include four components: (a) the researcher was the key instrument in the study, (b) the researcher used multiple sources of data that included documents and interviews, (c) the setting took place in the location of the participants, and (d) the researcher focused on learning about the problem or issue from the participants (Creswell, 2009). Specifically, I used a case study method. As a type of research, a case study focuses on an individual case to provide greater understanding of an issue (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Furthermore, a case study features components of qualitative research to include in-depth data collection from multiple sources and interviews (Creswell et al., 2007; Yin, 2003). In this type of research, data are collected in the participant's setting and are analyzed to ascertain specific themes that emerge from the data. Therefore, the researcher interprets the meaning of the data in a given context. Data are then interpreted by examining the relationships among variables and by analyzing the data using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009).

In this study, the case focused on a specific group of teachers within a context, secondary teachers in CCPS. I gathered data from interviews regarding the seven performance standards outlined in the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011).

Saldana (2011) ascertained that interviewing was an effective way of documenting an individual or group's perspective. The interview participants in this study included teachers who were assigned to teach at the six secondary schools in CCPS, with two teachers who were interviewed at each of the six schools. The authors of the research literature suggested that having 10–20 participants' aids in the credibility and trustworthiness of the data (Saldana, 2011). The interview participants were selected from a purposeful sample with two criteria. The interviews occurred either in person at a secondary school site, or by telephone should the teacher be unable to meet in person. The interview was semistructured; I asked each participant questions regarding the implementation of the seven performance standards described in the Virginia *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011).

Setting

This study took place in an urban school district, CCPS, located on the Intracoastal Waterway in southeastern Virginia. This school district was made up of 13 elementary schools, three high schools, three middle schools, four pre-K centers, one alternative school, one adult learning center, and one Career and Technical Education Center. Currently, the student population of CCPS is approximately 15,000 students who are served by an instructional staff of 1,063.

Participants

The participants in this study were secondary school teachers in an urban school district in the southeastern Virginia. In CCPS, secondary teachers were assigned to teach

students enrolled in Grades 7–12. Six schools met these criteria in CCPS: three middle schools and three high schools. In secondary schools, core teachers were assigned to teach the subjects areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies (hereafter referred to as tested subjects). Other teachers were assigned to provide instruction in the areas of art, music, career and technical education, and foreign languages (hereafter referred to as nontested subjects). I sought the assistance of the six secondary school principals in identifying a purposeful sample of interview participants that were reflective of CCPS secondary teachers. Each secondary school principal was asked to identify two teachers per school. To aid in the selection process of potential interview participants, secondary school principals used three criteria: (a) teachers who have been evaluated in the last 2 years, (b) one teacher who had received high ratings and another who received low ratings on his or her last summative evaluation, and (c) one teacher who taught a tested subject and one who taught a nontested subject. Once the list was compiled, 12 interview participants were included in this study. To ensure accuracy of the information provided by the six secondary school principals, I verified the ratings of the potential interview participants in collaboration with the Human Resources Department personnel.

For participation in this study, the interview participants were categorized according to three characteristics: (a) effective versus less effective, (b) tested versus nontested, and (c) working in a school that was accredited versus not fully accredited. The 12 interview participants possessed more than one of the aforementioned characteristics. For example, characteristics of a potential interview participant included (a) tested, (b) effective, and (c) fully accredited. Characteristics of another potential interview participant might include (a) less effective, (b) nontested, and (c) not fully accredited. Once the list of potential interview participants was compiled according to

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secondary school location, I made contact with the potential interview participants by e-mail. In this e-mail, I described the purpose of my research study and described how their participation was of great value for the outcome of my study. Participation in this study was voluntary; therefore, the characteristics of the final interview participants were (a) at least one teacher of a tested and nontested subject was interviewed at each secondary school location, and (b) at least one teacher who had received a high rating and one teacher who had received a low rating on a summative evaluation at each secondary school location. A teacher who had received a high rating such as "exemplary" or "proficient" on a summative evaluation was characterized as effective, whereas a teacher who had received an overall rating of "needs improvement" or "unacceptable" was characterized as less effective.

In all, I interviewed 12 participants that reflected a sample of secondary teachers in CCPS. The interviews of the 12 participants were categorized according to six criteria: (a) six interview participants were characterized as less effective teachers, (b) six interview participants were characterized as effective, (c) four interview participants were assigned to fully accredited schools, (d) eight interview participants were assigned to schools that were not fully accredited, (e) six interview participants taught tested subjects, and (f) six interview participants taught nontested subjects. The demographic information compiled during the interview process is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Demographic Information of Interview Participants

School	Teacher	Grade level	Type of course	Rating on summative evaluation	Years of experience
AG	A	High school	Nontested	Needs improvement	5
AG	B	High school	Tested	Proficient	7
BP	C	High school	Tested	Needs improvement	8
BP	D	High school	Nontested	Proficient	2
CHT	E	High school	Tested	Proficient	16
CHT	F	High school	Nontested	Proficient	3
AC	G	Middle school	Tested	Unacceptable	16
AC	H	Middle school	Tested	Proficient	1
BC	I	Middle school	Tested	Proficient	18
BC	J	Middle school	Nontested	Needs improvement	4
CT	K	Middle school	Tested	Proficient	6
CT	L	Middle school	Nontested	Proficient	29

Note. $N = 12$. 9.58 years of average of teaching experience.

Table 8 showed the total number of secondary teachers assigned to each of the six schools and their accreditation status. Table 9 displayed characteristics possessed by the interview participants in the study.

Table 8

Coastal City Public Schools Secondary School Teachers

Secondary School	Number of teachers	Accreditation status
AC Middle School	46	Accredited with warning
BC Middle School	47	Accredited with warning
CT Middle School	61	Accredited with warning
AG High School	84	Conditionally accredited
BP High School	102	Fully accredited
CHT High School	101	Fully accredited

Note. Acronyms stand for names of secondary schools in CCPS.

Table 9

Characteristics of Interview Participants

Characteristic	Teachers in possession of characteristic
Effective	8
Less effective	4
Tested subject	7
Nontested subject	5
Accredited	4
Not fully accredited	8

Note: All principals did not adhere to the criteria that I established for being participants in this study. As a result, some participants who volunteered to participate in this study did vary from the criteria that I established. The designated criteria for the study

encompassed the following: (a) teachers who have been evaluated in the last two years, (b) one teacher who had received a high rating and one teacher who had received a low rating on his or her last summative evaluation, and (c) one teacher who has taught a tested subject and one who has taught a nontested subject. If the established criteria had been strictly adhered to by the nominating principals, the study would have included (a) six effective teachers, (b)six less effective teachers, (c) six teachers of tested subjects, and (d) six teachers of nontested subjects. Since participants did not meet all of the established criteria, participants in the study were as follows: (a) eight effective teachers, (b) four less effective teachers, (c) seven teachers of tested subjects, and (d) five teachers of nontested tested subjects.

Data Sources

The focal point of the study was to gather data from secondary school teachers regarding their perceptions of the recently implemented *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011).

Interview Questions

In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews, meaning that I established the topics of discussion prior to the interview (Driver, 1995). In qualitative studies, interviews were the primary method of data collection (Saldana, 2011). Saldana (2011) ascertained that interviews were an effective way of documenting a participant's own words; provided insight into personal perceptive, and beliefs of the participants. Therefore, to gain further insight into the perceptions of teachers, I interviewed a purposeful sample of teachers who met two criteria for interview participation. The criteria established for interview participants included: (a) teachers who had a high rating

and teachers who had a low rating on their summative evaluation, and (b) teachers who taught tested subjects (e.g., math, science, English, social studies) and those who taught nontested subjects (e.g., elective courses).

I developed interview questions that were used to gather data on the perception of select teachers in an urban school district regarding the implementation of the seven performance standards in our current teacher evaluation system. To aid in validity and credibility of the data collected, the interview questions were field-tested before interviews were conducted. According to the data collected through the field test, the interview questions were altered to address the factors that might negatively influence or skew the data collected during the course of the interviews. The questions were field-tested by four secondary teachers who were not part of this study. Only one question was altered. The alteration was to change the word "practices" to "performance" in Question 1b when participants were asked their perceptions of six specific performance standards. When the word, "practices," was a part of the question, many participants needed to have the question rephrased for clarity. Otherwise, the field-test participants indicated that the questions would be reflective of the perceptions of teachers. The interview participants in the field test were not eligible for participation in the formal data collection. This step was followed to prevent any impropriety on behalf of the researcher or participant. Once the questions were revised, the interviews were conducted with the revised questions.

Table of Specifications

Table 10 provided a table of specification of the interview questions. The table provides details regarding the match between the intended research questions and the actual interview questions asked of the participants.

Table 10

Interview Questions Table of Specification

Interview question	Interview item and question text	Research question
Demographic items	Years of teaching experience	Q4, Q5, Q6
	Middle/high school grade level	
	Tested/nontested subject	
	Rating on summative evaluation	
Question 1a Question 1b	What are your overall perceptions of the seven performance standards and indicators? What are your perceptions of the six teacher performance standards and indicators? Ask about each individual standard: 1. Professional knowledge 2. Instructional planning 3. Instructional delivery 4. Assessment of/for learning 5. Learning environment 6. Professionalism	Q1, Q3, Q4, Q5
Question 2a Question 2b	What are your thoughts about the fact that 40% of your evaluation is based on student progress? Do you think teachers should be evaluated, at least partially, based on student progress? Why or why not?	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5
Question 3a Question 3b Question 3c	What are your thoughts regarding the teacher performance standards in the teacher evaluation system? What are your thoughts regarding the evaluation criteria in the teacher evaluation	Q1, Q3, Q4, Q5

Interview question	Interview item and question text	Research question
	system?	
	What are your thoughts regarding the overall summative evaluation process in the teacher evaluation system?	

Note. Q = Question.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study came from interviews. I conducted 12 semistructured interviews on-site or by telephone. To collect the data for this study, I interviewed secondary teachers who were identified by their principals according to given criteria. The criteria used to identify participants for the study included: (a) teachers have been evaluated in the last two years, (b) teachers who had a high rating and teachers who had a low rating on their summative evaluation, and (c) teachers who taught tested subjects (e.g., math, science, English, social studies) and those who taught nontested subjects (e.g., elective courses).

Potential participants were notified via e-mail and telephone of the study. I contacted potential interview participants to schedule a day and time for the interview. Contact was made by e-mail and by telephone. Once the interview was scheduled, I reminded the participant of the day, time, and location of the scheduled interview. If a participant could not meet in person, a telephone interview took place. When contact was made, I explained the purpose and processes in which I would conduct the study. Contact information was provided to address specific concerns before participating in the study.

On the day of the interview, I met the interview participant and thanked him or her for volunteering to be a part of my research. After introductions, I presented consent

forms for participation in the study, a letter describing the purpose of my research, and my contact information if he or she had questions later about the study (see Appendix for documents).

Next, I described the purpose of my research study. During the explanation of my research study, I elaborated on six aspects: (a) the process of selecting interview participants, (b) the use of the data collected in the study, (c) the method in which the data were described, (d) that the information shared in the interview would be confidential and that it would be shared in a manner in which the participant would not identified, (e) the rights of the interview participant not to answer a question if he or she was uncomfortable, and (f) the estimated time frame for the interview.

Before conducting interviews, I asked permission to record the interviews. In addition, I took notes to ensure that the data recorded was accurate. To ensure accuracy of the data, once the interview had been transcribed, I forwarded a copy to the interview participant for clarification. If changes were needed, they were made according to the input provided by the interview participants. The data collected from the interviews was transcribed, and coded to determine the emerging themes once the interview data had been analyzed. The interviews took place at each secondary school site unless a participant requested to meet at another location. I gathered the data from the interviews with the teachers who were identified by their principal according to established criteria.

The interviews were conducted adhering to established interview protocols (Creswell, 2009 & Driver, 1995). The data gathered were based on a specific set of interview questions related to the five research questions of this study.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed to determine which factors impact teachers' perception of the recently implemented *Guidelines for Teachers*. The research questions were answered by using data gathered from the interviews conducted. Data collected were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to determine emerging themes from the responses provided by the participants. As I examined the data, I analyzed the data to determine whether a relationship existed with the factors that affect teacher perception. Table 11 showed the data sources for each research question.

Table 11

Data Sources and Data Analysis

Research question	Data sources	Data analysis
Q1. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six process-based performance standards and related performance indicators?	Interview questions Q1, Q2, Q4	Descriptive statistics
Q2. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is based on student academic progress as outlined in the Virginia Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for teachers?	Interview questions Q2, Q3	Descriptive statistics Transcribing of data Coding of data Describing emerging themes and patterns Interpreting emerging themes and patterns
Q3. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Virginia Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation	Q2, Q3, Q4, demographic data	Descriptive statistics Transcribing of data Coding of data

Research question	Data sources	Data analysis
Criteria as determined by the teachers' status as effective versus less effective?		Describing emerging themes and patterns Interpreting emerging themes and patterns
Q4. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of The Virginia Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers as determined by whether the teachers work in fully accredited versus not fully accredited schools?	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5	Descriptive statistics Transcribing of data Coding of data Describing emerging themes and patterns Interpreting emerging themes and patterns
Q5. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of The Virginia Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers as determined by whether the teachers teach in tested versus nontested grades/subjects?	Q3, Q4, Q5,	Descriptive statistics Transcribing of data Coding of data Describing emerging themes and patterns Interpreting emerging themes and patterns

Note. Q = Question.

Ethical Considerations

To protect participant rights, I sought and received permission from the William and Mary College Education Institutional Review Board. Additionally, I used pseudonyms for the name of the school district, staff, and any other identifying factors to protect the identity of persons affiliated with the division. I also sought and received

permission to use the Coastal City Public School district as my laboratory of practice from the division's director of research and the division's superintendent.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

I assumed that the interviewed teachers participated openly and fully with me. Additionally, the interviewed teachers reflected secondary teachers employed in CCPS. I assumed that most teachers possessed perceptions that encompassed only a partial understanding of the seven performance standards and indicators. In my interactions with teachers, many focused solely on one aspect of the performance standards. Their level of awareness was greater pertaining to the component of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation than it was of the other six performance standards. Their views were influenced by the fact that 40% of their evaluation was based on the inclusion of student academic progress. This aspect of teacher evaluation has caused a degree of anxiety for some teachers if students do not meet established benchmarks. Many of their thoughts are focused on the possibility of losing their jobs. Consequently, their perceptions may be influenced more by one component of the teacher evaluation system instead of all of its components.

Limitations

Participants were asked to volunteer to be a part of the study. However, some potential participants were reluctant to devote the time or effort to actively take part in the interview. When this occurred, other teachers were invited to take their place in the interview pool. Also, I considered as a limitation that some teachers were not as forthcoming in their responses with an administrator. Although I was not involved in the teacher evaluation process for any participant in this study, some teachers did not provide

detailed responses to some questions. Perhaps, the teachers were fearful of reprisals if their assigned administrator became aware of their perceptions. Additionally, I used the assistance of building principals to identify participants in this study; therefore, the principals' interaction with me was another limitation of this study. Their timeliness in responding to my e-mail request for names of potential participants in the study affected my ability to contact participants to seek their consent to be a part of my study. There might also have been a selection bias among these principals regarding the teachers whom they nominated for the study.

Delimitations

This research involved teachers from only six schools of a small, urban school district in southeastern Virginia. The *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) were a part of the evaluation process for administrators, and elementary level teachers currently in CCPS. Administrators and elementary level teachers were not included in the study; thus, their perceptions may vary from those of secondary level teachers.

Chapter 4: Results of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate urban secondary teachers'

perceptions of the revised performance standards implemented in 2012 (VDOE, 2011)

that make up the teacher evaluation system in Virginia. In this study, I focused on a

sample of secondary teachers in an urban district in southeastern Virginia to gather their

perceptions of the seven performance standards: professional knowledge, instructional

planning, and instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning

environment, professionalism, and student academic progress. In this qualitative study, I

used documents and interviews as sources of data, and used the interview participants'

assigned schools as the setting for the interviews conducted.

Interviews were conducted to examine the influence of perceptions of the seven

performance standards. Responses varied and were categorized according to

commonalities. For example, two teachers felt that the performance standards were fair

and two teachers felt that the performance standards were a good tool. The remaining

teachers had a perception that reflected their encounters or experiences with teacher

evaluation. The majority of the teachers did not possess a shared perception.

A synthesis of teacher responses and a summary that reflects the nuanced range of

perceptions of the performance standards is outlined in Table 12. The synthesis is drawn

from demographic data and the five research questions used to examine participant

perceptions of the performance standards that reflect the findings of the study.

Table 12

Summary of Themes

Research question	Emerging themes
RQ1. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six process-based performance standards and related indicators?	• Perceptions of the six performance standards included positive and negative. • Perceptions of individual performance standards encompassed professional development, accountability, and experiences related to teacher evaluation. • Teacher responses were paired with a specific indicator to indicate how the standard was being met.
RQ2. What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is determined by student academic progress as outlined in the *Guidelines for Teacher*s (VDOE, 2011)?	• Perceptions regarding the 40% inclusion of student academic progress included fair, unfair, and challenges described by teachers. • Perceptions reflected partial inclusion of student academic progress was acceptable for some participants, but not all.
RQ3.What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by the teachers' status as effective versus less effective teachers?	• Eight teachers were identified as effective. Their perceptions reflected that there was a need for the performance standards. • Four teachers were identified as less effective. Their perceptions reflected that the performance standards afforded accountability and provided expectations for teachers to meet.
RQ4.What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether the teachers work in fully accredited versus nonfully accredited schools?	• Four schools were not fully accredited and two schools were fully accredited. Teacher perceptions were not influenced by the accreditation status of the school, but by their experiences with teacher evaluation.

RQ5. What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether or not the teachers teach in tested versus nontested grades/subjects?	• Seven teachers taught tested subjects. Their perceptions of the performance standards indicated that they help teachers to grow and improve professionally. • Five teachers taught nontested subjects. Their perceptions reflected that the performance standards were needed and they were a way to help teachers improve.

Note. RQ = Research Question; VDOE = Virginia Department of Education.

Demographic Information

The sample of secondary teachers who were interviewed answered four demographic questions regarding years of teaching experience, grade level of subject, tested or nontested subject, and overall rating on their last summative evaluation. The 12 interview participants were grouped according to their assigned high school or middle school. The group had an average of 9.5 years of teaching experience, ranging from one to 29 years. Seven of the 12 interview participants taught tested subjects and five taught nontested subjects. On their 2013–2014 summative evaluation, eight were rated as effective and four were rated as less effective. Effective teachers received ratings of "exemplary" or "proficient" on their last summative evaluation. Less effective teachers received a rating of "needs improvement" or "unacceptable" on their last summative evaluation.

Research Question 1: Teacher Perceptions of the Overall Set of Six Process-based Performance Standards

What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six process-based performance standards and related performance indicators?

The responses provided by the 12 interview participants reflect their perceptions of the implementation of the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011). The perceptions of

the teachers were influenced by factors such as the type of course taught, years of experience, personal encounters, and ratings on evaluations. The initial response offered by many participants alluded to the impact of one or more of the aforementioned factors. The influence of these factors, such as type of course taught, years of experience, personal encounters, and ratings on evaluations, are reflected in the perceptions of participants in this sample. As they were questioned about the six process-based performance standards, their perceptions of the standards began to emerge. As previously mentioned, teachers in this sample taught nontested subjects (e.g., Electives) and tested subjects (e.g., English, math, science, social studies). The influence of the type of subject taught was reflected in the perceptions shared by teachers regarding the six process-based performance standards. Teachers of nontested subjects do not appear to feel as compelled to encourage students to perform to a certain level of proficiency. However, teachers of tested subjects expressed concerns regarding the various factors that may impact student learning. Teachers in this sample had varying years of experience which are revealed in their responses regarding the six process-based performance standards. Years of experience ranged from one year to twenty or more years of experience. The amount of teaching experience of the participants may have had an impact on their perceptions of the six process-based performance standards. Teachers with more teaching experience have had more encounters with teacher evaluation and their knowledge base may be greater than a teacher with less experience. Additionally, their personal encounters with teacher evaluation, whether positive or negative, were expressed. In their responses, teachers shared their viewpoints as it related to their experiences with teacher evaluation. In addition, ratings on evaluations are indicative of the level of effectiveness of a teacher. The ratings on a teacher's evaluation are based on the level of proficiency exhibited by

each teacher for each of the performance standards. The ratings that teachers received on their 2013-2014 summative evaluations were used to identify teachers as effective or less effective. Regardless of level of effectiveness, teachers in this sample voiced similar perceptions.

When asked about their perceptions of the performance standards, seven of 12 teachers felt the standards were a good tool for teachers. A synthesis of the responses provided by the participants with a positive perception of the performance standards included (a) agreeing with the standards, (b) a great tool to evaluate teachers, (c) performance standards are clear and concise (d) fair, and (e) liking the standards because of the positive/constructive feedback provided. Teacher H expressed:

The standards are a good tool to help me figure out what is expected of me as an educator. It serves as a checks and balances. If there are certain areas that I need more improvement, it enables me to better myself professionally.

As stated by Teacher H, the performance standards are a beneficial tool because they provide teachers with guidelines regarding their performance. The structure of the performance standards has included components that support growth for teachers if improvement is needed. When teachers are offered and given assistance and resources as needed, they are inclined to respond in a positive manner. As a result, the teacher's level of proficiency and effectiveness increases. By increasing proficiency and effectiveness, teachers are able to provide students with quality instruction.

As previously mentioned, the revised performance standards have provided the framework for teacher evaluation in Virginia. With the established criteria, teachers are aware of what is needed to meet the standards. With this knowledge, teachers are able to make adjustments as needed to meet and or exceed the standards. As Teacher H has

indicated, the purpose of the standards is to assist teachers in refining their craft, not to punish or penalize them if improvement is needed. Teacher J expressed that the standards are fair, but teachers have not been given enough assistance to be evaluated on some of the standards

Two participants in the study perceived the standards negatively, including Teacher I, who indicated that the performance standards were unfair to teachers who taught courses that require SOL tests. Teacher I further explained that teachers have no control over the type of student they are assigned to teach. The participant suggested that the performance standards and indicators do not take into account factors such as socioeconomic status of the students, the locality in which the student resides, resources allocated by the district, and the type of school that the student attends. Similar to Teacher I, Teacher K expressed that the standards do not consider the demographics of all student types, and they are too general and should be revisited. Many of the concerns of these two teachers were focused on the inequities that may exist between geographic regions, school districts, schools, and resources. Many variables might affect the achievement level of a student; therefore, teachers have suggested that the VDOE (2011) has not considered the influence of various factors that might impede a student's progress.

Since the revised standards were implemented in 2012, teacher evaluation has acquired a new meaning for teachers. Depending on the grade level and type of course taught, teachers have expressed concerns regarding the inclusion of student progress in a teacher's evaluation. Although the VDOE (2011) has stated that student progress includes more than standardized test scores, teachers are apprehensive regarding this component of their evaluation. To alleviate the fear and level of apprehension that the teachers

expressed, the VDOE (2011) has provided school districts with a framework that is adaptable to meet the needs of their district. Additionally, schools districts have provided central office, building-based administrators, and teachers with professional development to aid with the implementation process.

According to the data collected, the teacher perceptions were influenced by three factors: (a) the use of the performance standards as a tool to assist teachers, (b) the amount of professional development provided to teachers, and (c) teaching a classes with an SOL test attached. Additionally, some teachers alluded to the influence of other factors such as support provided and types of students as factors that influence their perceptions of the performance standards. Teachers in this sample expressed that the performance standards were a tool to assist teachers because they provided the framework for teacher evaluation. They also shared that it was important that teachers were aware of the criteria regarding teacher evaluation. Teachers in this sample conveyed that it was important for them to know what they were being held accountable for regarding teacher evaluation. In their responses, teachers suggested that the performance standards helped them to become better teachers. This level of awareness has enabled teachers to take measures to ensure their professional growth. To continue their professional growth, teachers in the sample suggested that on-going professional development is needed for all teachers. The training would enable teachers to stay abreast of current trends and changing methodologies in order to meet the diverse needs of students in the 21st century.

Teaching a class with an attached SOL test caused some teachers to be apprehensive of the evaluation process. Their level of apprehension is related to the inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation. Teacher B suggested

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that this aspect of teacher evaluation may deter some teachers from teaching tested

subjects. He expressed that teachers do not want to be identified as ineffective if their

students do not meet established benchmarks. Other teachers of tested subjects voiced

that the performance standards did not take into consideration the many factors that

influence student learning. Consequently, student data collected may not be an accurate

representation of the actual student learning that occurred in a teacher's classroom.

Overall, teachers had favorable perceptions of the performance standards, but they do not

necessaryingly agree with the inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's

evaluation.

As reported, when the interview participants were asked their perceptions related

to the six overall performance standards, their responses were categorized according to

three overall themes: nine (75%) were positive, two (16.7%) were negative, and one

(8.3%) was neutral. The overall perceptions had subthemes that reflected the teacher's

personal connection to the performance standards based on their experiences, including

fair (positive), unfair (negative), and build relationships (neutral).

Research Question 1a: Teacher Perceptions of Each Individual Performance

Standard

What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six performance standards
and related performance indicators?

Teacher understanding of the individual performance standards (professional

knowledge, instructional planning, and assessment of and for student learning, learning

environment, and professionalism) might have had an impact on their perceptions of the

performance standards. Each of the previously mentioned standards account for 10% of a

teacher's evaluation. Teacher perceptions of each standard are categorized by the similarity of the responses.

Standard 1: Professional Knowledge

To demonstrate professional knowledge, teachers must possess knowledge of the content, curriculum, and needs of students to provide students with relevant learning experiences. When asked about professional knowledge, participant responses reflected a need for content knowledge, professional development, or training and accountability as related to the performance standard.

Content knowledge. When describing the need for professional knowledge, participants expressed that this standard was an important standard. Five of 12 interviewed participants indicated that knowledge of the content was a necessary component of professional knowledge. Teachers' responses suggested that it is important to possess professional knowledge in order to provide students with quality instruction. As Teacher C said, "I think it's very important for teachers to come in with the knowledge necessary to be able to spark student achievement." To engage students in learning, teachers must know how to make the subject matter relevant to students. Teachers must demonstrate how the subject matter is applied to real world applications. By doing so, students will be able to connect their current learning to prior experiences, and apply it to their future learning as well.

Professional development. Five participants expressed that professional development was needed so that teachers could possess the skills necessary to be knowledgeable in their content areas. Their perceptions included the need for on-going professional development, opportunities to grow professionally, and ways to obtain new

knowledge through such means as webinars, seminars, and professional learning

communities. As Teacher K expressed:

> I see that a lot of times we have teachers that have been in the field for a long
> time, and their professional knowledge is kind of antiquated. I do believe that
> professional learning communities should be a mandate for every teacher
> regardless of stage or content. Just as the world is evolving, our methodologies
> should be evolving as well.

To meet the needs of the 21st century learner, teachers must make adaptations to

address the ever-changing needs of students. The influence of technology and social

media have altered various aspects of our society, including schools. To stay abreast of

current pedagogical applications, teachers must adapt their methodologies to meet

students' current learning styles, which have been altered because of the influx of

technology and social media.

Accountability. Two of the 12 participants referenced the need for teacher and

administrator accountability. The participants suggested that more accountability is

needed regarding teachers receiving training to increase their professional learning. In

their responses, it was recommended that more mandated training is needed if teacher

growth was to continue. They suggested that administrators need to promote and

facilitate the implementation of Professional Learning Communities in schools. As a

result, teachers would be able to collaborate and share learning experiences which would

result in students receiving quality instruction. This stance would support the data

collected that teachers expressed a desire to participate in on-going professional

development or training to improve their knowledge base so that students would be

provided instruction that would result in increased achievement. The responses of the

teachers in this sample have suggested that teachers desire to stay abreast of current

trends in education that have an impact on their job performance. They believe in

continuing to improve and refine their craft to provide quality instruction for students. In order to ensure accountability, documentation of the on-going professional development would need to be documented in the school's professional development plan and its school improvement plan.

The participants' overall perceptions related to the standard professional knowledge were placed into three categories: five teachers (41.7%) made comments related to content knowledge, five teachers (41.7%) spoke about the need for professional development, and two teachers (16.6%) had a discussed accountability. When comparing responses, most high school teachers discussed the need for being knowledgeable of content, while middle school teachers were more likely to discuss the need for or impact of professional development. Clearly, factors such as grade level had an impact on teacher perception regarding the standard professional knowledge.

Standard 2: Instructional Planning

Teacher perceptions of the performance standard instructional planning were categorized into four themes: (a) a tool to implement instruction, (b) collaboration, (c) administrators' role, and (d) overall perception of the standard. Responses implied that instructional planning is a tool to deliver instruction which uses a variety of methodologies, and an adaptable guide to meet the needs of students by incorporating different content areas.

A tool to implement instruction. A synthesis of the responses provided by the participants suggested that lesson planning was a guide to deliver instruction to students with emphasis being placed on the need for flexibility in meeting the diverse learning needs of students. Six of the 12 participants suggested that instructional planning was as a tool to implement instruction.   As a performance standard, the core of instructional

planning is based on the Standards of Learning for the grade level/subject and the district's curriculum. By using effective instructional strategies, resources, and student data, teachers are able to create and to implement lesson plans which include methods to differentiate instruction in their classrooms. As a result of being evaluated on this process, teachers have had to devote an immense amount of time and effort when creating plans to meet the diverse needs of their students. This process is monitored by an administrator who provides teachers with feedback regarding their plans. At this time, reviewing and providing teachers feedback regarding their lesson plans is a commonly used practice to ensure accountability during the lesson planning process. When teachers use the feedback provided to make needed changes, their actions reflect that they have a responsibility to deliver quality instruction. Consequently, teachers have striven to create and to implement lesson plans in a timely manner and reflecting the diverse learning styles and needs of their students. Teacher K said:

> We don't teach to paper. We teach to students. And whereas I believe that instructional planning should be used as a guide, I don't feel that so much time should be spent on instructional planning or that the material put in instructional planning should be final. We get kind of rigid when it comes to instructional planning. And it kind of overlooks the need of the student.

To ensure student achievement, instructional planning has a pivotal role in this process. It forms the foundation for teachers to deliver instruction to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of students. When it becomes apparent that the plan did not meet the needs of students, it is altered to include the components needed to address areas of concern. This process has allowed a teacher to make the necessary adjustments to ensure student success. For that reason, instructional planning has been key to teacher and student success.

Collaboration. A synthesis of the responses provided by the participants suggested that common planning time, meeting as a team to plan, and meeting as a team to discuss student needs fosters their students' success. Three of the 12 participants responded that collaborating during instructional planning enables them to meet the diverse needs of students. Newly hired teachers must become acquainted with the curriculum, SOLs, and expectations regarding instructional planning. This process is simplified when new teachers are able to collaborate with veteran teachers to create plans, and to learn the practices and procedures associated with instructional planning. Teacher H expressed, "It has been helpful to have common planning because it gives us new ideas. As a new teacher, it has been insightful to get input from seasoned educators." Teacher H expressed the importance of experience and she has indicated that the instructional platform of a veteran teacher will contain an array of strategies and suggestions for creating lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of students. By being mentors for a newly hired teacher, veteran teachers are able to model effective strategies and procedures. This process has provided guidance that is essential to the development of a new teacher. Through collaboration, new teachers are afforded the opportunity to learn the practices and procedures related to instructional planning. When a higher level of collaboration and support existed among peers, the instructional planning process was more efficient and it allowed teachers to share ideas and resources that benefited both teacher and student as described by Teacher H.

Depending on the course and grade level, the levels of collaboration might have varied during the instructional planning process. As previously mentioned, key components of the performance standard instructional planning have included using effective instructional strategies, resources, and data to create lesson plans to meet the

diverse needs of students. By collaborating, teachers are able to discuss ways to

differentiate instruction and to identify best practices that address the varied learning

styles and needs of students.

Administrators' role. Teacher perceptions of the instructional planning

performance standard were influenced by the various aspects that are associated with

lesson planning, including collaborating with peers to create plans, using resources, and

receiving feedback from administrators. One interview participant questioned whether an

administrator who does not have content knowledge in a subject area is able to provide

meaningful feedback during the instructional planning process. Depending on an

administrator's training, the administrator might not be an expert in all content areas.

Although the administrator might not be a content expert, the administrator is able to

identify and monitor effective instruction.

Overall perception of the standard. Overall, the interview participants

expressed positive perceptions regarding the standard instructional planning. However,

two participants felt this standard had not been adequately addressed by their school

administration. Two participants felt the standard was appropriate as written. Teacher I

had reservations related to the content knowledge of administration reviewing plans

written and submitted by teachers and the feedback provided by the administrators

reviewing the plans. Teacher J implied that lesson plans were too long and not being used

by teachers. This participant felt that teachers were not able to teach everything as written

on the plan. As a result, the lesson plan was not being used in its entirety. At this time,

lesson plans might be lengthy to address the increasing rigor that is expected so that

students can learn beyond a level indicative of simple recall. Lesson plans, as a key

component of effective instruction are tools that guide the delivery of instruction, but

they should not be viewed as tools that cannot be altered if the needs of students are not being met.

Teacher perceptions of the instructional planning performance standard were influenced by the process of lesson planning that included collaborating with peers, the length of lesson plans, the resources used in planning such as technology and blueprints, and feedback provided by administrators. Additionally, the perceptions might have been influenced by the type of course taught, grade level, and personal encounters. Teacher interaction with administrators, whether positive or negative, might influence their perceptions as well. Of the 12 interview participants, six (50%) regarded it as a tool to implement instruction, one (8.3%) had a perception related to accountability, two (16.7%) had a perception of the standard approved as created, and three (25%) had a perception related to collaboration.

Standard 3: Instructional Delivery

A synthesis of the responses that the participants provided regarding the performance standard instructional delivery described the importance of delivering instruction in a manner in which students were able to understand the content presented. Their perceptions were influenced by their desire to ensure that students were learning. Respondents expressed the importance of knowing their students. They reported that being knowledgeable of their students' fostered successful instructional delivery. The ability to differentiate instruction to address the diverse learning styles of students was accomplished by using a variety of instructional methodologies and resources, including technology. It was suggested that the delivery of instruction must be made relevant to students so that learning can occur. Also, interview participants expressed the need to

make connections between the content being taught with real world applications to ensure student learning.

Differentiating instruction. The interview participants' perceptions of the standard that is related to differentiating instruction emphasized (a) the need to know one's students, (b) using a variety of instructional tools and resources, (c) making content relevant, and (d) connecting content to real-world applications. Eight of 12 interview participants reflected on the need to differentiate instruction. Teacher C expressed:

> The best teachers sometimes are those that know how to give content to their students. How to relate it to them, how to present it so that students will have a sense of wonderment, a sense of engagement. I almost feel as if that standard should count a little more, because it's very important to be able to deliver content in a way that students can relate and learn.

To meet the diverse needs of students, successful teachers are able to differentiate instruction by using a variety of instructional strategies to address the diverse learning styles of students. By individualizing instruction, teachers facilitate the learning process for students, which allows students to apply their knowledge of the content on their achievement level. Once students have shown progression according to the individualized instruction, they will be able to demonstrate mastery of the content.

Outcomes and feedback. When effective instruction is provided to students, expected outcomes are a result of this process. Whether the outcome is a formal or informal assessment, students are expected to meet specific standards. To meet and or exceed the standards, teachers will provide students feedback according to the outcomes of the formal/informal assessment. Three teachers' related perceptions regarding the outcomes and feedback related to delivery of instruction. In their simple responses, the participants described the impact and outcomes of instructional delivery.

The foundation of instructional delivery has been to maintain and to engage students in active learning. This is accomplished when a teacher delivers instruction which includes using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to differentiate instruction to meet student needs. Depending on his/her training, an administrator will be able to determine how well the teacher delivered instruction according to student actions. When teachers are observed during this process, an administrator is monitoring teacher/student interaction with emphasis centered on how well the teacher checks for understanding and reinforces learning goals during the lesson. Teacher I said,

> Most administrators are usually not from a content-specific background in one of the core areas. I feel that most of them are not qualified to come into my classroom and determine that I'm actually instructing my students in the way that I should be.

Although an administrator might not be a content expert, he/she may be able to monitor how well students are able to communicate what they are learning.

Overall perception of standard. In review, the responses of the teachers in this sample have suggested that instructional delivery was an essential component needed to provide students quality instruction. Many of their responses reflected the need to differentiate instruction to address the various learning styles and needs of students. Teacher perceptions of the standard instructional delivery were placed into two categories according to themes that emerged from their responses: (a) eight (66.7%) had a perception related to differentiating instruction, and (b) three (25%) had a perception related to the outcomes and feedback. Although administrators received training on how to monitor instruction, they are not content experts in all core subjects. Their training might not be equivalent to that of the content area teacher.

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Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning

A synthesis of the responses provided by the participants suggested that perceptions of assessment of and for student learning are influenced by teachers' use or knowledge of assessments. This was evident in the array of responses provided by the interview participants. The responses of the participants included using a variety of assessments to determine learning, including formative and summative assessments, alternative assessments such as portfolios, and projects to assess student learning. Participant responses suggested that assessments provided measurable data that was used to determine the needs of students and to provide instruction to meet those needs.

The alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum with assessments was a concern for one participant, Teacher I. Another participant, Teacher K, suggested that students were overly assessed and that using assessments caused too much pressure for students and teachers. Using assessments and their impact on daily instruction have altered classroom instruction. Assessments have become a daily component of instruction, whether formal or informal. Their influence on instruction has caused frustrations for teachers and students as they strive to meet the required standards. It does not matter whether or not an individual is a student or teacher. Success on assessments is used to determine the next step which might be positive or negative and the impact is long lasting for both. In recent years, states including Virginia have begun to examine the use of assessments. States are also taking steps to minimize the use of assessments and their impact on student achievement.

Impact on students. Teachers expressed in their responses how assessments impact student learning. Key aspects described in their responses included using formative and summative assessments and how assessments have affected the daily

instruction provided to students. Eight of 12 interview participants had perceptions in which they expressed that assessments helped them to create lesson plans to meet the needs of their students.

The basis of the performance standard assessment of and for student learning is centered on teachers' use of relevant data to monitor student progress to guide instructional content and delivery of instruction. This process will ensure that instruction is differentiated to meet the varied learning styles and needs of students. By providing students with feedback, teachers are able to assist students with establishing learning goals in which they can monitor their own progress. To assist students in monitoring their own progress, teachers are using a variety of assessment tools that are appropriate for meeting the needs of students. The results of assessments have provided data used in the decision making process to guide instructional content and delivery. As a result of this progress, the inclusion of student progress in a teacher's evaluation has altered instruction provided to students. Currently, assessments are considered to be essential components of instruction and indicators of student progress as well in a teacher's evaluation.

Teacher frustrations. Teacher G expressed displeasure with assessments and alluded to the unfair treatment of teachers because of assessments. At this time, the use and results of assessments are having a great impact on the perceptions of teachers. Regardless of teaching a tested or nontested subject, daily instruction has been altered by using of high stakes assessments. Using assessments has increased teacher frustrations because they must meet certain criteria in spite of the obstacles that they might encounter. To lessen the impact of assessments, the states are taking steps to minimize the influence of assessments on students and teachers to decrease the level of frustration that teachers and students express.

Overall perception of standard. Of the 12 participants interviewed, only one participant (Teacher J) suggested that student assessments should not be a part of teacher evaluation. When asked about the performance standard assessment of and for student learning, teachers in this sample provided responses that encompassed various aspects related to the use of assessments and their impact on student achievement. Some responses referred to types of assessments, kinds of software, and uses of data from assessments. According to the responses provided by the interview participants, three overall themes emerged regarding their perceptions of the performance standard assessment of and for student learning: eight (66.7%) related to the impact on students, two (16.7%) related to teacher frustrations, and two (16.6%) had an overall perception of the standard that they agreed with it as written.

Standard 5: Learning Environment

A synthesis of the responses provided by the participants described the actions taking place in the classroom which determine the learning environment. The actions reflect the level of student engagement in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Participant responses reflected their perceptions of the impact that student behaviors have on student learning in the classroom environment.

Classroom disruptions. The responses of the participants reflected how difficult it was to maintain an environment that was conducive to learning if students were displaying disruptive behaviors in class. Four of 12 interview participants expressed that disruptive behaviors and distractions in the classroom prevented learning from occurring. As Teacher A expressed, "if you have bad learning environment, you're not going to learn anything." Additionally, their responses suggested that emphasis was placed on managing behaviors instead of providing quality instruction. For students to learn, a

classroom must have as few disruptions as possible. A conducive classroom environment is engaging and students are learning. This becomes evident when a teacher quickly addresses inappropriate behavior to keep students on task and focused on learning.

Classroom management. The participants expressed that effective classroom management was critical to maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Five of the 12 teachers expressed a perception that was related to classroom management and expectations for learning and their impact on student learning. The participants described the following as vital components of classroom management: (a) providing expectations for student behavior and learning, (b) organizing the classroom to assist students with learning, and (c) fostering and maintaining an environment conducive to learning. Teacher B explained "if you don't have great classroom management, then kids aren't going to learn." When classroom rules and expectations are in place, students are aware of expectations for exhibiting appropriate behavior. This level of awareness enables students to display appropriate behaviors and make adjustments if needed. This process enables students to manage their own behavior before consequences ensue because of their noncompliance regarding the established expectations for displaying appropriate behavior in an environment conducive to learning.

Student safety. Two of the 12 interviewed teachers referenced student safety as a component of the learning environment. To maintain and foster an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, Teachers C and E stressed that students must feel safe to learn. Their responses suggested that students must feel safe to learn without repercussions and also feel that the classroom environment supports learning by being free of any factors that might have a negative impact on learning. Teacher C stated:

One important piece is to make sure that the environment is a safe place for students to learn and that they want to actually be there. That they don't feel intimidated or don't feel as if their contributions don't matter. I feel like all of that is part of the learning environment. A poor learning environment is very difficult to get any student to learn what they need to learn.

Student safety is essential to a conducive learning environment. By eliminating fear that they will be harmed, students are able to achieve their academic goals in an environment that is conducive to learning.

In review, the performance standard learning environment is based on teachers using routines and procedures to create an environment that is conducive to learning. This is accomplished when a teacher has defined expectations and rules for student behavior and learning in an environment that maximizes instructional time, but minimizes disruptions to student learning.

To ensure student learning, teachers in this study described the significance of having a conducive leaning environment. In their responses, teachers in this sample have suggested that students must have an environment that is safe and conducive to learning to achieve academic success. However, some of their responses expressed that a conducive learning environment might be impeded upon by the disruptive actions of students. Despite the detrimental influence of disruptive students on student learning, teachers implied that it was critical to address any factor which altered the learning environment for students. Three overall themes emerged regarding the teachers' perceptions of the performance standard learning environment: four teachers (33.3%) discussed classroom disruptions, five teachers (41.7%) talked about classroom management, and two teachers (16.7%) discussed student safety. When comparing the responses by grade level, most middle school teachers talked about disruptive behaviors of students and classroom management, while high school teachers reflected upon

classroom management and student safety. Clearly, the grade level of teachers' students influenced their perception regarding the learning environment of their students. I was able to surmise that teacher perceptions of the standard learning environment were influenced by factors that included their experiences with disruptive students, student safety, grade level of students, and classroom management as factors that might affect a teacher's ability to provide and maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning.

Standard 6: Professionalism

The interview participants' perceptions of Standard 6, Professionalism, yielded an array of responses. Their perceptions of professionalism reflected their experiences and the ownership that they associate with their job performance. Participant responses were grouped into the following categories: (a) respecting students, (b) professional behaviors, and (c) climate and culture.

Respecting students. The participants described the importance of respecting students and modeling appropriate behavior for students to emulate as being an important part of their professionalism. Four of 12 interview participants provided responses that included respecting students. The responses of the interview participants alluded to the impact of displaying professional behaviors and their impact on students and their learning. Teacher F expressed, "Students can sense if you're genuine. Be a leader in the classroom. Set an example." Successful teachers give and receive respect from students. This relationship ensures that there is mutual respect and it conveys that the teacher actually cares. If students feel that you care, they will strive to meet or exceed the established standards. The support and encouragement given by a teacher might be the motivating factor needed by a student to achieve his or her goals.

Professional behaviors. The responses of the participants suggested that it was important to display professional behaviors and to interact with stakeholders in a professional manner, regardless of role and responsibilities. Four of 12 participants alluded to the possession of a skill or setting a standard as a part of their perception related to professionalism. Teacher J expressed, "Teachers have to talk to parents, peers, students. They have to be professional; have to set a certain standard." Like other professionals, teachers are expected to display appropriate behaviors when interacting with their various stakeholders. By adhering to established expectations and guidelines, teachers are expected to model behaviors that students would emulate.

Climate and culture. The participant perceptions alluded to the influence of their own cultural backgrounds and the impact that it has on their level of professionalism. Responses provided by the interview participants reflected the influence of the work environment in which they were assigned. Their responses regarding professionalism reflected interacting with various stakeholders and possessing a level of ownership as related to roles and responsibilities associated with teaching. Three of 12 interview participants possessed this type of perception. Teacher I expressed:

> We all come from different cultural backgrounds. We hold strong beliefs of how we should or should not do certain things. And depending on the administrator and even their rapport with the teacher, that may be not quite fair in terms of the assessment given by the administrator.

The influence of climate and culture might have a positive or negative impact on teachers. Depending on their experiences, teachers and or administrators might display behaviors perceived to be unprofessional in a given context. Therefore, it is critical that teachers and administrators interact with one another in an objective manner that is free

of bias. Regardless of personal opinions or biases, both parties must display professional behaviors and eliminate behaviors deemed inappropriate in a professional setting.

As reported, the responses of teachers in this sample suggested that the performance standard professionalism encompassed a variety of components. According to the responses of the interview participants, professionalism was comprised of establishing relationships with stakeholders, demonstrating appropriate behavior, and examining the influence of climate and culture on professionalism. In the responses provided by the interview participants, four themes emerged to categorize their overall perceptions: four (33.3%) had a perception related to respecting students, four (33.3%) had a perception regarding professional behaviors, and three (25%) had a perception related to climate and culture.

Summary of Perceptions of Performance Standards

Teachers' perceptions were influenced significantly by their experiences with the performance standards and indicators that are components of the summative evaluation of the teacher evaluation system implemented in 2012. The responses provided by the participants yielded an array of perceptions regarding the performance standards and indicators. Partial responses of their perceptions included good tool, fair, and unfair. The participants' responses reflected perceptions that are both positive and negative, depending on the experience of the interview participant.

Research Question 1b: Teacher Perceptions of Performance Indicators That Fall Underneath the Six Process-based Performance Standards

What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the six performance standards and related performance indicators?

"Indicators are best described as observable, tangible behaviors that indicate the degree to which teachers are meeting each standard and the type of performance that will occur if a standard is being fulfilled" (VDOE, 2011, p. 8). In the process of observing and evaluating teachers, indicators are "look-fors" in the performance of teachers to determine whether or not the performance of the teacher has met the standard. The number of indicators varies for each performance standard. Most participant responses did not specifically use the term "indicator." Some of their responses were applicable to indicators related to a specific standard. Table 13 outlines sample participant responses paired with indicators that are related to the performance standards of professional knowledge, instructional planning, and instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, and professionalism.

Table 13

Teachers' Perceptions of Indicators

Performance standard	Indicator	Teacher Perception
Professional knowledge	1.4 Demonstrates an accurate knowledge of subject matter.	Teacher B: I think in order to put a teacher in the classroom; they need to be knowledgeable of their content area. I think that's a great standard to have. You don't want to put a teacher in math classroom that doesn't know math. I think that's something we all should be judged on.
Instructional planning	2.4 Aligns lesson objectives to the school's curriculum and student learning needs.	Teacher G: Teachers must have knowledge of student blueprints, pacing guides, and curriculum guides.
Instructional delivery	3.2 Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.	Teacher H: I try my best to reach kids at exactly their level and pull them up. Try to find different . . . several different ways to make it relevant to students. Making sure, they understand the correlations among the objects and incorporate technology, games, and whatever it takes.
Assessment of and for student leaning	4.5 Uses assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes and uses grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives.	Teacher L: I do at least two grades a week. I try to vary it from tests, which are things they put on a memory stick. I go very little paper. I walk around with a million different memory sticks, and each one representing a different activity. And the students have their own memory stick where they are responsible for keeping all of their work. So

Performance standard	Indicator	Teacher Perception
		they put them on, and they know that those are documents that I grade. I also do participation. That means that they're working, that they're continuing to work. And then I do a keyboarding where they just type. So they've got three areas that I assess.
Learning environment	5.2 Establishes clear expectations, with student input, for classroom rules and procedures early in the school year, and enforces them consistently and fairly.	Teacher F: Classroom management. To provide students with expectations from day one, to be fair, across the board. Students are to remain on task until they are completed with assignments.
Professionalism	6.6 Works in a collegial and collaborative manner with administrators, other school personnel, and the community.	Teacher C Professionalism . . . another piece, that's very important. We have obligations, to our students, to our building. Holistically to our community. To have professionalism, it comes to seeking out knowledge and attending professional development.

In summary, indicators are quantifiable actions that signify the level in which a teacher has met the performance standard and the ensuing results if the standard has been met. This is accomplished by observing and evaluating teachers on the performance standards. Each performance standard has a varied number of indicators which are "look-fors" in the execution of instruction by teachers that reveal if the teacher has met the standard.

Research Question 2: Whether 40 Percent of a Teacher's Evaluation Should Be

Based on Student Progress

What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's evaluation is based on student academic progress as outlined in the Guidelines for Teachers (VDOE, 2011)?

The interview participants were questioned regarding their perceptions of 40% of their evaluation being based on student progress. The responses provided by the sample of secondary teachers implied that teacher perceptions vary on this aspect of teacher evaluation.

As the responses were reviewed, I found that one of 12 interview participants indicated that it was fair to include student progress in teacher evaluation. Teacher F expressed that teachers are responsible for ensuring that students are knowledgeable of the content because teachers are held accountable for student learning. "At the end of the day, teachers must ensure that students are knowledgeable of the content." Teachers are tasked with delivering instruction in a manner to meet the diverse needs of students. This is accomplished by differentiating instruction to address the diverse learning styles and needs of students. This process ensures that the needs of students are being met with the end result being an increase in student achievement.

The remaining 11 participants suggested that 40% was a high number, and it was unfair and disliked by teachers. Eight of 12 participants indicated that they felt displeasure regarding the 40% inclusion of student progress as being a part of their evaluation. Participants' negative perceptions regarding the 40% inclusion of student progress in a teacher's evaluation were based on factors such as: (a) lack of control regarding students assigned to teach, (b) lack of significant progress shown by students

on assessments, and (c) the influence of factors that affect learning beyond the teacher's control.

The atmosphere of the school might be full of fear and trepidation while anticipating the results of the standardized test. The fear of students not performing to expected levels has caused teachers to feel stressed and uncertain of their futures. This level of fear and anxiety has caused teachers to speculate whether or not their jobs were in jeopardy. The thought of losing their jobs has caused many teachers to express how the inclusion of student academic progress is creating even more unwanted stress for teachers.

The inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation has caused teachers to express their dismay regarding this process. Their apprehensions have centered on the differences associated with teaching a tested/nontested subject. The challenges expressed by the participants included (a) ability levels of students, (b) lack of control over factors which influence learning such as attendance and student effort, (c) lack of resources, and (d) use of test scores. The inclusion of student academic progress as a part of a teacher's evaluation has caused many teachers to feel stressed. The process of preparing students for SOL tests and the ensuing results have led many teachers to feel unsure and anxious of themselves and their students. Three teachers expressed that 40% of a teacher's evaluation being tied to student progress created challenges for core teachers who taught classes with an SOL test. Teacher L expressed:

I think it's especially difficult for core area teachers, because you know they have the SOL standard. And they're given a specific test. I think that this causes core teacher's undue stress. In review, the data collected indicated that only one teacher (8.3%) felt that it was fair to include student progress in teacher evaluation. Eight teachers (61.7%)

indicated that they had a problem with the inclusion of student progress in a teacher's evaluation. Their overall perceptions were perceived to be negative. Three participants' (25.0%) perceptions were based on factors other than the ones previously mentioned. In the responses provided, some teachers indicated that their perceptions were influenced by four factors: (a) using data from student SOL tests, (b) being held responsible for student learning, (c) stressing that 40% is too much, and (d) being frustrated because they as teachers cannot control their students. Clearly, the perceptions of teachers in the sample were influenced by their experiences with teacher evaluation. As evident in the responses provided by the interview participants, their perceptions had three themes to emerge: (a) one (8.3%) had an overall perception perceived as positive, (b) eight (61.7%) had an overall perception perceived as negative, and (c) three (25.0%) had an overall perception perceived as creating challenges for teachers.

As the data indicates, teacher perceptions regarding the inclusion of student progress was influenced by factors that are not necessarily interconnected. Although the majority of the responses were not similar, only one teacher stated specifically that the inclusion of student progress was unfair. Consequently, the concerns suggested by teachers in the sample indicated that it was about more than the level of fairness. Their responses have alluded to the need to examine the amount tied to student progress in teacher evaluation and how teachers are held accountable for student progress. Some responses have indicated that the challenges that teachers incur should also be considered as well when tying student progress to teacher evaluation.

The perceptions of teachers reflected that they do not have a problem with student progress being a part of their evaluation, but the discord arises regarding the percentage of the evaluation that is based on student progress. According to their responses, the

perceptions of many teachers would be altered if 40% of their evaluation was not tied to student progress. For some, 40% is a fair amount; but for others, it is simply too much.

Research Question 3: Performance Standards in Teacher Evaluation

What are secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Guidelines for Teachers (VDOE, 2011) as determined by the teachers' status as effective versus less effective?

The views of effective or less effective teachers were examined to determine their perceptions of the performance standards, evaluation criteria, and summative evaluation process. For this study, teachers were defined as effective if they received a rating of "exemplary" or "proficient" on their 2013–2014 summative evaluations. Less effective teachers were defined as those who received a rating of "needs improvement" or "unacceptable" on their 2013–2014 summative evaluations. As the responses of teachers identified as effective were compared to teachers identified as less effective, notable differences were apparent regarding their perceptions.

Effective Teachers' Perceptions

Using demographic data provided, eight of 12 teachers in this sample were identified as effective. Demographic data indicated that no one was rated as "exemplary" for their 2013–2014 summative evaluation. The effective teachers were all rated as being "proficient."

Teachers identified as effective stated that performance standards are needed. The standards have provided the framework needed for teachers to meet basic expectations. In meeting those expectations, participants described the feedback provided that has been used to improve their instructional platform. However, one participant expressed that teachers become indifferent when they encounter inconsistencies with the procedures and practices related to teacher evaluation. Also, participants expressed that student progress

is essential, but they described factors that were out of their control impacting student learning. As a result, the effective teachers expressed a desire for the various aspects of teaching to be considered when teachers are evaluated based on the standards. Teacher I expressed:

> There needs to be something to let the teacher know exactly what you're looking for and how I can actually meet with success while helping my students meet their success. And not just giving me a sheet of paper and saying well this is how you'll be assessed.

To meet the guidelines outlined in the performance standards, teachers stated that requirements must be communicated in a manner that is clear and precise regarding the expectations. This information would need to be conveyed through a variety of methods to guarantee that teachers have the necessary awareness to meet the established guidelines and criteria.

The perceptions of effective teachers also reflected that they have had more positive encounters with teacher evaluation. Teacher F believed the standards are acceptable as written. Also, Teacher H believed that the standards were fair because, as an educator, one must uphold certain levels of professionalism.

Effective teachers were aware of the methods in which they would be evaluated. They were fully aware of the steps needed to meet and or exceed the standards. With this knowledge, they were able to display professional behaviors such as participating in professional development activities, professional learning communities, and further education to stay abreast of current trends in their content area and the field of education.

Less Effective Teachers' Perceptions

Using demographic data provided, four of 12 teachers in the sample were less effective. Three were rated as "needs improvement" and one was rated as "unacceptable" on their 2013–2014 summative evaluations.

The responses of teachers identified as less effective expressed views of the performance standards to include (a) being accountable, (b) being free of problems, (c) being fair, and (d) being knowledgeable of expectations. The less effective teachers also described encounters with teacher evaluation that have not always been positive. One of the four teachers rated as less effective expressed concerns related to the manipulation of the standards or slanted stance of the standards by an administrator. Teacher G expressed:

> I think that the standards are fair as written, but they can be manipulated by administrators. I am just going to put it out there. How can I be proficient before my students take the benchmark test? Then, I am unacceptable when my students do not demonstrate the progress that is expected by an administrator. Did the administrator consider any variables that may have influenced the progress or lack of progress by my students?

Teacher C expressed that more frequent observations would help administrators see the growth in teachers.

When teachers are aware of the components of evaluation, they have a level of awareness needed to meet the established guidelines. During this process, teachers want to be treated in a manner that is objective and free of bias. They want to be given assistance for themselves and their students so that both are successful. Teachers do not want to be punished or penalized for factors that may be beyond their control. When considering factors that impact a teacher's perception, less effective teachers expressed the need for teachers to be treated in a fair, respectful, and professional manner. This sentiment coincided with previously mentioned comments of Teacher G who expressed

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concerns regarding the standards and actions of administrators when interacting with teachers. To meet established guidelines, the less effective teachers indicated that they must be made aware of the steps needed to meet the standards. This opinion was expressed by three of four less effective teachers. By being knowledgeable of their expectations, teachers are able to communicate that they are cognizant of the requirements and how they are being held accountable. Less effective teachers expressed a desire to be treated in a fair and equitable manner. They were adamant about not being penalized for past mishaps or the lack of progress shown by students. Instead, less effective teachers were receptive to receiving constructive feedback that could be used to improve their instructional platform and assist their students as well.

Overall, effective and less effective teachers possessed favorable perceptions regarding the performance standards. When examining the characteristics of the teachers according to level of effectiveness, each grade level had two teachers identified as less effective. High school teachers identified as less effective had positive perceptions of the performance standards. However, middle school teachers identified as less effective had varying perceptions of the performance standards, including one neutral and one negative. When comparing grade levels, five high school teachers had positive perceptions of the performance standards and one had a perception perceived to be neutral. Unlike high school teachers, middle schools teachers had mixed perceptions of the standards. Three middle school teachers had a negative perception of the standards, two were positive, and one was neutral. The data suggest that grade level is a factor that influences the perception of teachers regarding the performance standards.

In summary, regardless of level of effectiveness, teachers expressed that they want to be aware of administrator expectations for teachers. This can be accomplished by

communicating with teachers in a variety of methods to ensure that all pertinent information has been provided. Teachers also expressed a desire to have the tools needed for success. In their responses, teachers suggested that in order to be held accountable for their performance, they must be treated in a fair manner. This would only occur if teachers are provided constructive criticism for improvement in a manner that is objective and free of bias.

Research Question 4: Accreditation Status

What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teacher's perceptions regarding the implementation of the Guidelines for Teachers (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether the teachers work in fully accredited versus not fully accredited schools?

The VDOE (2011) has established benchmarks that schools are to obtain to be fully accredited. For middle schools to be fully accredited, student pass rates on SOL tests must meet the following benchmarks: (a) English – 75%, (b) Mathematics – 70%, (c) Science – 70%, and (d) History – 70%. The requirements for high schools include the aforementioned benchmarks and the additional requirement of having a Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) of 85% or higher. If schools do not meet the above requirements, they lose their status of being fully accredited.

According to the accreditation status for the 2014–2015 school year, four of six secondary schools in this small urban district in southeastern Virginia were not fully accredited; three were middle schools and one high school. The two secondary schools accredited were high schools. In this study, eight (67%) teachers were assigned to teach in schools that are not fully accredited and four (33%) are assigned to fully accredited schools.

Teachers' perceptions of the performance standards did not appear to be influenced by the accreditation status of their assigned school. When comparing the characteristics of teachers assigned to fully accredited and not fully accredited schools, they had similarities as well as differences. Similarities shared by the groups included: (a) the majority of teachers were identified as effective, and (b) the majority of teachers had an overall positive perception of the performance standards. The main difference between the two groups was that no one assigned to a fully accredited school possessed a negative perception of the performance standards. This was evident in the varying perceptions of the teachers assigned to not fully accredited schools. In this group, three teachers possessed negative perceptions of the performance standards. All teachers possessing a negative perception of the standards were assigned to middle schools. Although the teachers expressed negative perceptions of the standards, they did not suggest that the accreditation status of the school influenced their perceptions. It is important to remember that schools that are not fully accredited are often given additional tasks to complete to improve student pass rates on SOL tests. Perhaps, their negative perceptions might be the result of an increase in their work load, which often leads to stress. Note: As a researcher, I considered the influence of grade level and the school in which a teacher was assigned to teach as variables that might have influenced the perceptions of teachers in the sample.

As reported according to the data collected, the accreditation status of the secondary schools indicated that four schools were not fully accredited and two were fully accredited in 2014–2015. I was unable to uncover data to suggest that the perceptions of teachers were influenced by the accreditation status of the school. Overall, teachers in the sample possessed favorable perceptions of the performance standards.

Research Question 5: Tested Versus NonTested Subjects

What is the relationship between interviewed urban secondary teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Guidelines for Teachers (VDOE, 2011) as determined by whether the teachers teach in tested versus nontested subjects?

Depending on the grade level and course, teachers are assigned to teach courses in which students will take SOL tests before the course ends. These courses are identified as tested subjects, and students are required to take state mandated SOL tests. Other teachers are assigned to teach courses that offer enrichment to the core content areas and are described as electives. Teachers assigned to teach electives are not tied to state mandated SOL testing.

Teachers with Tested Subjects

In this study, seven of 12 teachers in the sample of secondary teachers taught tested subjects, those classes with an attached SOL test. The teachers of the tested subjects taught core subjects such as English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Five of the teachers were identified as effective and two were identified as less effective. The seven teachers of tested subjects had an average of 8 years of teaching experience. Three teachers were assigned to fully accredited schools and four teachers were assigned to schools that are not fully accredited.

The participants expressed that the performance standards were a good tool that provided checks and balances. They suggested that the performance standards provided the framework for the expectations that teachers were to meet. Teachers of tested subjects believed standards help them to improve and grow professionally. Teachers of tested subjects were positive overall regarding the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria, but they expressed reservations as well. For example, Teacher I

believed that the performance standards were unfair to teachers who taught SOL classes. This teacher felt that other factors that influence student progress also needed to be considered in the teacher evaluation process. Additional concerns of teachers of tested subjects centered on teacher interaction with administrators. Some teachers of tested subjects suggested: (a) administrators have manipulated the standards, (b) administrators were biased, and (c) administrators were not consistent in performing their roles and responsibilities related to teacher evaluation. Teacher I expressed:

> The summative evaluation, sometimes administrators come one time, close to the end of the school year. What happened from September up until June? Again no problem being evaluated, but it should be fair. It should be consistent. And I should not have to worry that if they don't like this or they don't like that or something happened last week, I'm going to get a bad evaluation. And I may not get a contract. Those fears should not be there at all.

Apparently, teachers of tested subjects do not have a problem being held accountable for the performance standards, but they do desire to be treated in a fair, objective, and professional manner by administrators during the teacher evaluation process.

Teachers with Nontested Subjects

In this study, five of 12 secondary teachers taught nontested subjects. Teachers of nontested subjects included special education, oceanography, principles of technology, and two keyboarding teachers. Three were identified as being effective and two were identified as less effective. Teachers of nontested subjects had an average of 9 years of teaching experience. Two teachers were assigned to fully accredited schools and three teachers were assigned to schools that were not fully accredited.

A synthesis of the responses that the teachers provided on nontested subjects showed that the performance standards were needed. The teachers felt the standards were fair and that they help them to improve. The participants felt that the feedback provided

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to them enabled them to identify areas of weakness so that they could make necessary changes for improvement. The teachers' overall perceptions of nontested subjects regarding the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria were positive according to their experiences with teacher evaluations. The responses provided by some teachers of nontested subjects suggested that they have a degree of empathy for teachers of tested subjects and the challenges that they encounter. Teacher F expressed positive feelings for the performance standards:

> I like them because of the feedback that I am given. Very informative. I'm given specific feedback to address areas of weaknesses and strengths. And it offers suggestions for implementation.

As reported, teachers of tested and nontested subjects' responses have mirrored each other regarding the significant influence that experience has had on their perceptions of the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria. When comparing teachers of tested subjects versus nontested subjects, it was shown that most teachers had a positive perception regarding the implementation of the performance standards. Thus, according to the data collected, teaching a tested versus a nontested course did not appear to influence the perceptions of teachers in the sample.

Using assessments varied in tested courses and nontested courses. Two of 12 interview participants expressed frustrations related to the standard assessment of and for student learning. The frustrations related to assessments had different meanings for teachers of tested courses and teachers of nontested courses. Teacher F (nontested subject teacher) expressed frustration, but did not have the same type of frustration because the class was not connected to an SOL test. The assessments used in a nontested course were used to determine the level of student knowledge, but they were not used in a manner that was detrimental to student or teacher. On the other hand, Teacher G (tested subject

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teacher) expressed dissatisfaction, explaining that assessments did not always demonstrate the efforts that teachers have taken to adequately prepare students for the assessment.

Summary

As a sample, 12 secondary teachers in a small urban school district in southeastern Virginia were interviewed to identify their perceptions regarding the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) implemented in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2012. The participants were asked questions to determine their perceptions regarding six specific performance standards and evaluation criteria. The six performance standards and indicators were related to (a) professional knowledge, (b) instructional planning, (c) instructional delivery, (d) assessment of and for student learning, (e) learning environment, and (f) professionalism. Additionally, I included a research question specifically related to the seven standard, the inclusion of a measure of student progress in teacher evaluation. To identify themes, I reviewed the interview transcripts and coded key words from each interview. The responses were similar yet unique to each participant.

Teacher perceptions of the seven performance standards were influenced by a variety of factors. Their perceptions were positive or negative depending on the types of experiences or encounters that they have had with teacher evaluation. Overall, teachers in the sample had positive perceptions of the standards, but some teachers expressed concerns pertaining to the 40% inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation. A notable discrepancy occurred regarding teacher perception of the seven performance standards and the inclusion of student academic progress. When asked about the inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation, overall teachers in

the sample had a negative perception of this standard. What accounts for the discrepancy? The center of the discrepancy is the 40% inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation. In their responses, teachers in the sample expressed that they do not have a problem being evaluated, but that they are not in agreement with the 40% figure being used. Therefore, the issue might not be the inclusion of student academic progress, but the amount of academic progress that it is accounted for in a teacher's evaluation.

The seven performance standards that make-up our teacher evaluation system are used to rate teachers. Overall, perceptions of teachers identified as effective reflected the needs for performance standards. Also, the perceptions of less effective teachers reflected the need for accountability and with teachers being made aware of their expectations. Additionally, teacher perception of the seven performance standards did not appear to be influenced by their assigned school's accreditation status. Although the school's accreditation did not influence teacher perception of the performance standards, teaching a tested or nontested subject had some type of influence on their perceptions. Overall, teachers of tested subjects expressed that the standards helped them to grow and improve professionally. Teachers of nontested subjects expressed that the performance standards were needed and were a method to help them improve professionally.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Education is the foundation of the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In our society, schools are used as a conduit to gaining an education over a span of time, typically Kindergarten–Grade 12. During this time span, one of the common denominators is a teacher. Each teacher that a child encounters over this time span possesses a wealth of knowledge that is shared with the students. In several studies, researchers have found that teacher quality has a significant impact on student achievement (Aaronson et al., 2007; Hattie, 2009; Looney, 2009; Stronge, 2006).

The overarching purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of a sample of teachers regarding the implementation of *The Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) that were fully implemented in 2012 in CCPS. The revised standards in *The Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011) included a component regarding student progress. Twenty two states had revised their teacher evaluation systems to include components of student learning and its connection to teacher effectiveness (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). This increased accountability was a result of the Race to the Top initiative (US DOE, 2010) and its impact on teacher evaluation in states across the Nation (Lavigne, 2014).

For this study, six middle and six high school teachers were selected with the assistance of their building principals according to criteria to ensure a mix of teachers of test and untested subjects, as well as a mix of teachers rated as effective and less effective. I interviewed the sample of 12 teachers to determine their perceptions regarding the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria. The interview questions were related specifically to the implementation of the seven

performance standards and evaluation criteria that were outlined in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011), and the teachers' responses provided a wealth of information. Despite the influence of variables (e.g., degree of effectiveness, teaching a tested or nontested subject, being assigned to a fully or nonfully accredited school), teacher perceptions of the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria were similar. When a new evaluation system is implemented, its success or failure depends on getting teachers to buy-in to the new system (Stronge, 2006). Teacher buy-in might be influenced by a variety of factors that impact their perceptions regarding a new teacher evaluation system. Consequently, it is essential to determine whether a teacher's perception of the teacher evaluation system has been altered by the influence of the varied factors. By determining factors that might influence teacher perception of teacher evaluation, a researcher would be able to make recommendations to address teacher concerns to increase the level of teacher buy-in to a new evaluation system.

Discussion

The responses provided by the participants reflected their experiences with teacher evaluation. By analyzing the responses collected during the interview process, I was able to identify experience, accountability, and professional development as themes that emerged from the responses provided by the participants. This was supported by research of Preskill and Catsambas (2006) who described the impact of the work environment, the context of culture, and society and its influences on the data collected. The data collected might be influenced by the aforementioned factors or other undefined factors that might influence teacher perception. These factors play a role associated to teacher buy-in when a new system is implemented. Clearly, teacher perceptions might be influenced by the aforementioned factors or other unidentified factors that affect how

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teachers formulate their own perceptions regarding the components of a recently

implemented teacher evaluation system. In general, participants expressed that they do

not have a problem being evaluated or held accountable for their performance. The need

for on-going professional development was a desire expressed by most participants. They

felt that having the ability to attend in-service training consistently was critical to their

success as teachers. Their responses reflected a previous study conducted by van den

Berg et al. (1999), who stated that teachers develop their own organizational structure

that includes their experiences, abilities, and opinions related to their job performance. A

teacher's viewpoint becomes apparent when sharing his or her perceptions of the

standards and the impact that varied factors might have upon his or her perceptions.

Consequently, a teacher's organizational structure might influence whether he or she will

buy-in to a new teacher evaluation system. Teacher buy-in might be dependent upon the

teachers receiving the needed support and resources to be successful.

Perceptions Regarding the Six Performance Standards

Since the standards were fully implemented in 2012, teachers have developed new

meanings for teacher evaluation, which are reflected in their perceptions of the

performance standards that make up our current teacher evaluation system. When asked

about their perceptions regarding the seven performance standards and evaluation

criteria, all teachers were able to express their perceptions in detail. All participants

provided responses that were unique to their experiences regarding the implementation of

the revised performance standards and evaluation criteria. Their responses also reflected

concerns related to the challenges of core teachers and factors that they feel are not

addressed in the standards. Participants in this study expressed that the performance

standards do not take into consideration all aspects of teaching context. They mentioned

specifically four aspects: (a) socioeconomic status of students, (b) locality in which a student resides, (c) resources of the district, and (d) the type of schools that the student attends. The participants expressed that they do not control the type of students whom they are assigned to teach. The beliefs of the participants are supportive of research conducted by Ellett and Teddlie (2003) who described the impact of community demographics and teaching settings. Students in urban areas are most likely to start their educational journey less prepared than students in suburban areas. Factors that might contribute to their lack of preparedness include: (a) parental educational level, (b) access to preschool education, and (c) lack of resources. Once students start their educational journey in an urban setting, teachers are often tasked with teaching basic skills because of the lack of proficiency exhibited by students. As a result, student progress might be incremental, but not to levels at which students will meet and or exceed established benchmarks for displaying progress. This challenge has created a sense of apprehension among teachers in urban districts. Their apprehensions are based on the mere fact that they are judged according to the same performance standards and criteria as teachers in suburban districts without the added supports to ensure student success.

As previously mentioned, the interview participants expressed that a variety of factors affect the achievement gains of students in an educational setting. In their responses, interview participants felt that the performance standards did not encompass the full scope of the impact of those factors on student achievement. The beliefs of the interview participants are upheld by Martineau (2010) whose study explored the roles of student, classroom, and school and their influence on the educational outcomes of students. The participants in this study, like Martineau's study, suggest that student learning is not influenced by a single factor, but a menagerie of factors dependent upon

the complexities of circumstances. Depending on the circumstances, student learning might be influenced by the factors mentioned above or factors that are reflective of an individual's circumstances. Consequently, teachers are faced with the challenges of meeting the standards and the unknown variation of factors that might influence student learning.

The teachers' perceptions of the six performance standards (professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, and professionalism) that account for 60% of their evaluation and performance rating reflected their experiences. The participants expressed the need for content knowledge and receiving professional development to stay abreast of current trends. Their viewpoints included that lesson plans are a guide, and that collaborating with their peers to plan and write lesson plans is important. When incorporating the lesson plan into the delivery of instruction, participants indicated that it was important to present the content in a manner in which students would be able to grasp it. The instructional delivery was influenced by the classroom's learning environment. The participants alluded to their encounters when having to deal with disruptive behaviors that affect student learning and progress. When questioned regarding their professionalism, the participant responses included that teachers must possess specific skills and display professional behaviors when interacting with stakeholders.

In general, teachers in this study had favorable perceptions of the performance standards. Regardless of their viewpoints pertaining to the performance standards, teachers in this sample expressed that the performance standards have had some type of impact on their job performance. For some, the impact has been beneficial, but for others it has been frustrating at times. The teachers in this sample expressed to some degree

positive aspects of the performance standards as related to their job. Despite the positive aspects shared, teachers in this sample shared negative aspects as well. Nonetheless, for some the inclusion of student academic progress in a teacher's evaluation is perceived in a negative manner. This aspect alone has caused fear of losing their jobs for some teachers in this sample. Consequently, their perceptions may be influenced by their job performance. This connection might have an impact on teacher buy-in to the new teacher evaluation system.

The participants expressed perceptions that were reflective of their experiences with teacher evaluation since the revised standards were implemented. They conveyed their likes, dislikes, and apprehensions regarding the performance standards in the current teacher evaluation system. These findings agree with the research of Tuytens and Devos (2014), who stated that teacher perceptions are influenced by how they associate teacher evaluation with their job. Whether or not the participants had perceptions that were positive, negative, or neutral, the connection was evident in their responses when questioned about the standards. When teachers had positive encounters with the performance standards and teacher evaluation, their responses reflected encouraging and constructive feedback. Teachers with less positive encounters described negative responses and feedback perceived not to be as beneficial. Regardless of their perceptions of the standards, teachers in the sample wanted to be made aware of what would be expected of them and to be provided assistance as needed so that they could do their jobs successfully.

Perceptions Regarding Student Progress

In the state of Virginia, student progress accounts for 40% of a teacher's evaluation. When questioned specifically regarding the fact that 40% of a teacher's

evaluation was tied to student progress, only one participant indicated that it was unfair. Other participants referenced the challenges encountered by core teachers because of having an attached SOL test.

The majority of the participants stated that teachers should be evaluated, but only six stated that evaluation should be partially based on student progress at a level of 40 percent. The sentiment of the participants did include that students must show progress. The participants felt that teachers must be held accountable for their performance. As the responses of the participants were analyzed, I discovered that friction arises over the percentage of the evaluation that is tied to student progress, but not to the fact that students must show progress.

Overall, teachers in this study had positive perceptions of the seven performance standards and indicators. However, when asked about the inclusion of student progress in a teacher's evaluation, teachers in the sample had an overall negative perception of this component of a teacher's evaluation.

What possible factors could have contributed to apparent discrepancies in the perceptions? During the interview process, most teachers were aware of the performance standards, but they did not know all of them by their specific names. However, they were more knowledgeable of the standard related to student academic progress. Most teachers associated student academic progress with student results from SOL tests or other assessments. They were inflexible regarding their perceptions which included student academic progress. Furthermore, the sentiments expressed in the perceptions of the group suggested that this factor has altered the process of teacher evaluation and its impact on the job performance of a teacher. Some of their perceptions indicated that this process has created more fear and animosity among teachers when interacting with administrators.

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Despite their fears and reservations regarding the inclusion of student academic progress in their evaluations, teachers have suggested in their various responses that they just want to receive the necessary tools and support needed to provide students quality instruction.

As previously mentioned, teachers become defenders of their actions when judged on the progress of students. They must defend the progress or lack of progress of students on standardized assessments. These results might be indicative of teacher effectiveness which supports research conducted by Porter- Magee (2004). When tying teacher effectiveness to student progress, multiple measures are considered and statistically analyzed to determine their impact on student teaching (Everson et al., 2013). Furthermore, by associating teacher effectiveness with student progress, it reaffirmed research conducted by Webster and Mendro (1997) and reiterated by (Hallinger et al., 2013) that a correlation does exist when tying student learning with teacher effectiveness. This correlation also is supported by Martineau (2010) who described the interaction that occurs between students and the school and their impact on student educational outcomes.

The impact of student progress in a teacher's evaluation has caused teachers in this sample varying degrees of apprehension. The level of apprehension was in direct correlation to the level of student progress. When student progress was positive, teachers appeared to have little if any apprehension. If student progress was not as positive, the level of apprehension appeared to increase dramatically. Again, this was reflective of the connection that the participants had regarding teacher evaluation and their perceptions of the performance standards. Clearly, teacher experiences regarding student academic progress caused the participants in the study to create their own connotations of teacher evaluation as it relates to their job. When teachers had more positive experiences, they

appeared to have fewer negative connotations regarding teacher evaluation and their jobs.

If teachers had more unpleasant experiences, they appeared to have more negative

connotations regarding teacher evaluation and their jobs. Thus, teachers develop their

own values related to their attitude, job performance, and skill level (van den Berg et al.,

1999. Consequently, teacher buy-in of a new teacher evaluation system is dependent

upon a variety of variables which are directly related to their attitude, performance, and

skill level.

Perceptions of Effective Teachers Versus Less Effective Teachers

I also examined the relationship between the perceptions of teachers and their

effectiveness. In this study, eight teachers were identified as being effective and four

were less effective. Whether a teacher was identified as effective or less effective, they

shared characteristics. Common characteristics shared by the groups included (a) being

aware of expectations, (b) being accountable, and (c) being given assistance. These were

basic expectations described by both groups that teachers needed to meet the basic

guidelines outlined in the performance standards.

As the participants in this study indicated, teacher effectiveness is influenced by a

variety of factors. The correlation of the factors affecting teacher effectiveness might

vary depending on how teachers are judged according to student progress (Porter-Magee,

2004). Teachers in this sample had definite opinions related to student progress and their

level of effectiveness. In their responses, the participants described how they were able to

correlate their effectiveness to the progress shown by students. This was also reflective of

the ownership that teachers associated with their level of effectiveness and job

performance. This supports research conducted by Tuytens and Devos (2014), which

focused on how teachers develop their own meanings regarding teacher evaluation and

their job performance. Additionally, the findings substantiated the research of Aaronson et al. (2007), whose study described how teacher quality has a major impact on student achievement.

Perceptions of Teachers Assigned to Fully Accredited Schools Versus Nonfully Accredited Schools

If schools did not meet the established benchmarks for accreditation in the areas of science, social studies, mathematics, and English, they would not meet the requirements for full accreditation as outlined by the VDOE (2011). During the 2014–2015 school year, four of six secondary schools in CCPS did not meet requirements for full accreditation. Two schools did meet the requirements for full accreditation.

In their initial responses, teachers assigned to fully accredited schools and teachers assigned to nonfully accredited schools did not suggest that accreditation status had an impact on their perceptions. As the interviews were analyzed, a discrepancy emerged between teacher perceptions of the seven performance standards regarding the inclusion of student academic progress. This discrepancy is noted in the types of perceptions of teachers assigned to fully accredited schools and teachers assigned to nonfully accredited schools. The difference might be a result of the increased work load of teachers assigned to nonfully accredited schools. Typically, schools that are not fully accredited are given additional tasks to complete so that they could meet the established benchmarks. The additional responsibilities might lead to teachers experiencing an increase in the level of frustration and challenges.

Teacher perceptions of the performance standards were not influenced by the accreditation status of their assigned schools. Their perceptions were affected by the types of experiences they faced when implementing the revised standards in our current

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teacher evaluation system. This factor supports research conducted by Tuytens and Devos (2014) who described how teachers develop their own values regarding teacher evaluation and how it relates to their job performance. It is also connected to teacher buy-in when identifying the correlation between skill level, attitude, and knowledge of the teacher evaluation system when associated with job performance (van den Berg et al., 1999). Teacher H who is assigned to an unaccredited school described in her response that teachers must take ownership of their professional responsibilities to grow professionally, regardless of the school's accreditation status.

Perceptions of Teachers of Tested Subjects Versus Nontested Subjects

Teachers of tested subjects taught core subjects in areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and English with an attached SOL test. Teachers of nontested subjects taught electives that were in support of the core subjects without an attached SOL test. Seven of 12 teachers taught tested subjects; five teachers taught nontested subjects. Teachers of tested and nontested subjects shared many characteristics. Common characteristics shared by the groups included: (a) performance standards were the framework of teacher evaluation and needed; (b) performance standards helped teachers to improve; (c) the majority of teachers were identified as effective; and (d) most teachers had overall positive perceptions of the performance standards.

Whether teaching a tested subject or a nontested subject, participants conveyed that the performance standards did help teachers to improve, but they adamantly expressed that teachers encountered challenges. The challenges described encompassed (a) teacher/administrator interaction, (b) variables that influence the teaching context, and (c) unfair actions against teachers. As a result, teachers expressed a desire to be treated in a fair, objective, and professional manner.

Although the challenges of teachers of tested subjects might vary from those of nontested subjects, teachers of nontested subjects possess a degree of empathy for teachers of tested subjects. This factor is indicative of the many characteristics that they share. When the responses of teachers of tested and nontested subjects were analyzed, their responses are reflective of their personal experiences that affected their perceptions regarding the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria. Teacher L expressed empathy for teachers of tested subjects because of the many challenges that they encounter to prepare students for standardized testing.

Whether teachers in this study taught a tested or nontested subject, their perceptions of the performance standards were similar. This factor is supported by the research of Charalambous et al. (2014), whose study centered on how teacher perception influences the actions of teachers in a recently implemented teacher evaluation system. The perceptions of the teachers are reflective of their experiences during the implementation process which reflects how they associate teacher evaluation with their job (Tuytens & Devos, 2014). When a new teacher evaluation system is implemented, teachers are provided with professional development to gain an understanding of the new system. This process allows teachers to become aware of how they will be evaluated and is connected to the level of buy-in that is described in the responses of participants. The experiences of the teachers help to create a framework which formed the basis of their perceptions. Their perceptions are reflective of their position, skill level, and familiarity of the performance standards as related to their job execution (van den Berg et al., 1999.

Summary of Discussion

In review, the perceptions of teachers in CCPS clearly have been affected by their experiences with teacher evaluation. The responses provided by the participants reflected

their personal encounters and perceptions regarding the implementation of the revised performance standards and evaluation criteria in 2012. This supports research that was conducted by Charalambous et al. (2014). Charalambous et al. asserted that it was crucial to examine how teacher perception affects the teachers and students when a new teacher evaluation system is implemented. The perceptions of teachers in the sample were similar regardless of the variables that were examined. Also, the responses provided by the participants supported research by Tuytens and Devos (2014), who stated that it is essential for a researcher to comprehend the perceptions of teachers because their perceptions affect their relationship with a teacher evaluation system. They further asserted that teachers develop their own perceptions regarding teacher evaluation and how it relates to their job.

Participants in this study readily acknowledged their challenges and successes in teaching and the teacher evaluation process. A strong sentiment existed among the participants to continue their professional growth, which was in line with research conducted by Howard and McCloskey (2001). The participants indicated that their growth as teachers is also dependent on professional development. This thinking concurred with research conducted by Sanders (2000), who found that teacher evaluation is a method that can be used to strengthen professional development. This strengthening is accomplished when a school-based administrator identifies the strengths and weaknesses that were noted on the evaluation of the teachers. This information can be used to formulate a professional development plan for the school and to allocate resources as needed. This use is also supported by Muijis (2006), who stated that professional development is a tool that can be used to increase the level of instructional

proficiency for teachers. Ultimately, the impact of a teacher's increased instructional proficiency would also result in an improvement of student learning.

Regarding being evaluated, the participants in this study were receptive to being held accountable for their performance. They were open to receiving feedback from evaluators. Many participants perceived feedback to be used as a method for self-improvement or an affirmation that their performance was acceptable. However, the participants were not receptive to comments from an administrator that were perceived as subjective or unfair. The participants remarked about the apparent manipulation of the indicators or criteria used in the teacher evaluation system to meet the needs of the administrator instead of the teacher.

The teachers in this study have perceptions regarding the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria in CCPS. Their perceptions were significantly influenced by their experiences with the teacher evaluation system. Regardless of the variables that were examined, teacher perceptions were similar. This component had a great impact on their perceptions and a bearing on their perceptions regarding various aspects associated with teacher evaluation.

Implications from the Study

In recent years, researchers have studied teacher evaluation and teacher perceptions regarding the implementation of a teacher evaluation system. Many of the existing studies were the result of teacher evaluation being examined as a tool to improve student achievement. This study and its results contribute to the existing literature by (a) examining teacher perceptions regarding the implementation of the performance standards in a teacher evaluation system, (b) examining variables that might influence the

perceptions of teachers, and (c) examining how teacher perceptions influence their relationship with teacher evaluation.

Participants in this study had similar yet unique perceptions that were influenced by their experiences with teacher evaluation. Their perceptions described the impact of community demographics and teaching environments (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). Since the inclusion of student progress in teacher evaluation, teachers have expressed apprehensions because they do not control the types of students assigned to their classes. As a result, teachers are often faced with factors that affect teaching and learning that must be addressed before students are able to master the content.

Implications for Teachers

This study revealed that teacher perceptions are greatly influenced by their encounters with teacher evaluation. Since the implementation of the revised performance standards and evaluation criteria, teachers have had to make adjustments to comply with the requirements prescribed in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011). Their responses reflected both positive and negative experiences they have had with the implementation of the performance standards in a small urban school district in southeastern Virginia. It appears that the teachers are buying into the new teacher evaluation system with its performance standards and evaluation criteria despite the reservations they might have concerning the student progress component. Peterson and Peterson (2006) asserted that, if teachers are involved in the evaluation process, they gain respect for the processes related to teacher evaluation. Evidently, teachers in this sample have respect for the processes related to teacher evaluation because they are receptive to the feedback provided and take appropriate actions.

The participants in this study were receptive to accountability as it related to their job performance. They were eager to use the feedback provided by administrators if they perceived it to be objective. The participants expressed the desire to be held accountable by evaluators who are able to provide feedback in a constructive manner beneficial to the teacher rather than the administrator. This sentiment was supported by Sinnema and Robinson (2007), who asserted that evaluators must be well-trained and knowledgeable of the standards to analyze their observation data to determine whether teachers are meeting the standards.

Implications for Administrators

The findings of the study suggest that improvement is needed in the interaction that occurs between teachers and administrators during the teacher evaluation process. In many of their responses, teachers have expressed that their administrators treated them in an unprofessional manner. The relationships that exist between teacher and administrator have a direct impact on the work environment, climate, and culture of a school in which a teacher works. Consequently, teacher perceptions might be influenced by these factors, and Preskill and Catsambas (2006) supported this detail. Their research is reflected in the sentiments of Teacher G who described an unpleasant encounter with an administrator. In her response, Teacher G questioned the level of professionalism exhibited by the administrator. As stated by Teacher G, teacher–administrator interaction might influence the perception of teachers regarding the standards. Clearly, when teachers perceived that they have been treated in an unprofessional manner, they are inclined not to perform to the best of their abilities. Perhaps, their perceptions are focused on the lack of respect, and contentious relationship with an administrator as opposed to providing quality instruction.

Teachers in this study have alluded to the need for improving the relationships that exist between teachers and administrators. This coincides with research conducted by Adair (1984) who explored the Hawthorne effect. The basis of the Hawthorne effect is that attention given by a supervisor (administrator) to a worker (teacher) affects the level of productivity that ensues. When the supervisor gives a worker adequate attention and constructive feedback, productivity increases. Improving teacher/administrator interaction will create a work environment that is collegial and fosters respect by treating one another in a professional manner.

Implications for School District Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have implications for teachers and administrators that might affect the interaction between teacher and administrator during the teacher evaluation process. Areas of emphasis would focus on accountability and professional development.

Accountability. The findings suggest that teachers want to be evaluated and held accountable for their performance. To meet the requirements outlined in the performance standards, teachers must be made aware of the expectations. Through various modes of communication, teachers are in receipt of the needed information and the steps necessary to be successful. Teachers have adamantly expressed the need to be informed of expectations and to be provided the tools necessary to meet those expectations. This level of awareness is an avenue to meeting the standards. As teachers attempt to meet the standards, they are provided feedback from administrators that can be used for improvement. The goal of the performance standards is to assist teachers in meeting the minimum requirements as established in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (VDOE, 2011).

Professional development. The results of this study provide valuable information to continue using teacher evaluation as a tool to improve instruction. This finding concurred with research conducted by Sanders (2000). Sander's research focused on using teacher evaluation as a method to reinforce professional development. To meet the needs of teachers and administrators, the data from this study could be a component of the district's professional development plan and an individual school's plan as well. Job-embedded professional development for teachers and administrators would need to be on-going. Professional development for teacher evaluation is critical when promoting professional learning. Professional development of this kind is essential if change is to take place. This finding is supported by Muijis (2006) who focused on teacher evaluation functioning as a tool of professional development to increase instructional ability, resulting in an increased in student learning. The culminating result would be an increase in student learning.

Most importantly, the findings have indicated that a need exists for more professional development for teachers and administrators regarding the implementation of the revised standards. Professional development is needed to provide teachers the clarity that they desire related to the performance standards and indicators, and to increase their instructional proficiency. In contrast, administrators need additional training in being able to identify whether a teacher adequately meets the standard. The training should focus on enabling administrators to conduct classroom observations, provide constructive feedback, and evaluate teachers in a manner that is free of bias and not subjective. For teacher evaluation to be successful, teachers and administrators must understand the components of the system and work collaboratively to increase the instructional proficiency of teachers, which would result in the increasing levels of

student performance. Evaluation is best used as tool to benefit teachers and students, instead of a tool used to punish or instill fear in teachers regarding their job performance or job security.

The emphasis of professional development would be to ensure that teachers and administrators have received adequate training to ensure that the standards have been properly implemented. Professional development activities would need to occur on the district and school level to meet the diverse needs of staff.

According to the findings of this study, the school district and individual schools could create professional resource centers to meet the professional needs of teachers. In the centers, teachers could have access to books, technology, and mentors to assist them in areas of weakness. The professional resource centers could help teachers facilitate professional learning groups to meet their needs in providing students quality instruction.

Policy. Lastly, the data could be used to address the policies, procedures, and practices of CCPS regarding teacher evaluation. The district superintendent and his staff would be able to address areas of concern identified by teachers and take corrective actions. By using the feedback of teachers, the district superintendent and his staff would be able to implement policies, procedures, and practices to address teacher needs with teacher evaluation.

Future Research

The focus of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of the seven performance standards—(a) professional knowledge, (b) instructional planning, (c) instructional delivery, (d) assessment of and for student learning, (e) learning environment, (f) professionalism, and (g) student academic progress—in an urban district in southeastern Virginia. The study provided insights into the factors that influence

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teacher perceptions of the performance standards. Their insightful responses are reflective of teachers in the throes of a recently implemented teacher evaluation system. As described in their responses, teacher evaluation has acquired a new meaning since the implementation of the performance standards in 2012.

Secondary School Teacher Perceptions of the Performance Standards

Using a sample of 12 secondary teachers, teacher perceptions of the performance standards implemented in 2012 were examined. In this urban district, secondary teachers teach Grades 7–12. Secondary teachers teach a tested or nontested subject. Tested subjects are core subjects with an attached SOL test. Nontested subjects are electives classes that enrich the core subjects. Variables such as grade level, years, of experience, and level of effectiveness were analyzed to determine their influence on a teacher's perception of the performance standards.

I propose a follow-up study to include elementary teachers. In this urban district, elementary teachers teach students who are in pre-K to Grade 6. When comparing secondary teachers to elementary teachers, they both have similarities and differences. For one, the framework of an elementary school varies greatly from a secondary school. This detail and the influence of variables such as grade level, years of experience, and level of effectiveness would provide insightful information regarding the teachers' perceptions of the performance standards. Unlike secondary teachers, elementary teachers teach more than one subject. Additionally, all grade levels in elementary schools will not have tested subjects. By interviewing teachers of all grade levels and subjects, the data collected would provide an understanding of teacher perceptions across a wide spectrum.

The data collected from this study would provide more information regarding the disparities that exist between teachers of tested subjects and nontested subjects according to grade level. The data from this study could be used in a variety of methods by school, district, and state personnel to determine the impact of various factors on teacher perception. This study would support research conducted by Ellett and Teddlie (2003) who emphasized the influences of community demographics and varied teaching settings. In some teacher responses, they described frustrations regarding the disparities that exist among schools, school districts, and specific communities. They referenced the lack of resources to aid instruction and the ability levels of students as barriers to obtaining optimal student success. The teachers expressed that additional consideration needs to be given to schools who have more challenges with student success.

Comparing Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Performance Standards

I suggest a study comparing a sample of administrators with a sample of teachers may be a useful addition to the findings from this study. By interviewing administrators, it provides an avenue to investigate whether the variables that influence teacher perceptions also influence the perceptions of administrators. The data collected from this study could provide the basis for professional development for teachers and administrators by addressing concerns regarding the procedures and practices of teacher evaluation in a school district. This type of study would add support to studies conducted by Muijis (2006) and Sanders (2000) regarding the use of teacher evaluation as a method to strengthen professional development. As previously described, the purpose of professional development is to increase instructional proficiency that results in increased student achievement.

Comparing Teacher Perceptions in Urban, Rural, and Suburban Districts

In this study, I focused on a sample of teachers in an urban district in southeastern Virginia. Teacher responses referenced that the performance standards do not include all aspects of the teaching context. The impact of factors such as socioeconomic status of students, locality in which a student resides, and resources of the district were suggested as factors that the performance standards need to consider. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction because they felt that teachers in urban districts have challenges that are not the same as those of teachers in other localities.

I suggest a study comparing teacher perceptions in urban, rural, and suburban districts within a specified geographic region to identify the variables that influence the perceptions of teachers. This type of study would expand on the research of Ellett and Teddlie (2003) who emphasized the impact of community demographics and teaching settings on student learning and success. This study has implications that will exceed the boundaries of the established geographic region. As a researcher, identifying the similarities and differences regarding teacher perception in a rural, suburban, and urban environments have an impact on the roles of schools and students in these communities as these perceptions influence on educational outcomes of students (Martineau, 2010).

By using mixed methods, surveys and interviews would provide insightful data reflecting teachers' perceptions in a specified geographic region. This data could be used by the VDOE and local districts to implement policies and procedures that may take into consideration the influence of variables typical of a specified geographical region. Additionally, these data could lead to educational reform that is not a one size fits all approach. By creating and implementing reform efforts that are based on the needs of the community, the needs of teachers and students would be addressed.

Final Thoughts

As a school administrator, the findings of this study are intriguing for a variety of reasons. To summarize, it might be considered surprising at how the experiences of teachers affected their perceptions related to the implementation of the performance standards and evaluation criteria. The responses provided by the participants reflected both positive and negative experiences with teacher evaluation. The perceptions of teachers were clearly influenced by their interactions with school administrators. To assist teachers better with the teacher evaluation process, I must prevent my own personal biases from influencing my decisions when evaluating teachers on their performance. This task can be accomplished by building and maintaining relationships with teachers in which mutual respect is paramount. It is important to the teacher evaluation process that a teacher believes the feedback received from an administrator is free of bias and subjectivity. One of the participants responded by implying that administrators were not demonstrating professional behavior, but exhibiting bias. However, the interview participant (Teacher I) said that if she was meeting the criteria as outlined by the Code of Virginia (2012) then "[leave] all personal opinions aside." Ultimately, teacher evaluation is intended to improve the quality of instruction that students are receiving. If an acrimonious relationship exists between the teacher and the administrator, the students might be affected in negative manner. To prevent this level of discord from occurring, professional development activities for teachers and administrators on relationship building, on setting goals and expectations, and on adhering to the performance standards themselves are needed to foster professional growth for all. An example of a professional

development activity would be to conduct a book study. Arneson (2015) described how to foster a framework of trust in teacher evaluation between administrators and teachers.

As a part of the professional development process, ongoing training is needed to ensure that all teachers and administrators clearly understand the seven performance standards, indicators, criteria, and the ratings that comprise summative evaluation. Information can be shared during preservice week, faculty meetings, and in-house staff development and through individual conferences with a school-based administrator. This is needed to assure teachers that they will be treated fairly during the evaluation process. From my encounters with the interview participants, I understand that they want to know their job expectations. The sentiment expressed to me clearly indicated that they would be willing to accept constructive criticism if the feedback were free of bias and subjective comments.

To address the inconsistencies of past practices, the recently appointed superintendent, instructional team, and human resources established and began to implement new procedures and protocols. Part of this process was to provide ongoing professional development for administrators and teachers beginning in the summer of 2015. During the professional development sessions, the standards and criteria for meeting the standards were addressed. The ongoing professional development was to be provided by outside consultants, central office personnel, and school-based administrators.

Also, the findings of the study indicated that teachers were cautious yet frank about making comments about their evaluation. As a school administrator, it is important to treat teachers with respect and to adhere to the established guidelines of the district regarding teacher evaluation and to use the performance standards and criteria as written.

The purpose of teacher evaluation is to improve teaching and instructional practices of teachers, not to punish. When teachers are treated in a punitive manner regarding teacher evaluation, they lose respect for the process of teacher evaluation and the administrator. In responses provided by interview participants, the desire was expressed among the teachers for their administrators to be fair, consistent, knowledgeable, and respectful. Additionally, their responses alluded to the professional practices of administrators and whether they adhered to established protocols and procedures regarding teacher evaluation. Teachers will not buy-in to a new system if they feel mistreated. Therefore, the feedback given by a school administrator must be given in a constructive manner in which comments are stated objectively and free of bias. Therefore, teachers will be receptive of the comments and adhere to the established guidelines to improve.

Additionally, as a school administrator, the data collected from the interviews have provided me with information that is needed to address teacher concerns related to the implementation of the performance standards in CCPS. By listening to their concerns, a school administrator in conjunction with central office personnel can work together to establish practices and procedures that reflect the concerns of teachers, but maintain the fidelity associated with the teacher evaluation process.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Project: Urban Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Virginia Guidelines

for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria.

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee**:**

[Description of the project, informing the interviewee about (a) the purpose of the study,

(b) the individuals and sources of data being collected, and how long the interview will

take place.]

Allow the interviewee to read and sign the consent form.

Turn on the recording device and test to determine if it is working correctly.

Interview Questions

Interview question	Interview item and question text	Research question
Demographic items	Years of teaching experience	Q4, Q5, Q6
	Middle/high school grade-level	
	Tested/contested subject	
	Rating on summative evaluation	
Question 1a	What are your overall perceptions of the seven performance standards and indicators?	Q1, Q3, Q4, Q5

Interview question	Interview item and question text	Research question
Question 1b	What are your perceptions of the six teacher performance standards and indicators? Ask about each individual standard: 1: Professional knowledge 2: Instructional planning 3: Instructional delivery 4: Assessment of/for learning 5: Learning environment 6: Professionalism	
Question 2a Question 2b	What are your thoughts about the fact that 40% of your evaluation is based on student progress? Do you think teachers should be evaluated, at least partially, based on student progress? Why or why not?	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5
Question 3a Question 3b Question 3c	What are your thoughts regarding the teacher performance standards in the teacher evaluation system? What are your thoughts regarding the evaluation criteria in the teacher evaluation system? What are your thoughts regarding the overall summative evaluation process in the teacher evaluation system?	Q1, Q3, Q4, Q5

Note. Q = Question.

Teacher Demographic Items

a. How many years have you been teaching?

b. What grade level do you teach? Middle or High

c. Is the course that you teach a tested or contested subject?

d. On your last summative evaluation, what was your overall rating?

[Thank the individual for his/her cooperation and participation in this interview. Assure

Interview participants that he/she will see the final research product.]

Appendix B
Consent to Participate

Please read the following Consent Agreement before proceeding with the interview.

I, _____, agree to participate in a dissertation study examining the perceptions of secondary teachers regarding the implementation of *The Guidelines for Uniform Performance and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. The purpose of this study is to examine urban teacher perception of the recently implemented seven performance standards for teacher evaluation outlined in *The Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2012. In addition, the study explores the impact of teacher perception on the process of teacher evaluation.

I understand that my selection to participate in the study is based on the recommendation of my building principal and my participation in the study is voluntary. I understand that the researcher is conducting this study to fulfill requirements of a doctoral program in Education Policy, Planning, and Leadership at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

As a participant, I understand that my involvement in the study is limited exclusively to being interviewed. I understand that the interview requires that I answer questions related to my perceptions of the seven performance standards that make-up our teacher evaluation system. As a participant in this study, I will provide relevant demographic information used in the study to answer research questions. I understand none of the information collected will be used to reveal my identity as a participant or link my responses with my identity.

The interview will consist of 3 interview questions that have at least two parts and four questions regarding demographics of the participant. The interview may take approximately 30–45 minutes to complete. I also understand that I may request a copy of the study's results from the researcher by sending an email requesting results to bysmith@email.wm.edu.

I understand that there may be minimal psychological distress directly involved with this research. Additionally, I understand that I do not have to answer every question that is asked of me. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participating in this study at any time. If I have any questions or problems that arise in association with my participating in this study, I should contact Dr. James Stronge, the project director at (757) 221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. If any ethical concerns with the conduct of this study, I should contact Dr. Michael Deschenes, the chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary at (757) 221-2778 or mrdesc@wm.edu.

By participating in this interview, I verify that I am at least 18 years of age, that I have received a copy of this consent form, and that I consent to participate in this study and the tasks outlined above.

_____   _____
Date   Signature of Participant

_____   _____
Date   Signature of Investigator

Appendix C

Teacher Evaluation Criteria

Category	Evaluation Criteria
Planning and assessment	▪ The teacher designs coherent instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
	▪ The teacher plans instruction to achieve desired objectives that reflect the Virginia Standards of learning and division curriculum guides.
	▪ The teacher diagnoses individual, group, and program needs and selects appropriate materials and resources to match the abilities and needs of all students.
	▪ The teacher uses a variety of assessment strategies and instruments to make both short-term and long-range instructional decisions to improve student learning.
	▪ The teacher identifies and communicates specific student performance expectations and documents student learning gains using appropriate assessment instruments.
Instruction	▪ The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.
	▪ The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and is able to differentiate instruction to meet diverse student needs.
	▪ The teacher uses comprehensive materials, technology, and resources that promote the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
	▪ The teacher selects, evaluates, and refines a variety of teaching methods and instructional strategies for the active engagement of students and improvement of student learning.

Category	Evaluation Criteria
Safety and learning environment	▪ The teacher actively implements a discipline policy that fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff. ▪ The teacher manages classroom procedures to maximize academic learning time. ▪ The teacher establishes and maintains rapport with students. ▪ The teacher creates a supportive learning environment for all students that encourage social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.
Communication and community relations	▪ The teacher uses effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication to foster positive interactions in the classroom. ▪ The teacher forges partnerships with families to promote student learning at home and in the school. ▪ The teacher works collaboratively with staff, families, and community, resources to support the success of a diverse student population.
Professionalism	▪ The teacher takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning. ▪ The teacher works in a collegial and collaborative manner with peers, school personnel, and the community to promote and support student learning. ▪ The teacher provides service to the profession, the division, and the community.

Note. From Virginia Department of Education, 2000, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*, Richmond, VA: Author.

Appendix D

Sample Performance Indicators

Performance standard	Examples of teacher work conducted in the performance of the standard
1. Professional knowledge	1.1 Effectively addresses appropriate curriculum standards.
	1.2 Integrates key content elements and facilitates students' use of higher level thinking skills in instruction.
	1.3 Demonstrates ability to link present content with past and future learning experiences, other subject areas, and real world experiences and applications.
	1.4 Demonstrates an accurate knowledge of the subject matter.
	1.5 Demonstrates skills relevant to the subject area(s) taught.
	1.6 Bases instruction on goals that reflect high expectations and an understanding of the subject.
	1.7 Demonstrates an understanding of the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of the age group.
	1.8 Communicates clearly and checks for understanding.
2. Instructional planning	2.1 Uses student learning data to guide planning.
	2.2 Plans time realistically for pacing, content mastery, and transitions.
	2.3 Plans for differentiated instruction.
	2.4 Aligns lesson objectives to the school's curriculum and student learning needs.
	2.5 Develops appropriate long- and short-range plans and adapts plans when needed.
3. Instructional delivery	3.1 Engages and maintains students in active learning.

Performance standard	Examples of teacher work conducted in the performance of the standard
	3.2 Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.
	3.3 Differentiates instruction to meet the students' needs.
	3.4 Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout lessons.
	3.5 Uses a variety of effective instructional strategies and resources.
	3.6 Uses instructional technology to enhance student learning
	3.7 Communicates clearly and checks for understanding.
4. Assessment of and for student learning	4.1 Uses preassessment data to develop expectations for students, to differentiate instruction, and to document learning.
	4.2 Involves students in setting learning goals and monitoring their own progress.
	4.3 Uses a variety of assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and for the student population.
	4.4 Aligns student assessment with established curriculum standards and benchmarks.
	4.5 Uses assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes and uses grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives.
	4.6 Uses assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes to inform, guide, and adjust students' learning.
	4.7 Gives constructive and frequent feedback to students on their learning.
5. Learning environment	5.1 Arranges the classroom to maximize learning while providing a safe environment.

Performance standard	Examples of teacher work conducted in the performance of the standard
	5.2 Establishes clear expectations, with student input, for classroom rules and procedures early in the school year, and enforces them consistently and fairly.
	5.3 Maximizes instructional time and minimizes disruptions.
	5.4 Establishes a climate of trust and teamwork by being fair, caring, respectful, and enthusiastic.
	5.5 Promotes cultural sensitivity.
	5.6 Respects students' diversity, including language, culture, race, gender, and special needs.
	5.7 Actively listens and pays attention to students' needs and responses.
	5.8 Maximizes instructional learning time by working with students individually as well as in small groups or whole groups.
6. Professionalism	6.1 Collaborates and communicates effectively within the school community to promote students' well-being and success.
	6.2 Adheres to federal and state laws, school and division policies, and ethical guidelines.
	6.3 Incorporates learning from professional growth opportunities into instructional practice.
	6.4 Sets goals for improvement of knowledge and skills.
	6.5 Engages in activities outside the classroom intended for school and student enhancement.
	6.6 Works in a collegial and collaborative manner with administrators, other school personnel, and the community.
	6.7 Builds positive and professional relationships with parents/guardians through frequent and effective communication concerning students' progress.

Performance standard	Examples of teacher work conducted in the performance of the standard
	6.8 Serves as a contributing member of the school's professional learning community through collaboration with teaching colleagues.
	6.9 Demonstrates consistent mastery of standard oral and written English in all communication.
7. Student academic progress	7.1 Sets acceptable, measurable, and appropriate achievement goals for student learning progress based on baseline data.
	7.2 Documents the progress of each student throughout the year.
	7.3 Provides evidence that achievement goals have been met, including the state-provided growth measure when available as well as other multiple measures of student growth.
	7.4 Uses available performance outcome data to continually document and communicate student academic progress and develop interim learning targets.

Note. From Virginia Department of Education, 2011, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, Richmond, VA: Author.

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