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A STUDY LINKING TITLE 1 STRATEGIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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by

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STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Strategic instructional resourcing has become an important topic in public education, the most lucrative and expensive business in the United States. It is estimated which the United States spends about $612.7 billion annually on public education. This study will analyze and synthesize data from Title I schools in South Carolina, specifically in the area of resource allocation and its relationship to student academic success. Historically, public education has provided all citizens with an equal and equitable opportunity to receive an adequate education. Over time, access to strong public education can impact the lives of students with regard to social mobility.

Instructional leadership is a term which appeared during the 1970s through the research conducted by Ronald Edmonds. In his publications Edmonds found which school leaders who focused on learning in their actions and conversations throughout the school year had a deeper impact on student learning. This was a signficant discovery because school leaders during this time focused more on inspiring students and stakeholders to work together towards a common goal. These leaders had qualities of what is referred to as being a “transformational leader”, which meant a leader devoted to reflecting on student data and what/how teachers teach. Prior to this point, teachers were regarded as the experts and the reason why students learned or did not learn. After this research was published, school leaders were determined to have the biggest impact on student learning. School leaders who were most effective had a strong focus on areas including: collective efficacy, evidence, implementation, learning, student engagement,

and instructional strategies.

This research study is designed to examine how Title I high schools in the state of South Carolina are resourcing their Title I funds. Studies have shown which schools which practice effective and efficient specific instructional resourcing improve their students' academic success. This paper will also explore what steps schools execute before making strategic instructional resourcing decisions.

Keywords: Funding, per-pupil expenditure, equity, quality education, social mobility, socioeconomic status, achievement gap, adequacy, Title I, instructional leadership, six principles of instructional leadership, strategic resourcing, instructional resourcing, English language learner (ELL), socioeconomic disadvantage (SED), special education (SPED), end of course tests (EOC), graduation rate, college and career readiness assessments

Dedication

The completion of my doctoral degree is essentially the result of the overwhelming love and support which I have received from my family members. My wife and newborn son mean the world to me, and they have held my hand to walk me through this entire process. I will always support them both in accomplishing their dreams, and I cannot wait until we are a household of Dr. Coes.

I would also like to thank my doctoral cohort. These colleagues are truly special and the best minds in the east. We have built a family relationship over these past 3 years which will last for generations to come. I could not have done this without them, and I am blessed to say which I accomplished this journey with them.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The public education system was designed to provide equal opportunities for all students to receive an adequate education. Over the years, its mission has been to provide all students with the best possible education regardless of their location, background, culture, beliefs, and/or race. The mission of the South Carolina Department of Education is to provide leadership and support so which all public education students graduate prepared for success (*About - South Carolina Department of Education - 3/16/21 2:27 AM*, n.d.). Court cases have legally defined "equal opportunity" in several high-profile cases including Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), and Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley (1982). These cases not only held the public education system to specific and accountable standards at a legal level, but also compelled the public education system to consistently monitor its responsibilities to provide equitable educational experiences to all students, regardless of students' status within society at large. Current data reflecting success rates of students in the public education system indicate growing gaps in academic success based on race, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, consequently, whether the educational community is maintaining the equity legally required by the aforementioned court cases must be reassessed by ensuring equity in educational opportunities for every student in the public education system.

Historically, one of the main methods the federal government has utilized to combat the lack of access to equitable public education in an effort to reduce monetary inequities is through the allocation of funds to districts in low socioeconomic areas. These funds, known as "Title I" funds, provide extra support to designated schools based

on Census Poverty Data from the US Department of Education of Children ages 5-17. Title I (Part A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). This financial assistance is designed to help ensure all children meet challenging state academic standards, and is allocated based upon four statutory formulas based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state. A district can apply for Title I funds through documentation of its student poverty rate by utilizing data drawn from one of three methods. The first method is determined by the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Student eligibility for this program is determined after students submit the National School Lunch Program Application form to the school. The second method is direct certification through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF). The third method available to districts applying for Title I funding is the student poverty rate, which is based on data regarding student eligibility for the following programs: SNAP, TANF, Medicaid (within the last 3 years), foster care, migrant, and homeless/runaway statistics.

Nearly every district in the US receives some form of Title I funds (Sparks, 2019). Title I funding is designed to help ensure all children meet challenging state academic standards, and its main purpose is to provide all students, regardless of where they go to school, an equal opportunity to receive adequate and appropriate education. These funds date back to the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law in April of 1965 (McClure, 2008). This

legislation was created to ensure federal financial aid is spent in addition to state and local funds to assist all students in meeting challenging state standards. Enactment of this legislation was not achieved without challenges. The most significant of these challenges was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which established Title VI, which prohibits schools receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin (McClure, 2008). This act required school systems which operated racially segregated schools to create and implement acceptable desegregation plans in order to be eligible to receive these federal funds.

Policymakers since 1965 have debated ways to update Title I and how its federal funds are allocated to local educational agencies (Sparks, 2019). In the latest Every Student Succeeds Act, Congress called on the Institute of Education Sciences to recommend options which would amend and consolidate the four formula grants. This Institute developed A National Center for Education Statistics' report in 2019 which detailed what a large challenge it would be for Congress to revise support for its neediest students (Sparks, 2019). To this date, there have not been any changes to the formulas used to allocate Title I funds, but there are some important things which must be considered in order to understand how these funds work.

First, not all disadvantaged students are served by Title I (Sparks, 2019). Due to children not always being enrolled in a school district receiving funding, and these funds were determined based on children aged 5 to 17. Consequently, many districts with preschool programs which served low-income three- and four-year-olds did not receive funding for these students. Also, schools have an option to choose to implement their own personal schoolwide program instead of receiving Title I funds, which gives them

more flexibility on how they can spend their monies (Sparks, 2019). This flexibility is very attractive to district leaders, but many have not been trained well enough on how to use the money more creatively. In total, about 11.6 million students were eligible and allotted Title I money when over 25 million students received Title I services (Sparks, 2019).

Title I funds do not always go to the highest-poverty schools. The four types of grants which make up Title I funds are: (1) basic, (2) concentrated, (3) targeted, and (4) Education Finance Incentive. These grants are based on different formulas by which the needs of the district are determined, which then dictates the amount of money it will receive with Education Finance Incentive Grants (EFIGs). Targeted grants are more likely to be focusing funds towards the areas of highest poverty (Sparks, 2019). Smaller districts tend to receive more funding through the basic and concentrated grants, while larger districts receive more through targeted and EFIG grants. This differentiation causes districts having between 300 to 24, 999 eligible children to receive the least amount of money per child (Sparks, 2019). The size of the state in which a school is located can also make a significant difference in the amount of money received. This is because each state must receive at least .5 percent of the total nationwide Title I funding, and small states which do not meet the minimum are moved to that threshold, which often leads to the smallest states receiving higher per-child grants than the national average (Sparks, 2019).

Schools with rising poverty may also lose out to schools with decreasing poverty based upon the current Title I formulas (Sparks, 2019). Population shifts cause districts with rising poverty numbers to be left without funding, while districts with decreasing numbers are not being required to return any of their excess funds. This difference leads

to a major misappropriation of funds, but it all this means nothing until Congress passes a budget. Every year Congress approves spending for Title I, and the formulas help districts understand what portion of the funds they will receive (Sparks, 2019). In fiscal 2015, the four Title I grants were authorized for $181.7 billion, but ultimately Congress only appropriated $14.3 billion of those funds to the different districts (Sparks, 2019).

It is estimated the United States spends about $612.7 billion annually on public education, which indicates the lack of funding is not the cause of the academic divide. Research has now begun to look at how school districts are spending money to determine if there are positive correlations between where funds are being designated and student academic achievement. This research study is designed to evaluate how Title I high schools in the state of South Carolina are resourcing their Title I funds and the efficacy of their distribution. Studies have shown schools practicing effective, efficient, and specific instructional resourcing of funds are improving their students' academic success. This study will also explore what steps schools should take before making strategic instructional Title I resourcing decisions.

Educational Adequacy

The anti-poverty and civil rights laws during the 1960's and 1970's have brought about a huge emergence of the Department of Education's equal access mission (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). During this time, the passage of laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, have respectively made civil rights the fundamental focus of the Department of Education. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) launched a set of comprehensive programs of federal

aid for disadvantaged children which included the Title I program (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The Higher Education Act was also passed in 1965 to authorize assistance for postsecondary education, which included providing financial aid to needy college students.

The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) originated with President L. B. Johnson's War on Poverty. ESEA was an educational law which was meant to close the achievement gap between children of poverty and those who are more advantaged. ESEA is an extensive statute which funds primary and secondary education, emphasizing high standards and accountability. As mandated in the act, funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and the promotion of parental involvement. The act was signed into law on April 9, 1965, and its appropriations were to be carried out for five fiscal years. The government has reauthorized the act every five years since its enactment. In the course of these reauthorizations, a variety of revisions and amendments have been introduced. Since its origination, ESEA has been renamed No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and most recently, Every Student Succeeds Act (Lee, 2020).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was in effect from 2002–2015. The goal of NCLB was to provide equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged students (Lee, 2020). NCLB was the product of a collaboration between civil rights and business groups, Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill, and the Bush administration (Klein, 2020). States had the option to follow the NCLB Act, but if they failed to do so, they risked losing Title I money. Two criticisms of NCLB were: it

focused too much on standardized testing, and as the law matured there were no congressional updates or reauthorizations.

NCLB was in effect from 2002-2015; then it was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). NCLB primarily focused on students in poverty and minorities, but when developing the ESSA, educators and families were involved in creating a better law which focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in colleges and/or careers. NCLB was developed by political stakeholders whereas ESSA involved families, students, and community groups. The goal of the ESSA was not only to make sure public schools provided a quality education for all students with accountability measures, but to also return to the states the autonomy to determine how their schools account for student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a). This revision has led to increased graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates around the United States. There are also more students enrolling in and attending college than ever before.

In Hawaii, schools are required to develop annual school plans called Academic/Financial Plans often referred to as Ac/FP (Tyrell, 2012). These plans are designed to: improve performance, document school goals, priorities, programs, activities, and designate the funds to accomplish them. Unfortunately, there seems to be some confusion about how the Ac/FP is used by principals in Hawaii to determine resource allocation with a focus on improving student achievement (Tyrell, 2012). *Resource Allocation strategies and educational adequacy: an examination of an academic & financial plan used to allocate resources to strategies which promote student achievement in Hawaii is a* study which uses Odden's (2009) Evidence-based Model as

the framework to align resources in the Ac/FP with research-based strategies which have been successful in meeting student academic outcomes. This study is based on five elementary principals' Ac/FPs and examines the links between resource allocation and student achievement. It also focuses on how principals can use an Evidence-Based framework to link resources effectively to meet the mission and vision of the school as described in its Ac/FB (Tyrell, 2012).

With increases in high-stakes accountability throughout the global economy through standards-based reform established through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, principals' roles have shifted from "operations managers" to "educational leaders" (Tyrell, 2012). It has become the principal's sole responsibility to ensure school success and individual student achievement regardless of the disadvantages its students may be facing. In an effort to study the process of allocating resources using the Hawaii Ac/FP, this multiple methods study will combine the Evidence-based model with the current Ac/FPs of five elementary schools to answer the following research questions: 1. What is the school's instructional vision and how does it align resources to meet the vision within the framework of the Hawaii strategic plan? 2. How can principals use an Evidence-based model as a guide to align resources effectively to strategies which work in raising student achievement? 3. In a time of economic decline and state budgetary cuts, how can an Evidenced-Based Model assist principals in prioritizing resource allocation needs more effectively? 4. How can an Evidence-Based framework help Principals statewide to link resources effectively to meet the school's vision and mission as described in the Ac/FP (Tyrell, 2012)? The interest of this study is to compare the resource allocation framework

which the Hawaii Department of Education uses with those outlined in the Evidence-Based Model (Tyrell, 2012).

Odden and Picus' EBM, Odden's (2009) *Ten Strategies for Doubling Student Performance* were used to compare five elementary schools' instructional visions and strategies. This study also compared the Evidence-based model resource allocation strategies to the resources which were available at an elementary school using a matrix which shows what the model generated in terms of resources: what the school actually has, and the differences between the two (Tyrell, 2012). The study concluded few schools experienced significant gains in student achievement outcomes, and others experienced a decline or lack of growth in student performance. When comparing each school's resource allocations using the EBM, it is clear which three of the sites were understaffed in terms of core teachers, and two were adequately staffed (Tyrell, 2012). Also, the administration positions exceeded the EBM recommendations in all sites but one. Lastly, the sample schools underfunded according to the EBM in the areas of per pupil resource allocations to support items such as technology, professional development, instructional materials, and student activities (Tyrell, 2012). This shows the use of the Odden's (2009) model to be crucial to the effectiveness in improving student academic success by school leaders (Odden, et al., 2003).

Background of the Problem

The challenge of ensuring every student receives educational equity regardless of his/her location remains the biggest unsolved problem facing public education (*Department of Education Equity Action Plan | U.S. Department of Education*, n.d.). The structure barriers (outdated facilities, lack of needed resources, lack of high-quality

teachers, i.e.) and inequitable funding systems have truly impeded efforts to close the achievement gap. There are significant differences in public education revenues in school districts within and across states. These differences are defined in terms of actual and resource-cost-adjusted and student-need-adjusted dollars (Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States, n.d.). Since the major responsibility for public education lies with the states, a major focus is on how each individual state allocates its resources.

Studies have focused on the discrepancies between per-pupil funding, referred to as actual funding, and resource-cost and student-need-adjusted funding. Actual funding is funding which refers to nominal dollars, a set amount of funds which a student receives (Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States, n.d.). If the amount of money allocated to each student is $6,000, then each student in the state will be awarded $6,000 regardless of where he/she is located. In instances where resource-cost- and student-need adjusted dollars are considered, an analysis is done based on the cost of needed resources in a given area, and dollars per student are awarded based upon this data. Research has shown in these instances, educational equity has been more attainable in the relevant states. This outcome is also true in states where the average education revenues are similar throughout all districts (Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States, n.d.).

There has been an increase in federal involvement in public education directly linked to the increases in federal funding. Most recently, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 allowed the federal government to impose federal accountability measures on

schools and school districts and to mandate standardized testing. Schools and districts were required to publish their school's data which included: scores on mandated standardized assessments, as well as graduation percentages, average scores on college and career readiness assessments, and demographic statistics (Lee, 2020). States were also required to report their annual yearly progress toward the federal goals in place, and serious consequences were imposed upon schools and school districts which did not meet their goals. These consequences sometimes even called for school and district leaders to be fired or removed from their positions. Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 under the Obama administration, loosened some of the federal mandates and gave the powers back to the states in the essence of developing their own standards and determining when they could administer standardized assessments. States and districts were also only required to create plans and progress goals for schools rated in the bottom 5%, high schools which graduated less than 67% of students, and schools where subgroups were consistently underperforming. These changes resulted more concentrated focus on public education and their instructional leaders (Lee, 2020).

District and building administration quickly became one of the most scrutinized positions in America. As a result of this scrutiny, teachers began to leave due to the pressures of unrealistic expectations and under-valued compensation for the amount of work being required of them. Researchers began to study the qualities and skill sets of these educational leaders and their connections to achievement of academic success in their schools. The title, "instructional leadership', was brought to the forefront during this time, and educational leaders began to be required to possess certain skills in order to be considered qualified to be an educational leader. These requirements must be discussed in

order to understand how and why instructional leaders are choosing to allocate their federal funds.

Instructional leadership has grown into a main focal point of educational research in the last 50 years. Globally, significant efforts have been made by researchers and practitioners to understand the linkages between learning and school leadership (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). Educational researchers are all working towards an understanding of what qualities and practices are required to make a school leader effective, and how and where they are capable of making a positive and significant difference in student learning. Many leadership models have been studied throughout previous decades to determine their relationship to learning, including, but not limited to: transformational leadership, principal leadership, transactional leadership, educative leadership, strategic leadership, teacher leadership, and distributed leadership (Greb, 2011). However, none of these practices has been under more scrutiny than instructional leadership as it relates to student achievement and allocation resourcing.

Research on instructional leadership first began in the United States during the 1950's as a practice-based prescription rather than a theory-driven construct (Bridges, 1967). During this time period in the United States, it was largely assumed adequate schools had good leaders (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). This assumption led to Edwin Bridges's foundational research on instructional leadership, which was subsequently published in the *Journal of Educational Administration* in 1967. In this publication, Bridges (1982) states, "of the seven major task areas for which principals have responsibility, curriculum and instruction have generated the most sound and fury" (p. 32). He continues by commenting on the lack of clarity in what are considered to be

the “concepts of instructional leadership,” (p. 33). The unclear expectations of a leader, asserting that significantly more research is required before determining a leader's impact on learning (Bridges, 1967).

Recent research has shown instructional leadership has demonstrated the strongest empirically-verified impact of student learning outcomes (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). This observation has led to a global trend towards strengthened school accountability measures, reflected in the creation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in the United States, enacted in 2001, and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) established in the UK in the late 1990’s (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). In both of these government-issued requisites, students’ achievement of learning outcomes (based on standards created and required by the government) were measured to determine school leaders’ success. These developments led to gradual global acceptance of sustainable school improvement which is seldom found without active, skillful leadership from principals (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013).

The policies resulting from the NCLB Act and the Race to the Top 2012 refocused attention on making principals accountable for the school’s results in the 21st Century. Research has reinforced the role of the principal as the primary instructional leader (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). Changing instructional leadership from a more conceptual idea to a more theoretical approach marked a significant change in the focus of educational research. Prior to the 21st Century, most principals were considered to be “effective” if they possessed good managerial skills and motivated their stakeholders toward a common vision. These principals were perceived to be transformational leaders. Currently, school leaders are being assessed based on more comprehensive requirements,

including possessing instructional knowledge and demonstrating the ability to create cohesive and effective instructional practices, which promote positive academic growth movements in all students.

Statement of the Problem

In order to determine the need for educational funding for schools to support students' needs, the difference between adequacy and equity first must be established. *Adequacy* is defined as "all students receiving what is needed to fund their educational process." *Equity* means "funding everyone equally regardless of whether their needs are met." Providing *adequacy* for all students means instructional leaders must ensure students' needs and basic requirements with regard to education are met sufficiently, and perhaps even exceeded in some cases. It also means educational funding is provided for all public-school students so they are afforded the same opportunities regardless of which district they attend. *Adequacy* is based on individual needs, which is more efficient and effective than the equal distribution of resources which many districts use. Equal distribution of resources ensures all resources are evenly distributed to schools in any given district. This even distribution ensures no matter what a school's needs are, it will only receive the equal portion.

The difference between "educational equity" and "educational adequacy" is "educational *equity*" distributes funds equally to all schools, while "educational *adequacy*" distributes funds based upon the individual needs of the students at a particular school. Article XI of the South Carolina State Constitution, Section 3, addresses access to free public schooling and other public institutions of learning, stating "The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free

public schools open to all children in the State and shall establish, organize and support such other public institutions of learning, as may be desirable (1972 (57) 3193; 1973 (58) 44.).” This statute exists to ensure the General Assembly is held accountable in providing maintenance, growth, and support of a free public education accessible for all children in the state of South Carolina. The General Assembly is tasked with providing equal resources for school districts, while the task of the designated school districts is to distribute these resources (based on previously stated data) to the qualifying schools within that district.

Title I funding is an example of funding which goes beyond the “equity” level and is based on student needs. This funding is only allocated to schools which meet certain criteria based on their student populations. A district can apply to receive Title I funds through documenting its student poverty rate by utilizing data from one of three methods. The first method is determined by the number of students on free and reduced lunch. Student eligibility for this program is determined after students submit the National School Lunch Program Application form to the school. The second method is direct certification through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF). The third method available to a district applying for Title I funding is its student poverty rate, which is based on data regarding student eligibility for the following programs: SNAP, TANF, Medicaid (within the last 3 years), foster care, migrant, and homeless/runaway statistics.

This example of adequacy funding examines the number of students, socio-economic status of the community, and school test scores in order to determine the amount of money designated for school districts by the United States Department of

Education. An example of financial output, or per-pupil expenditure, is generated by the United States Census Bureau. In 2013, New York State spent $19, 818 per pupil, while South Carolina spent $9, 514 (Education Spending Per Student by State, 2013). These significant differences in funding establish a discrepancy among students and their learning environments. Students who receive more funding usually have access to more educational advancement opportunities, while those with less access to funding tend to have fewer opportunities. This difference holds true for educators as well; those who work in school districts where the per-pupil expenditure is higher tend to receive lower pay than those who work in higher-funded areas. In 2019 Bamberg County, one of the lowest income areas in the state of SC, reported $13,467 in per-pupil expenditure, and its teachers received a starting wage of $35,000. In Charleston County, one of the highest income areas in the state of SC, the school districts spent an average of $11,718 in per-pupil expenditure, and the starting wages for teachers were around $39,000. This is a $4,000 difference in teacher starting pay for schools located less than an hour and thirty-five minutes apart (Stanley, 2021).

Funding in the lower socioeconomic area public schools is now under more scrutiny than ever. Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, provides and outlines funding to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high percentages or high numbers of students from low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). This Act includes four statutory formulas which are based primarily upon census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state. This funding is designed to ensure these students meet or exceed the expectations of

challenging state standardized assessments (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Title I is the largest federal aid program for K-12 schools. The program's purpose is to ensure all students have fair, equal, and significant opportunities to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, a level of proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments. In 1992, The National Council of Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) released a report which changed education forever (Kortez et al., 1992). The report, "Raising Standards for American Education," called for a reform of American education by implementing a national system of educational standards and assessments. Once schools receive Title I funds, it is the instructional leaders' responsibility to properly allocate the funds assigned to their schools. Funds can be spent on: salaries and benefits, professional development, instructional supplies and materials, parent and family engagement activities, extended day programs, student incentives (capped at 1% of the school's allocation), educational field experiences, and speakers and consultant fees for students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Funds cannot be spent on "entertainment costs" or field trips which fall under the category of "amusement parks" and "social activities." There is currently no monetary cap placed on money which may be spent on salaries and benefits, technology, professional development, conference attendance, and/or furniture and fixtures; however, it is important to consider the return on investment, meaning due consideration of what is necessary and reasonable, as well as what is going to best address the school's needs based on the data. Ultimately, the district can set parameters on how much money can be distributed to each part, but the state department retains the legal right to question the amount invested in an activity if it considers the amount to be in excess or if it suspects

schools may be supplanting funds in a particular area which is not beneficial to students. Title I plan activities should align to these reform strategies.

As the research expands on instructional leadership and the skills which are required of an effective instructional leader, resource management and allocation of funds have become key to establishing the effectiveness of the school leader. This information is especially true for principals in low socioeconomic areas who are receiving additional state and federal funds. When instructional leaders do not manage funds effectively and are not knowledgeable on research-based practices, it results in students in the lower socioeconomic areas not receiving the very benefits Title I was created to support. These students already have many negative factors which decrease their opportunity to live successful lives after high school, and by not preparing them at the level of their peers, they are truly being hindered from living their best lives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the effects which strategically allocating federal funds has on student educational success. This study will also look at the role the instructional leader has in strategically allocating resources for improved student academic success. Research trends suggest the abilities of instructional leaders play a major role in student academic improvement (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). The public education system has prided itself on providing free, adequate, and appropriate education to all students; however, this is not the case in all schools, especially those in lower socioeconomic areas lacking effective instructional leaders. Public education has had discrepancies in funding based upon where students are located for years. These schools have attempted to conceal these discrepancies with the allocation of funds given

to them through Title I funding.

Such allocation is largely accepted worldwide now and principals have been required to become instructional leaders. This requirement means they must have the ability to: (1) define schools' mission and goals; (2) design academic structures and processes through financial management and resourcing; and (3) develop people (Hallinger, Heck, 1996). Strategically allocating funds is crucial to the effectiveness of these behaviors because they all require money in order to be accomplished. This study aims to show how effective resource allocation by school principals can lead to greater academic success of students in Title I high schools.

Research Questions

I. What is the impact of Title I Part A funds which are specifically resourced on the South Carolina state accountability measures in Title I high schools during the years 2017-2021?

Hypothesis: Title I schools which strategically use resource funds for instruction in the areas of instructional development are able to increase their scores on the South Carolina state accountability measures (i.e., graduation rates, academic growth on EOC assessments, and college and career readiness scores).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it focuses on how school leaders in under-resourced schools serving low socioeconomic students are using strategically-resourced federal funds to make a positive impact on student success. Schools are located in various areas, and no child has the same needs. All students require different assets and activities to be successful in the classroom. Consequently, assigning a general price on those needs

is inappropriate. Policymakers since 1965 have debated ways to update Title I and how its federal funds are allocated to local educational agencies (Sparks, 2019). In the latest Every Student Succeeds Act, Congress called on the Institute of Education Sciences to recommend options which would amend and consolidate the four formula grants. The Institute developed A National Center for Education Statistics' report in 2019 which detailed how much of a challenge it would be for Congress to overhaul support for its neediest students (Sparks, 2019). To this date, there have not been any changes to the formulas used to allocate Title I funds.

A landmark case which argued the misappropriation and unequal dissemination of funding was Serrano v. Priest (1971). In this California case, the state Supreme Court affirmed the lower court's finding of the wealth-related disparities in per-pupil spending generated by the state's education finance system violated the equal protection clause of the California constitution (School Funding Cases in California, 2015). Serrano v. Priest (1971) was viewed as the first modern-era case to show a constitutional violation of human rights through education finance litigation decisions. Equity was not established among all schools due to the fact some schools were receiving more money than others based upon the wealth of the area in which the schools were located.

Hartzell v. Connell (1984) was also a significant case in California in 1984. Taxpayer-parents, community organizations, and the Coalition Opposing Student Fees filed suit against the Santa Barbara School District, its school officials, and its board. The filings alleged the new policy requiring students to have to pay to participate in some school extra-curricular activities was a violation of California Constitution's "free school" clause (Art. IX, Sec. 5) and its equal protection clause (Art. IV, Sec. 16) (School

Funding Cases in California, 2015). The Supreme Court of the state of California ruled in their favor saying it was a violation of equal opportunity and equal access citing the writings of Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and John Swett. The Supreme Court declared since extra-curricular activities at the school "constitute an integral component of public education" and promote civic engagement and responsibility among students, the court ultimately held California's "free school" clause prohibited schools from charging fees for students to participate in extracurricular activities, regardless of whether waivers were provided to students with financial hardship or whether school districts themselves were facing financial hardship (School Funding Cases in California, 2015).

In Williams v. State 1999, several organizations sued the State of California, citing inadequate, unsafe, and unhealthy facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, missing libraries, a lack of instructional materials, and overcrowded schools which resulted in a staggered and shortened school year (School Funding Cases in California, 2015). In 2004, both parties reached a settlement of 800 million dollars for school repairs, an implementation of a complaint process, along with five other objectives to improve the quality of the educational process. Eight years after the settlement agreement, California had failed to pay even half of the emergency funds which it promised would be allocated to the betterment of schools throughout the state, and over 700 schools were still inadequately equipped to fix the most basic of problems including broken toilets, infestations, and clogged sewer lines.

South Carolina Inadequate Funding Case

The state of South Carolina has also been under scrutiny based upon its public-

school funding. South Carolina's supreme court had a twenty-four-year battle with the state's legislature over how to fund its most rural school districts (Burnette II, 2017). Located in some of the state's most isolated areas along Interstate 95, there are school districts which have become known as The Corridor of Shame. Thirty districts argued in a lawsuit in 1993 which the state of South Carolina had neglected to give them enough money to provide their students with a "minimally adequate education." This area has consistently had low test scores and demonstrated inefficiencies in teaching students to read and write. They have some of the highest teacher turnover rates in the state and a documentary released in 2005 depicted conditions which were heart-wrenching and deplorable (Burnette II, 2017).

In these cases, the South Carolina Supreme Court has ruled to address educational equity, but it has done very little to address how school districts should spend and allot their monies. Even in the Abbeville County School District vs. The State of South Carolina of 1993, often referred to as the Corridor of Shame Case, the state supreme court voted 3-2 to end oversight of the legislature's spending, arguing it is not the role of the court to dictate how the legislature spends the state's money (Burnette II, 2017). Basically, the legislature abandoned its focus on determining how local funds for education are being allocated to different districts. The establishment of education is one of the powers reserved to the states under the Tenth Amendment. The state cannot deny this right, and it is required to fund all districts equally and not based upon economical distinctions. Equal access and equal opportunity rights are meant to protect the citizens and to ensure everyone is treated equally and provided with their right to the pursuit of happiness.

In conclusion, students in the public education system are given and afforded different opportunities based upon the school leader's ability to manage and use funds appropriately. Students in higher economic areas are provided a better opportunity to be successful after high school than students located in lower socio-economic areas due to the instructional leaders in those areas. This difference is also reflective in the class system which composes the American economy. Students who grow up in low-income households tend to maintain this same financial status into adulthood. Instructional leaders must do a better job of allocating funds which will provide all students with equal and adequate opportunities to live productive, fulfilling, and honest lives in the career of their choice. Students' life and career choices should not be limited based upon the quality of education (or lack thereof) to which they have access in their school district; instead, they should be guaranteed the same opportunities presented to students in other districts.

Operational Definitions

1. *Funding*- "The amount of money allocated to a school or school district by the county, state, and US Department of Education" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)
2. *Per-Pupil expenditure*- "In the state of South Carolina per pupil amount equals the total expenditures of the district divided by average daily membership, which now includes 3- and 4-year-old students" (FY 2021-22 Revenue Per Pupil Report By District, 2021)
3. *Equity*- "The quality of being fair and impartial with regard to funding" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)
4. *Quality education*- "Education which provides all learners with the capabilities

they require to become productive, positive, effective, and sustainable citizens in society" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)

5. *Socioeconomic status*- "Is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation" (Demographic Profiles – NCCP, n.d.)

6. *Lower socioeconomic area* (low income)- "The economic area where the average family income is below federal poverty threshold" (Demographic Profiles – NCCP, n.d.)

7. *Higher socioeconomic area* (high income)- "The economic area where average family income is well above federal poverty threshold" (Demographic Profiles – NCCP, n.d.)

8. *Achievement gap*- "Any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between Caucasian students and students of color" (Greb, 2011)

9. *Adequacy*- "An approach to school funding which begins with the premise the amount of funding schools receive should be based on an estimate of the cost of achieving the state's educational goals. This approach attempts to answer two questions: (1) how much money would be enough to achieve those goals? and (2) where would it be best spent?" (Odden & Picus, 2003).

10. *Title I, Part A*- Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, provides and outlines funding to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high percentages or high numbers of students from low-income families (U.S.

Department of Education, 2018)

11. *Instructional leadership*- “The management of curriculum and instruction by a school principal, or the principal’s role in managing teaching and learning in schools” (Greb, 2011)

12. *Strategic resourcing*- "The process of identifying the spending profile of an organization and its supplier base to ensure its business requirements are aligned appropriately with the suppliers” (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013)

13. *Instructional resourcing*- “The human and non-human materials and facilities which can be used to ease, encourage, improve, and promote teaching and learning activities” (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013)

14. *Data-Driven Decision-Making*- “A process involving a plan of action which uses strategies to overcome setbacks and a monitoring system” (Fullan, 2010)

15. *Socioeconomic disadvantage (SED)*- "Stakeholders with fewer years of formal education, low income, and/or low occupational status” (Koball and Hernandez, 2021)

16. *Special education (SPED)*- “The practice of educating students in a way which provides accommodations which address their individual differences, disabilities, and special needs, Title VII” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)

17. *Social Mobility*- “To provide anyone having the ability and motivation to succeed with the opportunity to learn and grow his/her skills to rise in the class society of America” (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006)

18. *End of Course Assessments (EOCs)*- “A statewide assessment program of end-of-course tests for gateway courses awarded units of credit in the areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies” (*End-of-Course Examination Program*

(EOCEP) - South Carolina Department of Education - 5/9/20 11:55 PM, n.d.)

19. *College Entrance Exams*- "ACT and SAT, which are timed multiple-choice tests which assess students in the areas of ELA, writing, and mathematics" (*College Entrance Exams*, n.d.)

20. *Graduation Rate*- "The rate at which students graduate from high school within four years of the time they first enter" (*South Carolina Department of Education Releases Annual Student Dropout Report*, n.d.)

21. *ESSER Funds- "Are emergency relief funds to address the impact of COVID-19 by the US Department of Education" (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, n.d.)*

Assumptions

The assumption in this study is principals are instructional leaders who have the ability to decide how to spend money based on students' needs with a goal to mitigate gaps in student achievement successfully. This successful achievement will be shown in graduation rates, the number of students attending/enrolling in higher education programs, and student scores on standardized tests.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are: (1) the generalizability of this study, and (2) the instructional leaders' qualities and years of experience. Given this study is only examining instructional leaders of Title I high schools, it would be misleading to use the results of this study in other educational environments, such as elementary and middle schools. Additionally, the instructional leaders of these Title I high schools are already in place and have various educational backgrounds and years of experience which may

affect their ability to allocate funds. (3) COVID-19 is a limitation of this study as well. This study was conducted in the middle of a pandemic where students and adults lost their lives and financial income. This does effect student academic success and cannot be controlled.

Lastly, a key limitation of this study is researchers are not investigating the leadership style or ability of the principals of the schools being investigated. Researchers are only evaluating the school leaders' resource allocation in order to determine if the leader can and does have an impact on struggling schools. This is a limitation of this study since these specific phenomena are not being investigated.

Delimitations

The delimitations are: the population of the study, statistical analysis, and the focus of the study on student graduation rates. The population of the study will consist of only Title I high schools from the state of South Carolina. The data used during this study was collected by the South Carolina Department of Education and covers the 2017, 2018, and 2019 school years. Lastly, the researcher was not able to control any participant's level of willingness to participate in this study.

Conclusion

Strategic instructional resourcing has become an important topic in public education, which remains the most lucrative and expensive business in the United States. It is estimated the United States Department of Education spends about $612.7 billion annually on public education. This study will analyze and synthesize data from Title I schools, specific resource allocations, and the correlations made in the changes in student academic success rates overall. Historically, public education has provided all citizens

with an equal and equitable opportunity to an adequate education. Over time, access to strong public education can impact the lives of students with regard to social mobility. This study will seek to discern how Title I high schools in the state of South Carolina are resourcing their Title I funds and whether it has an impact on student success as measured through state assessments and accountability measures. Studies have shown schools practicing effective and efficient instructional resourcing are able to improve their students' academic success (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). This paper will also explore what steps schools should execute before making strategic instructional resourcing decisions.

It is assumed students who receive more funding than the state average towards their public education will have better jobs and career opportunities after high school than those who receive less than the state average. This assumption will be confirmed by their post-secondary careers and schooling choices. These students also will receive more scholarships and accumulate less debt than those receiving less funding during their public-school careers. With this assumption occurring over time, a social and economic divide among society may be outlined based on where a young person grows up, which is a variable they (and oftentimes their guardians) cannot control. This crucial element is the reason why the results of this research are crucial for increasing student academic success in public education.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Education Equity in the States

Public Education is constitutionally delegated to the individual state governments, yet the federal government's involvement has increased progressively since the 1960s. The federal courts desegregated the public schools in the 1960s and 70s after the civil rights movement and became more involved in public schools by trying to provide more equitable education systems (DeBray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009). It was the goal of the Johnson (1964) Administration to create equal access opportunities to eliminate poverty and discrimination. This mission was called the *Great Society* and became the ESSA of 1965. The ESSA's biggest initiative was to put money into lower-funded school districts and schools with high levels of poverty, which is where Title I funds were created. Title I funds are federal funds distributed to schools of high poverty levels with federal regulations to combat the ill effects of poverty and decrease the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students (Wong & Nicoteria, 2004).

In 1996, a study was completed by James Coleman, a Johns Hopkins sociologist, who was disturbed by a paragraph in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Johns Hopkins University, 2016). Section 402 required the commissioner of education conduct a survey and report the findings to the President and Congress. This survey collected data concerning the lack of availability of equal opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions. Coleman and his team had little over a year to complete one of the largest social science surveys ever conducted (Johns Hopkins University, 2016). Very little was known about American schools with regard to funding, resources, accountability, or academic divides between

whites and students of color because standardized assessments and required elements for successful learning had not been created yet. The goal of Coleman's study was to understand these outcomes: How well were kids learning? What might influence a child's capacity to learn? Was it teachers? Peers? Family?

Before Coleman finished the study, the federal government had already made assumptions about what the data would reflect. These assumptions included: (1) some schools were still segregated, (2) some districts were still underfunding schools with predominantly minority student populations, and (3) the South was still discriminating by having inferior schools for poor and minority students (Johns Hopkins University, 2016). The government's plan was to use the data gathered in this report to impose pressure on the offending districts and threaten to withhold federal funds unless changes were made. This was the federal government's plan, but was not the objective of Coleman and his team. Their main goal was to understand American education on the basis of the outcomes they were studying.

What Coleman and his team uncovered was yes, segregation still existed, but the biggest determination of a child's academic success was a student's family background (Johns Hopkins University, 2016). The physical amenities of a school and funding were factors in a child's academic success, but not the most significant determinant. Coleman also was the first to document what is known as the achievement gap, or the divide between African American children who were several grade levels behind their white counterparts in school (Johns Hopkins University, 2016). These discoveries led to an age of educational reform which is still being implemented today. Title I legislation's allocation of federal funds to areas of poverty to decrease achievement gaps was the most

significant outcome of this research. These findings also led to inspired research on educational inequalities and the impact of socioeconomic status on student achievement (Gamoran & Long, 2006).

Educational equity has been a concern often discussed throughout the centuries in public education. In 1992-93, the United States Department of Education conducted a study to investigate the degree of disparities in average revenues across school districts within each of the states and the District of Columbia for the school year of 1991-92 (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.). The degree of disparity was observed at the 50th and the 75th percentiles of average revenue per student, as well as the more extreme ranges of the 5th and 95th percentiles. Standard equity measures were presented and compared in terms of actual cost and student-need-adjusted dollars, which reflect intra-state equity comparison analyses (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.).

The second analysis which was completed in this study was an inter-state analysis, which compared what is being received by the median student in each state across the states (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.). This information was also separated in terms of actual cost and student-need-adjusted dollars. A major limitation of this study was the intra-state comparisons did not include separate analyses on elementary, secondary, and unified school districts. The primary disadvantage of this omission is the comparisons may include legitimate disparities in the cost of education at the two levels (*Inequalities*

in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States, n.d.).

This US Department of Education (1992-93) study summarized a variety of findings. The first was in an inter-state perspective, median total revenues differed considerably between the highest revenue state of New Jersey and the lowest revenue state of Utah. In terms of actual dollars, New Jersey students received $9,257 versus Utah students who received a total of $3,185. In terms of cost and need-adjusted dollars, New Jersey students received $6,721 while Utah students received $2,862 (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.). In regard to the intra-state comparisons, the degree of variations among students within individual states also varies considerably across the nation. The degree of disparity in revenues between students in the 5th and 95th percentile was over two-to-one in nine states, while the same difference was observed in less than 50 percent in nine other states (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.).

Collectively, these data express the increasing concerns with regard to the overall level of funding for all districts. Examining actual dollars does not provide a clear representation of whether districts are properly funded; cost and need-adjusted indicators have proven to be more useful for the purposes of equity comparisons across states because these are more representative of the variations in purchasing power (*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues / 98210 / Chapter IV Education Equity in the States*, n.d.). Policy makers have also argued equity in educational provision across a state is of limited benefit to students in states where all districts are uniformly underfunded. These

statements emphasize the importance of student equity and the significance of the limitations on a student's education can be the result of where a student lives, even if he/she is receiving extra federal assistance with Title I funds. This explains why a new focus has been placed on how instructional leaders are allocating their resources to address the deficits created by lack of equity in funding.

Social Mobility

It is often believed colleges and universities in America are committed to promoting the goal of social mobility. This goal aims to provide anyone who has the ability and motivation to succeed with the opportunity to learn and grow his/her skills to move up in the class society of America (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Needless to say, this rise does not happen very often. Students in poor and minority neighborhoods are usually less prepared academically due to lack of financial and human resources needed to compete with their more successful counterparts. Elementary and secondary schools in poor or minority communities tend to be of low quality and are ill-equipped to prepare students for postsecondary schooling adequately. This deficiency is reflected in the increased number of students going into colleges and universities from low-income families. These students are not graduating due to the lack of necessary study and work habits which they should have been taught in high school (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). This observation is important to this study because Title I schools serve students in predominantly poor and minority neighborhoods.

Thomas Kane reported data he collected from an inner-city Boston program which focused on primarily minority students in comparison to their suburban counterparts. He reported only a third of the inner-city students had taken the SAT exam

by October of their senior year, and they were ill-informed about the process of looking at the cost of attending a college. He continued to report 97 percent of the suburban students had taken the SAT by October of their senior year and understood financial aid and cost of attendance (Neckerman, 2004). This finding shows the inequalities in public education which are directly linked to student success after high school because research shows higher education influences social mobility (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). In general, the earnings gained by students of high-income families exceed those of students from low-income families due to the large disparities between these two groups in gaining a post-secondary degree. In 2005, the earnings gap between those with a degree and those with just a high school diploma was $29,000 (Haskins, 2006).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is a term which appeared during the 1970s through the research conducted by Ronald Edmonds. In his publications, Edmonds found school building leaders who focused on learning in their actions and conversations throughout the school year had a deeper impact on student learning (Edmonds, 1980). This was a significant discovery because school leaders during this time focused more on inspiring students and stakeholders to work together towards a common goal. These leaders represented qualities of what is referred to as a transformational leader, one who is a leader devoted to reflecting on student data and what/how teachers teach. Teachers to this point were regarded as the experts and represented the reason why students learned or did not learn. After this research was published, school leaders were determined to have greater impact on student learning. School leaders who were most effective had a strong

focus on these areas: collective efficacy, evidence, implementation, a focus on learning, student engagement, and instructional strategies.

Common Leadership Responsibilities of Principals of Successful Turnaround Model Schools is a qualitative study which was conducted for the purpose of discovering which leadership responsibilities school principals of successful turnaround schools commonly perceived as most necessary to lead a turnaround (Fullwood, 2016). These leadership responsibilities were within the domains of trust, communication, learning, and shared leadership, concepts which have been identified by Marzano (2005). This information led to a deeper understanding of how to select principals to lead schools through current and increasing achievement gaps (Fullwood, 2016).

This study concluded there were distinct commonalities among principals concerning which leadership responsibilities they attributed to their success (Fullwood, 2016). The conclusions were: changing the culture changed the school, participation in professional learning communities (PLC), building relationships on campus to solidify trust, and establishing and communicating an identified focus and alignment of resources leading to their school's success (Fullwood, 2016). Principals used a transitional leadership approach to make their focus on culture deliberate and strategic, which encouraged agreement and participation from staff members and instructional strategies to achieve their goals. Findings also showed which turnaround schools benefited from principals who engaged in building effective and efficient PLCs through a shared vision with a clear focus (Fullwood, 2016).

Lastly, successful turnaround schools showed a narrow focus on students' instructional needs. Principals and staff members determined the students' primary needs

at their schools and focused on a select group of strategies to meet those needs. These findings suggest when hiring principals to lead schools which are failing, a district must ensure they possess specific leadership skills and abilities. Principals who were hired who possessed the appropriate skill sets and abilities were able to establish a culture of learning which led to student academic achievement and success (Fullwood, 2016).

The importance of a principal's instructional leadership skills is also shown in an Education Week Report (Diplomas Count, 2010). Twenty-one urban school districts were identified as districts who defined expectations based on factors such as district size and poverty level. This finding led to a study through the support from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Council of Chief State School Officers designed to identify what key priorities the schools had in common to lead to their increased academic success (Dick, 2013). The study identified nine factors or priorities of these schools. These factors included: 1. Focused instruction around students' interests, learning styles, and aptitudes. 2. Administrators and teachers sharing an unrelenting commitment to excellence for all students, especially in the area of literacy. 3. An extraordinary commitment of resources and attention to ninth grade students. 4. A rigorous and relevant twelfth-grade year. 5. A laser-like focus on data at the classroom level to make daily instructional decisions for individual students. 6. High-quality curriculum and instruction which focuses on rigor and relevance. 7. Provide students with adults with whom they can develop relationships and be allowed opportunity to use reflective thought. 8. Focus and maintain professional development around a limited number of high-impact initiatives. 9. Solid and dedicated leadership (Dick, 2013). This study highlights the importance of having an instructional leader who possesses the necessary skills to lead a

school which services students of poverty and minorities. Many responsibilities fall on the instructional leader, and he/she must have the ability and vision to lead and provide for the teachers and students in his/her school to increase academic achievement.

Allocation to Student Achievement

In the early 1990s, school finance and how schools decided to spend their money came under much scrutiny. Many schools and districts began to look for resources they could purchase to assist their students in meeting state and national accountability standards in academics. One approach which became popular at this same time is the Evidence-Based method developed by Allan Odden and Lawrence O. Picus (Odden & Picus, 2003).

In Odden and Picus's Evidence-Based model, there are two steps: (1) a review of the evidence from research and best practice on what programs work in education; and (2) a review of districts and schools which have increased the level of student achievement over a three-to-seven-year time period (Odden & Picus, 2003). Studies conducted in the states of Wyoming, Washington, Wisconsin, and Arkansas have offered examples of how the Evidence-Based method can be applied to increase student performance on state assessments. Therefore, South Carolina could achieve this outcome as well by implementing this same method of strategic resource allocation.

These steps of the Evidence-Based method for this study were completed by the department of education and local school districts. After receiving Title I, Part A funds, schools develop a proposal which first must be approved by their district Title 1 coordinators. The proposal is then submitted to South Carolina

Department of Education for approval before the schools can spend any of their allocated funds. During these processes, school leaders and district coordinators research best practices and use evidence-based strategies to allocate funds strategically to improve student educational success. The written proposal is then, submitted to the state department for approval, which can take a few weeks to occur. If a proposal is denied, which rarely happens, then the district must resubmit its proposal with the recommend changes (ESEA Title I Part A, n.d.).

Based upon the review of the budgets obtained through the study, all schools budgeted their funds under six categories designed to assist students with meeting state and national accountability standards. The categories listed were: personnel, instructional supplies, software, professional development, technology supplies, and parenting activities/community outreach. These areas, based upon the Evidence-Based model, have been shown to have the greatest positive impact on student achievement on standardized assessments at the state and national level in the state of South Carolina.

Importance of Strategic Resource Allocation

These efforts are not only about increasing the funding in low-income areas, but also about using the increased funding to provide students with equitable opportunities similar to those of their affluent peers. *An Investigation of Leadership Practices That Yield Success in Renewal Schools* is a study which focused on New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) Renewal School initiative as a method of school turnaround. This initiative was intended to preserve the existing school community, supply necessary leadership changes when appropriate, and provide human operational

resources (M. A. de Govia, 2017). One of the clear keys to turning around a struggling school is strong leadership (Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, & Redding, 2008). As the nation's largest school district, New York City public schools serve over 1.1 million students in more than 1800 schools (New York City Department of Education, NYC Data, 2017). A National Equity Atlas (2014) analysis indicated 7.64% of white students were receiving free or reduced lunch, while 42.6% of students identified as people of color were receiving free or reduced lunch. These numbers indicated there was a high correlation between poverty and race due to the number of students of color learning in high-poverty schools in the United States versus the 7.64% of white students (National Equity Atlas, 2014).

At the end of the study, it was concluded principals must possess certain qualities in order to lead a school deemed to be at-risk or failing through the application of a turnaround model. Some of the qualities identified in this study were: good organizational management skills, resilience, emotional intelligence, and improved systemic communication (M. A. de Govia, 2017). The study also identified the importance of: making data-driven decisions, possessing strong instructional leadership skills, evaluating leadership and instructional practices as qualities the principals and superintendents needed to possess. Lastly, successful instructional leaders accepted and understood they were in a unique situation and needed to be open-minded because they would be faced with unique experiences (M. A. de Govia, 2017).

The study also concluded the Renewal Schools were an initiative which ultimately failed (M. A. de Govia, 2017). The research questions from this study were based on the findings of Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2005) which identified

principal leadership qualities and correlated them to student academic achievement to create a scale based upon their statistical impact. It concluded the Renewal School initiative required the positions of school leadership to operate on the lower end of the scale, except for the area of resources. (M. A. de Govia, 2017). In the area of resources, school leaders yielded a statistical impact of .25 which is a strong indicator for student achievement. These findings support the research of Horng et al. (2010), which found leadership participation in the classroom was not significant to principal success and student achievement.

Title I School Performance

The U.S. Constitution assigns the primary responsibility of public education to the states, but the federal government has continuously played significant roles in emphasizing the importance of education as the equalizer to poverty reduction (Wells, 2009). In 1965, President Eisenhower's educational focus was to improve opportunities for children in poverty by providing additional funds for these students and schools. Over time, this emphasis and national educational policy has been refined and reauthorized to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (*Department of Education Announces Actions to Advance Equity in Education | U.S. Department of Education*, 2021). The primary goal of these reforms was to focus on standards-based education reform, which was based on measurable goals to improve individual student educational outcomes (Wells, 2009).

Title I is a federal categorical program which provides federal funds to schools and districts with high percentages of students in poverty to assist them in ensuring all students meet the outlined academic standards (Stanley, 2021). These schools are

normally labeled as Title I schools and usually score low on standardized assessments due to various reasons directly correlated with students of poverty (Krumpe, 2012). Receipt of these funds requires more accountability. There are parameters placed on these funds which outline how this money can and cannot be spent by the schools and districts receiving this federal aid. Schools and districts are also required to create and submit Title I plans to their state department, as well as to share them with local stakeholders (US Department of Education, 2004). These requirements can be achieved in various ways including: holding Title I community meetings where these plans are distributed to those who attend, publishing the plans on the school website, or distributing the plans electronically.

The Title I, Part A funding is granted through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and provides supplemental resources to districts and schools beyond state and local funds (*Title I, Part A Allowable & Unallowable Costs NCLB No Child Left behind Program Series*, n.d.). These funds are based upon funding formulas and are intended to help schools having high concentrations of students from low-income families to meet the state high-quality performance standards. The intended beneficiaries are students who experience difficulties mastering the state content standards and academic achievement standards.

Before any funds can be spent, a comprehensive needs assessment and improvement plan must be completed. This assessment requires funds to be spent only on programs, activities, and strategies which are scientifically based and meet the needs identified (*Title I, Part A Allowable & Unallowable Costs NCLB*

No Child Left behind Program Series, n.d.). These assessments and plans are submitted to the South Carolina Department of Education's Innovation and Support Office of Federal and State Accountability for approval before being submitted to the US Department of Education. In this process, if a school or district's proposal does not meet the mandated requirements outline by US Department of Education, then it must revise and resubmit its application. This requirement keeps school proposals from being returned or denied by the US Department of Education.

The allowable uses of Title I, Part A funds fall under five categories: Employee Salaries, Professional Development, Supplies and Educational Materials, Equipment, and Travel (*Title I, Part A Allowable & Unallowable Costs NCLB No Child Left behind Program Series*, n.d.). At least 1% of Title I, Part A funds must be used for parent involvement activities as well. Parents must also be involved in the decision-making process about how to spend this 1% of the funds.

Linking Resource Allocation to Student Achievement: A Study of Title 1 and Title 1 Stimulus Utilization was a mixed-method study intended to help schools and school districts allocate categorical dollars effectively in order to improve student academic achievement (Krumpe, 2012). Of the 184 schools within the 20 districts which were selected to participate in the original sample, only 15 elementary and middle schools from five districts in Southern California completed the survey and participated in the research study (Krumpe, 2012). These schools were traditional public, non-charter, calendar school year type schools. They were also Title I schools with a poverty

percentage of forty percent or higher. At the completion of the study, most schools showed an increase in AYP ELA and Math scores (Krumpe, 2012).

Analysis of the 2009-2011 Title I and Title I stimulus expenditures revealed the top percentages of the expended funds were devoted to interventions during the school day (34.2%), coaching (23.0%), and extended learning time before and after school (10.1%). Additionally, there were nine areas of expenditure which had a strong to moderate correlation with student achievement (Krumpe, 2012). These include: administration professional development, teacher professional development, district professional development, school collaboration, coaching, interventions before and after school, learning time during summer school, technology for learning, and additional teaching staff.

Based upon the findings at the conclusion of the study, it was determined professional development should be included in all at-risk schools' plans. It had the strongest correlation to student academic growth and achievement (Krumpe, 2012). These results are well-supported by the literature, which suggests ongoing, sustainable professional development is a key effective strategy in raising student academic achievement (Fullan, 2010; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Odden, 2009; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Odden & Picus, 2008). Professional development comes in many forms, for example: collaboration with teachers working together, district-sponsored professional development, intensive teacher workshops and training, and coaching (Krumpe, 2012).

This study is significant because it highlights the importance of resource allocation and expresses the challenges which Title I schools face. Title I schools

traditionally have lower standardized-test scores and must cope with many other factors which affect a student's ability to learn at the same rate as his/her peers (Krumpe, 2012). This type of situation is where Title I funds help to assist schools by providing additional funding to make sure all students receive the education they deserve, but principals must allocate these resources effectively and spend money on effective tools designed to increase student achievement. This study outlines conditions and results which have been shown to be effective in the state of California.

The state of South Carolina has also been under scrutiny based upon its public-school funding. South Carolina's supreme court had a twenty-four-year battle with the state's legislature over how to fund its most rural school districts (Burnette II, 2017). Thirty districts argued in a lawsuit in 1993 the state of South Carolina had neglected to give them enough money to provide their students with a "minimally adequate education." This area of South Carolina has consistently, over the years, had low test scores and demonstrated inefficiencies in teaching students to read and write. These districts have some of the highest turnover rates in the state, and a documentary released in 2005 depicted conditions which were "heart-wrenching and deplorable" (Burnette II, 2017). This situation remains true to this date.

These court cases have decided to address educational equity, but very little has been done to address how states should spend and allot their monies. Even in the *Corridor of Shame Case,* the court voted 3-2 to end oversight of the legislature's spending, arguing it is not the role of the court to dictate how the legislature spends the state's money (Burnette II, 2017). The establishment of education is one of the powers reserved to the states under the Tenth Amendment. The state cannot deny anyone this

right, and it is required to fund all districts equally with no considerations for economical distinctions. Equal access and equal opportunities rights are provided to protect the citizens and make sure everyone is created equal and given their right to the pursuit of happiness.

Students in the public education system are granted different opportunities based upon the school leader's ability to manage and use funds appropriately. Students in higher economic areas are provided better opportunities to be successful after high school than students located in lower socio-economic areas based on the capability of instructional leaders in those schools. This finding is also reflective in the class system which composes the American economy. Students who grow up in low-income households tend to maintain this same financial status into adulthood. Instructional leaders must do a better job of allocating funds which will provide all students with equal and adequate opportunities to live productive, fulfilling, and honest lives in the career of their choice. Students' life and career choices should not be limited based upon the quality of education (or lack thereof) to which they have access in their areas; instead, they should be guaranteed the same opportunities presented to students in other districts.

The State of Funding Equity in South Carolina

High schools face a challenging task every year in trying to not only educate students to a level where they can graduate from high school and continue into higher education, but also to prepare them to be successful in the workforce where they can provide for themselves and others. There are many challenges inside and outside of school which influence students' academic success. Such challenges are evident in high schools which are disadvantaged and have a low quality of resources.

There are often misconceptions about the inequities in our school system. Many states believe they are spending more money on educating their low-income students and students of color, than their Caucasian counterparts, but this is not true (Trust, n.d.). In the state of South Carolina Funding Equity reports and Funding Gaps 2017 brief, the funding inequities from the school year 2015 became very evident. South Carolina enrollment population is broken down into: 52% White, 35% African American, 8% Latino, 3% 2 or more races, and 1% Asian. South Carolina also has 24% of its student enrollment living below the poverty line and approximately 56% of these students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (Trust, n.d.).

In the state of South Carolina, the highest poverty districts received $738, or 7% more per student than the lowest poverty districts. The highest poverty districts receive $318, or 6% more in state revenues per student than the lowest poverty districts (Trust, n.d.). It was also stated after adjusting for the additional needs of low-income students, the highest poverty districts received $59, or 1% more per student than the lowest poverty districts (Trust, n.d.). Lastly, districts serving the most students of color receive $696, or 6% more per student than districts serving the fewest students of color.

The highest poverty districts in the state of South Carolina make up 29% of enrollment, and South Carolina's highest poverty districts receive about 7% more state and local funds per student than the lowest poverty districts. Local funds are based on property taxes, which vary between districts. State funds are allocated based on the need to offset these discrepancies between local funds (Trust, n.d.). These findings rank South Carolina 13th among the fifty United States and show this state's funding is being allocated to the students having the most need (Trust, n.d.).

This information suggests schools are struggling, not because of money discrepancies, but due to the traditional paradigms not meeting the needs of their population of students (Cullen et al., 2013). This philosophy of providing all students with the same primary college and vocational skills with little experimental perspectives has led to a loss of creativity and resulted in larger differences between schools of affluent students and schools of disadvantaged or challenged students. There has been an effort to move disadvantaged students to high-performing schools which has shown positive gains in graduation rates and labor market outcomes (Cullen et al., 2013). These positive results demonstrate by properly allocating funds based upon what their population of students need, schools can increase their students' academic success and close the achievement gap.

Chapter Three: Methods

Introduction

Higher educational achievement levels have substantial effects on the amount of money one earns per year (Haskins, 2006). It is also understood education level and financial achievement level play a role in accounting for the degree of mobility between generations (Kearney & Haskins, 2020). Education can boost the mobility of children from poverty or low-income families because it adds substantial income, however, this cannot be achieved until schools become more effective in improving basic skills which will help these students complete high school and college.

This study will examine the effectiveness of the allocation of Title I funds in South Carolina secondary schools based on the South Carolina state accountability measures outlined on a South Carolina high school report card. These Title I monies are designed to assist high poverty school districts in meeting the high state standards of South Carolina public education. Poverty has shown to be one of the greatest indicators of low student academic achievement (Harris, n.d.). I

In this chapter, the research design and approach to this quantitative, descriptive study will be explained. The sample and setting of this study will be described and defined. This chapter will provide an explanation of the instruments used for data collection, as well as the descriptive analysis developed in this research study.

Research Design

Context of Study

The quality of education throughout the communities has been identified as essential to social mobility. A college degree has become a prerequisite for an

increasing number of entry level jobs, and is the most direct way to join the middle class (Moore, 2018). In 2000, the median income for college graduates more than doubled that of individuals who only had a high school diploma, and 42% of jobs in 2010 expected applicants to have a post-secondary degree (Moore, 2018). Research has identified many variables which have a significant impact on student achievement. These variables include, but are not limited to: family background, poverty level, teacher-pupil ratio, location in rural and urban areas, and expenditures per-pupil (Greenwald et al., 1996a; Hanushek, 1998; Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1994).

To control or manipulate these variables is difficult because most of them are out of the realm of the schools' control. This study examines how schools are spending their Title I monies to increase their student academic performance (i.e., overall academic growth metric). School districts and Title I high schools from across the state of South Carolina were contacted directly through a letter (see Appendix 2) to gather their Title I budgets for the years of 2017-2021. All identifying information was removed from this research study, and this study also includes information gathered directly from the South Carolina Department of Education website and state officials. This research study is designed to assist local and state at-risk children and youth with services needed to continue their education (Harris, n.d.).

Design Choice

The purpose of this study is to determine if the factors: poverty, student-to-teacher ratio, enrollment, personnel, instructional supplies, software, professional development, technology supplies, parenting activities, or other expenditures, impact academic growth of students in Title I, Part A-receiving high schools. The instruments

used to collect data were the programs GEMS and GAPS. GEMS (Grants Electronic Management System) is where all Title I, Part A-receiving high schools must submit their Needs Assessment and Allocation Plan for feedback and review by the State Department of Education. GAPS (Grants Accounting Processing System) is where the Title I, Part A-receiving high schools submit their budgets for their plans being approved by the SC Department of Education.

Academic and demographic data (average EOC English score, average EOC Math score, average EOC Biology score, average EOC US History score, average graduation rate, average college and career readiness score, average poverty percentage, average student enrollment, and average student to teacher ratio) were collected from the schools' report cards located on the South Carolina Department of Education website. These academic data were collected from the 2017-2021 school report cards. An academic growth metric for this study was created by subtracting the 2021 scores in these areas from the 2017 scores, and then adding all these scores together to determine each school's overall growth metric. All the schools which had a positive growth metric were schools which grew academically, and all the schools with a negative growth metric were schools which did not grow academically. There were no schools which did not show either negative or positive growth. A description of this data can be found in Table A1 in Appendix A.

Key Abbreviations

Table 1

List of Abbreviations

No.	Category Title	Category Abbreviation
1	Title I Part A served High School	TS
2	End of Course English	EOCE
3	End of Course Math	EOCM
4	End of Course Biology	EOCB
5	End of Course US History	EOCU
6	Graduation Rate	GR
7	College and Career Readiness	CCR
8	Overall Growth	OG

Table 1 represents the academic categories of accountability outlined by the South Carolina Department of Education for high schools in the state from 2017-2021. While all schools are required to report these data to the state department each year, due to COVID-19 in the 2019-2020 school year high schools were excused from these academic accountability measures, so academic data from this year were not included in this study.

Setting and Sample

This study takes place in the state of South Carolina. As of May 2021,

763,254 students were currently enrolled in the South Carolina Education system (*Operational Status - South Carolina Department of Education*, 2021). In 2019, South Carolina was ranked 44th out of the 50 states by *US News* for its quality of education (Ziegler, 2019). In 2021, there were a total of 16,680 students enrolled in a Title I, Part A-receiving high schools in the state of South Carolina. These 16,680 students were located in 33 different high schools in 19 different school districts. The average poverty rate for these schools was 79.8%.

A letter was sent to all Federal Programs directors who have Title I high schools in their district, and this letter is located in Appendix B. From the 469 high schools within 80 public school districts in South Carolina, 5 Title I, Part A-served high schools out of 5 different school districts were used for this study. Title I-served schools are schools which have a high percentage of students in poverty and receive federal funds to assist them in ensuring these students meet all standard assessment measures. Many of these Title I-served high schools are located along or near Interstate 95 in predominately underdeveloped rural areas. Participating schools all have a poverty rating of 65% or higher and are traditional public-serving schools on a traditional school-year calendar (August-June). These public high schools are traditional high schools which serve 9th-12th grade students and report student achievement data to be displayed on their school report card each year. Each school's demographic data can be found in Table 2 (see Appendix D).

Only Title I, Part A-receiving high schools which had a positive overall academic growth metric for every year from 2017-2021 were the population for this

study. These 1,933 students were located in 5 different schools in 5 different school districts. The average poverty percentage in these schools was 85.62%. The schools are made up of mostly minority students and are located in the area referred to as the *Corridor of Shame* along I-95.

Instrumentation

IBM® SPSS

IBM® SPSS Statistics is a statistical software platform which offers user-friendly interface with a robust set of features which allows users to extract actionable insights from their data sets (IBM, 2019). These advanced statistical procedures help ensure high accuracy and quality decision-making by allowing the user to include all facets of the analytic lifecycle from data preparation and management to analysis and reporting. This computer-based program was purchased and downloaded from the licensed IBM website. For this study, the IBM® SPSS Statistics program was used to run a multilinear regression and statistical analysis of the variables. The variables for the multilinear regression are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Dependent and Independent Variables of the Study

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variable**
Other	Overall Academic Growth Metric
Parenting Activities	
Technology Supplies	

Professional Development	
Software	
Instructional Supplies	
Personnel	
Poverty Average	
Enrollment Average	
Student to Teacher Ratio	

Note: In Appendix A you will find a description of each one of these variables explained in more detail.

Data Collection

Academic and demographic data were collected for this study from January to June of 2022, for Title I, Part A-receiving high schools in the state of South Carolina. These data are located in Appendix C (Table 2A) and D (Table 3A). The only data used in this study was from Title I, Part A-receiving high schools which consistently received federal assistance each year and showed an overall academic growth metric which was positive.

Achievement and Demographic Data. To determine student academic achievement and demographic data for this study, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) was used to retrieve all Title I, Part A-receiving high schools' report cards from 2017-2021. An academic growth metric was created by subtracting their 2021 scores in these areas from their 2017 scores, then adding these scores together to determine the schools' overall growth metric. The schools' averaged demographic is provided in Appendix B. Research has shown student achievement can be linked to test

scores and graduation rates (Ferguson & Ladd, 1996). Research has also shown measures like: SAT/ACT scores, highest level of education achieved, and future income has been linked to student achievement (Ferguson & Ladd, 1996).

Allocation Data. To determine money allocations for this study, Title I, Part A-receiving high schools' Allocation Plans were collected from South Carolina Department of Education (see Appendix E, Table 4A). A comprehensive needs assessment is the first step in creating these plans as legislated by Every Student Succeeds Act. After the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) is complete, a team of stakeholders developed these Title I plans and submitted them with allocation amounts including the items they identified which would address their needs. These plans are analyzed, and upon approval by the state department, upload into GAPS. Title I plans are public information and should be accessible to all stakeholders. Schools' Title I plans should be shared with stakeholders during their Annual Title I meeting and should be shared on the schools' website.

Data Analysis

Research Question:

The research question leading this study:

I. What is the impact of Title I Part A funds which are specifically resourced on the South Carolina state accountability measures in Title I high schools during the years 2017-2021?

Hypothesis: Title I schools which strategically use resource funds for instruction in the areas of instructional development are able to increase their

scores on the South Carolina state accountability measures (i.e., graduation rates, academic growth on EOC assessments, and college and career readiness scores).

Null Hypothesis: Title I schools which strategically use resource funds for instruction in the areas of instructional development are not able to increase their scores on the South Carolina state accountability measures (i.e., graduation rates, academic growth on EOC assessments, and college and career readiness scores).

Descriptive Statistics

The sample chosen for this study were from the state of South Carolina. They had to be a Title I, Part A-receiving high schools which consistently received federal assistance each year from 2017-2021 and showed an overall academic growth metric which was positive.

Inferential Statistics

IBM® SPSS was used to complete the statistical analysis of the research question. A multilinear regression model was conducted to determine the independent variables' significance with regard to the dependent variable of this study which was student academic growth on state accountability measures. The independent variables included: (1) other allocation average, (2) parenting activities allocation average, (3) technology supply allocation average, (4) professional development allocation average, (5) software allocation average, (6) instructional supplies averages, (7) personnel averages, (8) poverty averages, (9) enrollment averages, and (10) student-to-teacher ratio averages from the five schools used in this study.

Once this multilinear regression was completed, the significant f and p-value were examined for a value less than 0.05. A significance *f* of less than 0.05 informs the researcher the regression ran a respectable model, and a *p*-value of less than 0.05 demonstrates the significance or effect the variable has on the outcome. The R-Square was investigated to determine how much change was driven by the independent variable. A table will be included in chapter four which outlines the regression models' findings.

Conclusion

This section outlined the research design, while examining the setting and sample selected for this study. Chapter three explains the instruments used and how the data were collected. The descriptive analysis and inferential statistical analysis performed allowed the research question to be answered. Chapter four will provide an overview of the findings of the analysis.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

It has been questioned whether money positively influences student academic performance, and this study evaluated whether strategically allocated funds could lead to academic growth in disadvantaged schools. Research has also suggested improving policies and practices around school resource allocation can lead to improved student achievement (Hanushek et al., 1996). The statistical results of this study are shown descriptively and analytically for our five-school sample. The total sample includes 5 different high schools in 5 different school districts which service a total number of 2,056 students. This chapter will analyze the inferential statistics. The multilinear regression model was analyzed to examine the variables which had the most statically significant impact on the outcome.

Key Abbreviations

Table 1

List of Abbreviations

No.	Category Title	Category Abbreviation
1	Title I Part A served High School	TS
2	End of Course English	EOCE
3	End of Course Math	EOCM
4	End of Course Biology	EOCB
5	End of Course US History	EOCU
6	Graduation Rate	GR
7	College and Career Readiness	CCR
8	Overall Growth	OG

Table 1 represents the academic categories of accountability outlined by the South Carolina Department of Education for high schools in the state from 2017-2021. While all schools are required to report these data to the state department each year, due to COVID-19 in the 2019-2020 school year, high schools were excused from these academic accountability measures, so academic data from these years are not included in this study.

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

The statistical software package used by the researcher to analyze the descriptive statistics of the intensive and strategic sample was IBM Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS). For each variable included in this study, the standard deviation and mean were calculated. The percentage was also calculated for all demographic variables and the enrollment variable. All calculated information relevant to student academic outcomes are presented in Figure 1.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personnel20	5	0	219604	133991.40	93067.831
InstructionalSupplies20	5	2608	49040	18796.60	18735.932
Software20	5	0	47654	17991.40	18107.658
ProfessionalDevelopment 20	5	258	45656	17047.80	19362.971
TechnologySupplies20	5	0	76729	27422.80	32263.446
ParentingActivities20	5	0	7341	3803.80	3517.665
Other	4	0	0	.00	.000
Poverty	5	67	93	85.62	10.624
Academic	5	0	17	5.41	6.940
Enrollment	5	264	564	411.20	136.150
StoT	4	23	29	26.35	2.669
Valid N (listwise)	3				

Figure 1. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables in This Study

Regression Results

To approach: What is the impact of Title I Part A funds which are specifically resourced based on the South Carolina state accountability measures in Title I high schools during the years 2017-2021, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the evidence of academic growth from average poverty percentage, average student enrollment, average student-to-teacher ratio, average other allocations, average parenting activities allocations, average technology supplies allocations, average professional development

allocations, average software allocations, average instructional supplies allocations, and average personnel allocations. The results of the multiple linear regression analyses revealed poverty average was the only statistically significant predictor to the model ($p < .05$). Poverty average was statistically significant, $F(2,2) = 40.804$, $p < .05$, with the adjusted R^2 of .976. Within the model, poverty was a statistically significant predictor, $t(2) = -8.369$, $p < .05$.

Conclusion

Overall, poverty average was the only variable which had significance. Enrollment average and poverty average alone accounted for 98% of the variance in academic growth in Title I, Part A-served schools which demonstrated academic growth ($R^2 = .976$). The *p* value for this regression was .024, which is less than or equal to .05, meaning the regression model was significant. Poverty average was a strong predictor of academic growth with a *p* value of .014. Instructional Supplies ($p = .117$) and Personnel ($p = .15$) also could be considered significant predictors if the alpha were raised from .05 to .1. By collecting more data over time on these two predictor variables, they could easily fall into the significant range as predictors of academic growth.

Chapter five will provide a summary and interpretation of the findings addressed in this chapter as they pertain to the research question of the study. Implications and recommendations of the study will be addressed. Lastly, recommendations for further research will also be included.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Throughout the past four years, South Carolina schools have been challenged to undertake more challenges than ever before. Schools were still required to meet federal and state accountability measures, while navigating a pandemic (COVID-19) and a teacher shortage which is currently ravaging public education. Teachers are exhausted and more are leaving the workforce, not only after each passing school year, but now, oftentimes, during the school year due to physical and mental exhaustion.

The COVID-19 virus began impacting South Carolina schools as early as the spring of 2020. Schools all across the state began to close and move to a virtual platform to help combat the spread of the virus. As of September 19, 2021, there were 6,849 cases reported among school students and 592 cases among school employees, which had decreased from the 14,378 and 4,520 cases respectively reported on June 16, 2021 (*Archived COVID-19 Associated with Students & Staff | SCDHEC,* 2021). During 2019-2021, many people across the world lost their lives, their jobs, and their peace of mind. After this worldwide shut down which lasted almost two years, people are now struggling to determine what "normal" everyday life is, and if they can ever return to the way life was prior to the pandemic.

The sudden shift from customary in-person learning and schooling to distance and virtual learning was another extraordinary shock for many households. The absence of extracurricular activities and school social events negatively impacted students' social and emotional development. Parents were required to spend numerous hours assisting students with the learning process through various learning systems they did not fully understand. School districts attempted to help students remain on track to

achieve their appropriate grade levels, but the quality of this new delivery of education varied by state (Bansak & Starr, 2021). There has been a noticeable learning loss across the United States, including in the state of South Carolina.

COVID-19 has not been the only contributing factor to recent learning loss. The teacher shortage has undeniably had a devastating impact on students' educational progress. In the United States, the number of high school students who have expressed interest in pursuing a career in general education has been declining. Additionally, enrollment numbers in teacher preparation programs have dropped significantly from 2009-2010 (725,518 students enrolled) to 2013-2014 (465,536 students enrolled) (Aragon, 2016). The college students who choose to enter the education profession tend to report job dissatisfaction, loss of autonomy, and limitations in recognition, feedback, advancement, and rewards (Aragon, 2016). These negative results have led to an annual turnover rate from 2009 to 2014 of 29 percent of teachers moving to other schools or districts and 17 percent leaving the teaching profession altogether (Aragon, 2016).

In March of 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) released a statement with plans to combat the teacher shortage. In the last five years, South Carolina alone has seen 5,000 to 7,000 teachers retire, transfer to another school district, or leave the profession each year, while only 2,000 new teachers graduated each year (*SCDE Expands Two Existing Partnerships and Adds Another to Tackle Teacher Shortage*, 2022). At the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, South Carolina had over 1,000 teaching positions remained vacant.

The SCDE stated it had expanded two successful home-grown programs, Teaching Fellows and Call Me MISTER, and had begun a new initiative called

TeachSC (*SCDE Expands Two Existing Partnerships and Adds Another to Tackle Teacher Shortage*, 2022). The state of South Carolina provided $1,690,000 in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding over three years to TEACH, a national non-profit. ESSER funds are emergency relief funds to address the impact of COVID-19 by the Department of Education (*Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund*, n.d.) TeachSC is a statewide coalition of colleges, K-12 schools, government and community organizations, and nonprofits whose mission is to recruit the next generation of South Carolina teachers and support them throughout the certification process at no cost (*SCDE Expands Two Existing Partnerships and Adds Another to Tackle Teacher Shortage*, 2022).

COVID-19 and the teacher shortage have played a significant role in student academic achievement over the past few years, and this shortage supports why strategic resource allocation by school leaders is so important. SCDE is putting forth its best effort to stabilize and support the educator workforce. However, it is equally important to allocate funds to efforts which will contribute to academic growth of students in order to develop students into life-long learners and positive, productive citizens of society. It is research-based efforts which are focused on improving policies and practices for school resource allocation which can lead to improved student achievement (Hanushek, 1996; Greenwald et al., 1996a; Grubb, 2010; Odden & Archibald, 2009).

Discussion of Findings

Methodological Overview

There were 19 school districts and 32 Title I, Part A-receiving high schools during the 2017-2021 academic years which were examined for the purpose of this study. Their demographic data and academic growth measures were retrieved from the school report cards posted on the South Carolina Department of Education website. Academic growth measures from the 2019-2020 school year were not utilized in this study due to the state of South Carolina exempting schools from national and state academic accountability assessments. The financial allocation data were collected directly from the South Carolina Department of Education Federal Programs Department, and school districts were contacted directly through email (see Appendix 2). The 2016-2017 school year financial and allocation data had been archived by the state and could not be retrieved for this study. The research question which framed this study is:

I. What is the impact of Title I Part A funds which are specifically resourced on the South Carolina state accountability measures in Title I high schools during the years 2017-2021?

With regard to this research question, findings suggest spending the most money on personnel to serve students of the highest poverty level results in the highest academic growth values. Expenditures in this area are a focus throughout this chapter.

Funding Utilization Discussion

Odden's Evidence-Based Resource Allocation Model shows deploying resources effectively, engaging in data-based decision-making, and making both state-level and more curriculum-focused formative assessments can lead to student academic growth (Odden, A.R. and Picus, L.O., 2008). In this model, there are two steps. The

first step is to review evidence-based research and best practices based on which programs have worked effectively to develop students academically. The second step of the model is to study schools and districts which are similar and have dramatically increased their level of student performance over a three-to-seven-year period (Odden, A.R. and Picus, L.O., 2008).

For this study, step one of Odden's Evidence-Based Resource Allocation Model was employed by the South Carolina Department of Education. All schools which receivedTitle I, Part A funds were required to submit a resource allocation proposal to the state department for approval before they were allowed to spend any of the money allocated to them. In the state department's review process, it was validated that schools must allocate their funds to research-based best practices, and all funds must fall under evidence categories which have shown to improve student academic growth. These categories are: personnel, parenting activities, technologies supplies, professional development, software, and instructional supplies. Research suggests if a school utilizes its resources in these specific areas in schools with a high percentage of students in poverty, student achievement will improve (Odden, A. R., & Archibald, S. J., 2009).

The second step of Odden's Evidence-Based Resource Allocation Model, which focuses on the study of schools and districts which have similar dramatic increases in their levels of student academic performance over a minimum three-year period, was the basis for this study. Findings suggest schools which allocate and spend the greatest amount of their funding on personnel for students of the highest poverty level receive highest academic growth values. Adding teachers and decreasing class sizes for the high

poverty student population has been shown to provide positive results in those students' academic growth rates.

Implications of Findings

Based upon the findings in the schools which participated in this study and showed overall growth from 2017-2021 school years, it was verified spending money on more teachers and personnel should be an expectation at all school sites receiving Title I, Part A funding. All schools which experienced academic growth over this research time frame spent over 50% of their funds on adding personnel to their schools. The results of this study are well supported in the literature. Sutton and Soderstorm discovered after their study a school's achievement score is more a function of the school's demographic status and socioeconomic status than its effectiveness (Sutton & Soderstrom, 1999). Research has also shown class-size reduction and a focus on core academics were clearly visible in schools which demonstrated academic growth (Odden et al., 2003).

Recommendations

This work solely focuses on Title I, Part A-receiving high schools in the state of South Carolina, but the next step might be to analyze data from all Title I, Part A-receiving schools at all levels in the state of South Carolina. This analysis would provide evidence of how school leaders are allocating and spending their funds. Another potential useful exercise would be to interview all the school leaders at each Title I, Part A-receiving school to learn their backgrounds, educational experience, and reasoning on how allocations determinations are made. This exercise may reveal key foundational information about the school leaders' circumstances which are

uncontrollable and which could directly affect their ability to implement an expenditure structure which are based on research and best practice. Lastly, the results of this research encourage a study would include students' family background and educational accomplishment. In some areas of the state of South Carolina, there is still a huge racial divide, and minority students are encouraged systematically to learn trades and get jobs to support the society versus their private school peers who obtain post graduate degrees and enter privately-owned businesses.

Conclusion

Money matters and so does how it is spent. Research trends suggest the abilities of instructional leaders play a major role in student academic improvement (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). The public education system has prided itself on providing a free, adequate, and appropriate education to all students; however, this is not the case in all schools, especially those in lower socioeconomic areas without effective instructional leaders. Public education has had discrepancies in funding based upon where students are located for many years. These schools have attempted to correct these discrepancies with the allocation of funds provided to them through Title I funding. Title I, Part A funds have been intended to serve poor students in both public and private schools since its original enactment in 1965, and still to this day educational gaps between those students who have and those who have not are still significantly increasing (*History of the ESEA Title I-A Formulas*, 2017).

It cannot be ignored, race does play a role in students' educational success as demonstrated by the high minority numbers in low-poverty schools with low academic achievement. This study presents evidence which supports how school leaders

strategically allocate funds directly affects whether students of poverty improve on academic growth measures set forth by the state of South Carolina and the federal government. Research has demonstrated by simply increasing the amount of funding at a school with high levels of poverty only improves the graduation rates of some students. This outcome indicates educational leaders must know how to spend the increased funds for this implementation properly in order to be effective (Cascio et al., 2013). It also demonstrates the importance of using school-based data to make school-level budgeting decisions is foundational in student academic growth and development. Odden's Evidence-Based Allocation Model is a useful tool to determine how funds should be spent, and all educational leaders should use some form of research-based expenditure structure to properly allocate funds.

Appendix A

Description of Data Items Collected for the Study

Table A1

Data Items Collected for This Study

Enrollment	Average Student Enrollment at a Title I, Part A-receiving high school in South Carolina from 2017-2021. These data were collected from the schools' report cards for those years.
Percent Poverty	Average Percent Poverty at a Title I, Part A-receiving high school in South Carolina from 2017-2021. These data were collected from the schools' report cards for those years.
Academic Achievement Growth Data	Academic Data was collected on all Title I, Part A-receiving high schools in South Carolina from 2017-2021. These data were collected from the schools' report cards for those years. All years were collected except for the 2019-2020 school year. The academic categories included: English

	EOC, Algebra I EOC, Biology EOC, US History EOC, Graduation Rate, and College and Career Readiness Metric.
School Allocation Data	Allocation Data was collected on all Title I, Part A-receiving high schools in South Carolina from 2017-2021. These data were collected from the State Department of Education and some data were collected directly from Title District Office Coordinators over different districts throughout the state of South Carolina.
Student to Teacher Ratio	Average Student-to-Teacher Ratio at a Title I, Part A-receiving high school in South Carolina from 2017-2021. These data were collected from the schools' report cards for those years.

Appendix B

Letter Sent to All District Directors of Federal Programs in South Carolina

Dear Title I Coordinator,

My name is Brenton Coe. I am an assistant principal at Brookland-Cayce High School and a doctoral candidate at Coastal Carolina University in Education. I am writing to share information with you about a doctoral research study which I am conducting on Title I, Part A funding, and its connection with student academic success, in hopes which you would consider sharing key information with me about your high schools which receive Title I, Part A funds.

Strategic instructional resourcing has become an important topic in public education. According to numerous data sources, it is estimated which the United States spends about $612.7 billion annually on public education. This study will analyze and synthesize data from Title I, Part A high schools in South Carolina, specifically in the areas of resource allocations and their relationship to student academic success.

I am requesting copies of your Title I, Part A budgets for the years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 for the Title I, Part A-served high schools in your district. This study will investigate if there are any relationships between resource allocations in Title I, Part A-served high schools and student academic achievement in the areas of End of Course Assessments, College and Career Readiness Assessments, and graduation rates. In an effort to complete my research study on time, I ask which you please send me a copy of the above-referenced budgets on or before April 8, 2022. Your time is valuable, and I truly appreciate your assistance with this study. It is my expectation which this study will be beneficial to many different stakeholders in South Carolina.

Please understand which participation is voluntary, and personally identifiable or sensitive demographic information for schools will be redacted and not used in the study.

If you have specific questions, you may contact me at 843-307-8801 or bjcoe@coastal.edu. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brenton J. Coe

Doctoral Candidate

Coastal Carolina University

Appendix C

Demographic Data of All 32 Title I, Part A-Receiving High Schools In South Carolina

2017-2021

Table 2A

School Demographics

School	District	Enrollment	% Poverty	Student to 1 Teacher Ratio
TS #1	District #1	323	76.6	21.1
TS #2	District #2	314	90.1	25.5
TS #3	District #3	293	83.4	16
TS #4	District #3	623	74.6	24.5
TS #5	District #4	429	78.7	26.2
TS #6	District #5	69	98.4	15.6
TS #7	District #5	377	93.5	19.2
TS #8	District #5	669	89.5	26.6
TS #9	District #5	530	88.5	22.1
TS #10	District #5	471	86.9	19.1
TS #11	District #5	346	77.1	26.9
TS #12	District #5	1580	77.9	28.1
TS #13	District #6	862	90.8	24.1
TS #14	District #7	740	81.6	22.5
TS #15	District #8	821	88.2	20.1
TS #16	District #9	171	92.7	20

TS #17	District #10	360	78.7	20.4
TS #18	District #10	576	72.3	21.3
TS #19	District #11	687	72.9	23
TS #20	District #11	822	72.9	29.7
TS #21	District #12	564	89.4	29
TS #22	District #13	198	76.2	22.2
TS #23	District #14	457	87.1	22.3
TS #24	District #14	675	84.1	19.3
TS #25	District #15	254	88.2	15.9
TS #26	District #16	391	95.9	15.6
TS #27	District #16	545	93.3	23
TS #28	District #17	608	68	28.6
TS #29	District #18	264	88.4	27.9
TS #30	District #18	565	89.6	31.4
TS #31	District #18	277	83.5	33.7
TS #32	District #19	369	66.9	

Appendix D

School Academic Growth Chart Used to Calculate the Academic Growth Metric

Table 3A

School Achievement Growth

TS	EOCE	EOCM	EOCB	EOCU	GR	CCR	OG
TS #1	-3.2	-34	-31.4	-28.4	-6.2	-14.1	-18.8
TS #2	10.1	-13.5	5.7	7.1	2.9	-0.7	1.6
TS #3	18.2	-11.8	-10.9	-21.4	4.4	-17.7	-8.1
TS #4	17	7.9	5.1	-12.2	3.5	-14.4	-1.1
TS #5	12	-13	-7.8	-2.5	-0.4	5.8	0.0
TS #6	7.2	-16.7	-21.4	-9.1	3.7	-12.1	-8.6
TS #7	5.3	-36.1	-21.4	-14.8	-1.1	-0.5	-9.9
TS #8	1.2	-23.4	-9.5	-17.4	-3	-5.5	-9.0
TS #9	2.5	-45.4	-34.9	-16.7	1.9	20.2	-7.5
TS #10	-1.3	-30.6	-23.5	-20.9	12.6	-5.8	-10.8
TS #11	-4.4	-30.2	-26.3	-11.7	14.3	-1.1	-8.6
TS #12	7.8	-22.2	-13.2	-13	9.1	-16.1	-9.1
TS #13	1.4	-11	-12.3	-22.9	-3.6	-8.8	-9.4
TS #14	-1.1	-35.7	-16.2	-5.2	-8.1	-14.8	-13.7
TS #15	5.9	-13.3	-19.5	-19.8	-4.3	-12.8	-10.9
TS #16	-4.7	-16.8	-7.3	-23.6	-21.9	-27.8	-18.6
TS #17	-3.6	-27	-27.8	-13.5	3.7	-10.7	-12.8

TS #18	7	-16.4	-4.6	-18	0.1	3	-3.7
TS #19	2.8	-33	-18.8	-22.8	1.4	-11	-13.2
TS #20	18.2	-8.5	-3.3	-15.6	1.5	-4.6	-2.4
TS #21	7.7	-5.7	-6.5	-0.2	-2.9	10.7	2.0
TS #22	3.4	-26.1	-11.6	-7.7	-9.5	-28.7	-15.6
TS #23	7.2	-28	-13.3	-18.2	4.4	-14.9	-11.1
TS #24	-17.1	-23.1	-23.3	-19.5	8.3	-22.5	-17.1
TS #25	-2.1	-39.7	-23.8	(2.9 only 2 years of data)	-2.3	-4.5	-11.6
TS #26	8.1	-12.3	-8.2	-17.1	5.8	-25.3	-10.6
TS #27	21.5	-15.8	-14.5	-7.6	5.4	6.4	0.3
TS #28	-11.5	-33.6	-27.1	-15.8	-1.1	-14	-16.7
TS #29	18.3	-2.3	-12.6	-0.2	10.5	13.8	5.9
TS #30	11.6	-36	-16.4	-9.3	-19.2	-1.9	-10.4
TS #31	13.6	-8.2	-5.3	-28	-19.7	-26.1	-14.3
TS #32	9.1	-13.7	-9.7	EX	83.3	-83.3 (only two years of data)	17.25

Appendix E

Allocation Data of All 32 Title I, Part A-Receiving High Schools In South Carolina 2017-2021

Table 4A

School	District	Allocation 18-19	Allocation 19-20	Allocation 20-21	Average
TS #1	District #1	$114,680.00	$78,400.00	$112,280.25	$101,786.75
TS #2	District #2	$212,940.00	$195,200.00	$223,200.00	$210,446.67
TS #3	District #3	$313,600.00	$225,500.00	$292,600.00	$277,233.33
TS #4	District #3	$63,843.65	$114,450.00	$134,160.00	$104,151.22
TS #5	District #4	$57,681.00	$47,607.71	$73,133.69	$59,474.13
TS #6	District #5	$238,680.00	$233,961.83	$393,655.19	$288,765.67
TS #7	District #5	$361,998.00	$365,667.73	$646,291.88	$457,985.87
TS #8	District #5	$308,295.00	$289,697.98	$538,388.46	$378,793.81
TS #9	District #5	$241,661.07	$231,960.97	$404,722.77	$292,781.60
TS #10	District #5	$118,339.55	$142,818.90	$300,610.81	$187,256.42
TS #11	District #5	$705,093.41	$617,869.00	$1,372,644.83	$898,535.75
TS #12	District #5	$306,900.00	$335,335.00	$504,445.00	$382,226.67
TS #13	District #6	$116,808.00	$93,744.00	$93,304.00	$101,285.33
TS #14	District #7	$372,547.62	$342,254.96	$302,356.26	$339,052.95
TS #15	District #8	$73,273.00	$77,913.00	$65,280.00	$72,155.33
TS #16	District #9	$222,300.00	$203,400.00	$203,700.00	$209,800.00
TS #17	District #10	$232,780.00	$221,950.00	$221,400.00	$225,376.67

TS #18	District #10	$50,448.86	$149,545.16	$192,909.86	$130,967.96
TS #19	District #11	$256,161.00	$213,355.00	$222,700.00	$230,738.67
TS #20	District #11	$72,590.00	$57,855.00	$114,720.00	$81,721.67
TS #21	District #12	$552,043.04	$506,576.50	$493,158.40	$517,259.31
TS #22	District #13	$225,948.24	$206,613.44	$193,142.40	$208,568.03
TS #23	District #14	$275,781.56	$177,785.86	$235,862.25	$229,809.89
TS #24	District #14	$87,406.00	$76,736.00	$56,028.24	$73,390.08
TS #25	District #15	$203,360.00	$155,071.58	$172,072.00	$176,834.53
TS #26	District #16	$252,360.20	$246,965.86	$266,272.00	$255,199.35
TS #27	District #16	$317,952.00	$237,120.00	$239,700.00	$264,924.00
TS #28	District #17	$466,832.00	$299,520.00	$261,320.00	$342,557.33
TS #29	District #18	$202,665.07	$290,451.41	$409,500.00	$300,872.16
TS #30	District #18	$264,592.00	$254,880.00	$212,520.00	$243,997.33
TS #31	District #18	$254,652.11	$264,317.76	$260,654.80	$259,874.89
TS #32	District #19	$15,280.00	$13,693.53	$12,324.17	$13,765.90

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