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Teacher self-efficacy beliefs and their impact on recommendations for student retention at grades K–2

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TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPACT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENT RETENTION AT GRADES K-2

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Nicole Pearce Rummel
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TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPACT ON
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENT RETENTION AT
GRADES K-2

By Nicole Pearce Rummel

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DEDICATION

The dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Patti and Neal, and my incredibly patient and loving husband, Andy. I thank each of them for their continuous encouragement and support. And finally, this work is dedicated to all the children and teachers I have had and will have the honor and privilege of serving during my career.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents a journey in my life that is coming to a close. After many years of schooling, it is time to unpack my bags and settle in at home for a while. However, I would never have completed the journey and reached this long deserved rest without the support and direction of others. I thank the wonderful teachers at both West End Elementary\(^1\) where the pilot was conducted and the teachers at Bayside\(^2\) where the actual study took place. I also thank my dear friends and fellow doctoral candidates who traveled the last leg of the journey with me. Without their support and words of encouragement, the journey would have taken quite a bit longer.

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\(^1\) West End Elementary is a pseudonym.
\(^2\) Bayside is a pseudonym.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and teacher recommendations for student retention. An online survey served as the data source for this study. The survey link was emailed to 236 kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers in an urban Virginia school district. Teachers were asked to report the number of students recommended for retention over a two year period as well as information regarding the characteristics of the children actually retained (e.g., race, gender, SES status, etc.) over that same two year period. In addition to providing the information regarding student retention, teachers were asked to complete Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale.

The results from the study indicated that among teachers at non-Title I schools the higher the number of recommendations for student retention, the higher the Student Engagement Subscale mean. When examining the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 at Bayside, as reported by the classroom teacher, many of this study’s findings contradicted previously published research in regards to race, family socioeconomic status, school attendance, and parental involvement.

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GRADES K-2
Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction

Retention, also referred to as, nonpromotion, flunking, or being held back, is defined as a student repeating the same grade for two consecutive school years. As a result of retention, a child who is held back is older than his or her peers throughout the remainder of his or her school career, with the few exceptions for children who later skip a grade returning to their original peer group. Retention is most often presented by classroom teachers as an option for students who have not met academic requirements, as determined by the school or school district. Traditionally, students who are retained are given another year in the same grade with the same curriculum they failed to master the first time. Often, there are no additional services as retention is viewed to be the intervention (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003).

In contrast, social promotion is the practice of promoting a student with his or her peer group when the student has not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress or mastery of the grade-level specific content. The practice of social promotion often allows children with insufficient reading and math skills to be promoted with their age-equivalent peers. As with retention, social promotion is seen as the intervention, and thus, little to no additional academic support is provided to the socially promoted student. The result is a struggling student, who previously failed to meet grade-level academic requirements, now being asked to meet even higher academic standards following the social promotion.
Current educational practices view retention and social promotion as an either-or solution to student academic struggles. Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) suggest that retention research has been exhausted, and that researchers and practitioners need to begin to invest time and resources into developing effective intervention and remediation programs that can serve as alternatives to retention and social promotion. However, at their suggestion, researchers are looking for solutions to a problem that is not clearly understood. Researchers do not fully understand how decisions are made regarding retention. Retention has traditionally been examined in relation to the student (i.e., student’s family socioeconomic status, student achievement, student school attendance). A few researchers have ventured to look at retention from the viewpoint of the classroom teacher (Bonvin, 2003; Reynolds, 1992; Smith, 1989; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). What we know from their studies is that the individual teacher does impact student retention rates. Bonvin’s (2003) study revealed that a teacher’s beliefs regarding retention could increase the likelihood of a child being retained by 180%. Other researchers have taken a more qualitative approach to studying teachers’ perceptions regarding retention (Smith, 1989; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). Teachers’ perceptions regarding student retention are the only teacher predictors of student retention currently being studied. Other areas, including teacher self-efficacy beliefs have not been examined in relation to student retention.

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs, a teacher’s beliefs about his or her ability to impact student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), has been found to have an impact on various aspects of education including student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986), classroom management (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990)
and referrals for special education (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Soodak & Podell, 1993). Teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs produced higher achieving students and had better classroom management, while teachers with lower self-efficacy beliefs were found to refer more students for special education services.

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs need to be further evaluated for their possible impact on student retention rates. This study proposes that there may be a connection between student retention rates and a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs. It is the researcher's argument that Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) were incorrect in their statement that retention research has been exhausted. Researchers must continue to search for explanations and understandings into the ineffective practices of both student retention and social promotion. Realizing the limits of a research study, this study focuses solely on the issue of student retention. The hypothesis is that there is a link between teacher sense of self-efficacy and the number of recommendations made for student retention.

Statement of the Problem

Public schools as we know them today began in the 1830s, with the practice of students being promoted by age and content mastery (Grant, 1997; Owings & Magliaro, 1998). The goal was to produce citizens with similar experiences while preparing them to be contributing members of society. During this period of industrialization, students were educated in large, same-age groups. It was through this process that students were essentially sorted. Students who prospered academically in the school environment continued their education and furthered their post-school opportunities. Students who struggled in school often dropped-out and sought factory work or other low-skill positions.
Over 150 years later, children continue to be funneled through the educational
system in large groups based on an age-grade structure even though the purpose of
schools has evolved. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the educational system underwent
major philosophical changes as schools became accessible to all students. By the 1990s,
the mission of schools was beginning to shift again. Schools began to be held
accountable for their responsibility to teach all children. The mission of schools today is
to educate all children to a set of externally-determined standards.

Research suggests that there are a number of factors that negatively impact
learning such as break-ups in the home, lack of medical treatment, improper nutrition,
mobility of families, and the number of premature babies surviving birth (Grant, 1997).
The changes within the family have flowed over into education, leading to changes
pertaining to the mission of schools. However, despite changing families and changing
mission statements, educators have too often confined themselves to two solutions for
assisting students who struggle within the current system, retention and social promotion.
Ebel and Damrin (1960) estimated the retention rate to be 52% as recently as fifty years
ago. In the 1980s, Shepard and Smith (1989) estimated that if school dropouts ceased to
exist, 56% of students in each graduating class would have experienced at least one grade
retention during the course of their school career. More recently The National Center for
Educational Statistics [NCES] (2006) reported a more conservative view indicating a
decline in the number of youth ages 16-19 who had ever been retained. NCES reported
that in 1995 the national retention rate average was 20%, compared with 12% in 2004.
The NCES data provide evidence that retention rates are currently declining across the
country, with southern states producing the highest retention rates on average. Some
researchers, however, believe that in the next couple of years the retention rates will begin to rise again as retention rates at the elementary level are beginning to increase again (Bonvin, 2003).

In Bayside City Schools, the Virginia urban district participating in this research study, the average yearly retention rate since the 1996-1997 school year has hovered at 7%, a rate that has remained constant despite changes in both state and local policies and national trends to reduce retention rates (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). With a district promotion-retention policy, one would expect the retention rates to be fairly consistent from school to school and classroom to classroom. However, this is not the case. Some teachers in the district recommend 15-20% of their students for retention each year, while others recommend none over the course of several years. When looking at a school building, some schools retain on average 9% of their primary population, compared with less than 1% at other schools within the district.

The initial decision to retain a student in Bayside in many cases is made by an individual teacher, as allowed by district policy. Often intervention plans are created by a team of teachers before the actual retention, and remediation plans are created by a team of teachers after the retention, but the recommendation for retention is left in the hands of the classroom teacher. Parents do have a right to appeal, and there are parent notification timelines that the teacher must meet according to district policy. But, research shows that a majority of retained students come from low-income homes with parents who are uninvolved in the educational process (Grant, 1997; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999). The result is a retention decision that impacts a child for the remainder of his or her academic

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3 Bayside City Schools is a pseudonym.
4 The school district directed the researcher to the Virginia Department of Education website for retention rates. Data prior to 1996 were not available on the website.
career being left in the hands of one teacher, and that teacher’s beliefs regarding retention. With so much power over the recommendation for retention, teachers’ personal beliefs regarding the effectiveness of retention impact their decisions regarding student retention (Bonvin, 2003).

Significance of the Study

Retention research indicates that African American males from high poverty homes are often over represented when it comes to student retention (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 2003; Jimerson, 2001). In addition, larger research studies exploring the results of retention have been overwhelming opposed to the practice citing repercussions such as increased likelihood of dropping out, decreased academic performance, and decreased self-esteem (Grissom, & Shepard, 1989; Holmes, & Matthews, 1994; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson, & Kaufman, 2003). The few studies supporting the practice of student retention often fall in one of two categories: small qualitative studies that focus on individual successes (Powell, 2005) or methodology that incorporates poorly constructed comparison groups and insufficient measures of student progress (Jackson, 1975; Holmes & Matthews, 1984). Thus, it can be tentatively concluded that retention may have instances where it is an appropriate solution to academic or social shortcoming; however, as a larger practice or policy, retention does not serve the goal of improving student achievement.

Social promotion, often viewed as the alternative to retention, is as flawed in its approach to student learning as student retention. The practice of social promotion overwhelms high schools with ill-prepared, illiterate students lacking the academic skills needed for graduation (Thomas, 2000). It ignores the academic struggles of students and
provides few attempts to resolve the student shortcomings. The result of social
promotion is not much different from that of student retention. Social promotion leads to
increased crime, decreased worker productivity, and increased reliance on various social
programs (Thomas, 2000).

When looking for answers to the retention-social promotion debate, a few
researchers have turned to the classroom teacher (Bonvin, 2003; Smith, 1989). However,
the piece these researchers have focused on is the teachers’ perception of student
retention. Other beliefs, such as teacher self-efficacy beliefs, have yet to be examined in
relation to student retention rates or social promotion. What is unclear is if there is a link
between teacher beliefs regarding their ability to impact student achievement, teacher
sense of self-efficacy, and the likelihood of a student being recommended for retention.
The hypothesis was that as teacher self-efficacy beliefs increased, the number of
recommendations for student retention would decrease.

Research Questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy
   beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention
   over the last two years?

2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs
   among primary teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools?

3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and
   years of teaching experience?

4. Is there a significant relationship between retention rates at Title I and
   non-Title I schools in grades K-2?
5. Is there a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and the number of recommendations for retention?

6. What are the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 as reported by the teachers who made the recommendation for retention?

Definition of Terms

_High-Stakes Testing_ 

High-stakes testing involves giving a standardized, criterion-referenced test to all students in a particular grade. The result of that test is then used either as the sole determinant or a major determinant for grade promotion or high school graduation. Examples of high-stakes testing discussed in this paper include Standards of Learning (SOL), Literacy Passport Test (LPT), and Graduation Competency Test (GCT).

_Permanent Teachers_

Primary teacher is used to define to regular education teachers teaching grades in grades kindergarten, first, or second. When referring to previously existing research that uses a different configuration to describe primary teachers, a note will be added to assist in clarifying the research findings.

_Redshirting_

As part of compulsory attendance laws, states have a kindergarten cut-off date. Students entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before the established date. Some parents, however, who have a child turning five on or shortly before the given date elect not to send their child to school during the qualifying year. This is found most often when a child has a summer or qualifying fall birthday. The decision by the parent to hold a child out of kindergarten for a year, when the child meets all criteria to
enter, is defined as redshirting (Graue & DiPerna, 2000). This paper does not address redshirting that may occur later in school (after kindergarten) nor does it differentiate between the two main purposes for redshirting: academics and athletics. Instead, the paper refers to redshirting as a form of elective retention prior to a child entering kindergarten.

**Retention**

Retention refers to a student repeating the same grade for two consecutive school years. As a result, the child is older than his or her new peer group. Retention is most often presented as an option for students who have not met academic performance standards in their assigned grade.

**Social Promotion**

Social promotion is the practice of promoting a student with his or her similarly-aged peer group when the student has not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress or mastery of the grade-level specific content.

**Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

Teacher self-efficacy is defined as, “a judgment of [a teacher’s] capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated.” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783).

**Limitations of the Study**

The study made us of a convenience sample involving one urban school district in Virginia. Because of the narrowness of the sample, readers should be cautious when making generalizations. In addition, teacher self-efficacy beliefs, school status (i.e., Title
I, non-Title I), years of teaching experience, and other variables related to predictors of
student retention previously researched (e.g., academic achievement, parental
involvement, social adjustment) were considered. Data collected for these areas were the
result of self-reporting by teachers. Thus, these data were a reflection of teachers’
perceptions of characteristics of retained students, but may not reflect the true
characteristics of retained students in Bayside. Teachers of self-contained special
education classes were not invited to participate in this study, and thus, their students
were not represented in the student demographics section. However, special education
students serviced though inclusion or special education resource classes were represented
in the student demographic section, as reported by the homeroom teacher. Other retained
students who were not represented in the student demographic section, as reported by the
teachers, included students who were retained in grades K-2 and the retaining teacher had
since retired or was no longer a K-2 teacher in Bayside City Schools at the time of the
study.

Major Assumptions

The following major assumptions will be ongoing throughout the course of this
study:

1. Teachers will be able to accurately recall the requested retained student
demographic information.

2. Teachers will respond honestly to the online survey instruments, both the Teacher
Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the
Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument (RRCI).
3. Teachers completing the online survey instruments will be kindergarten, first, or second grade regular education teachers with a homeroom base.

4. The teachers completing the online survey instruments will be representative of the teachers in the sample district.

5. The online survey instruments to be used will provide reliable and valid data.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

History of Retention Practices and Policies

National Overview

The mid-1800s marked the beginning of grouping students by grades in the United States as Horace Mann brought this Prussian practice of “lock-step” promotion to the U.S. (Grant, 1997; Owings & Magliaro, 1998). It was during this time when students were first promoted based on one of two criteria: content mastery or age (Lindsay, 1933). It was during this same time that St. Louis schools led the way in attempting to find a happy medium between content mastery and age. Sympathetic to the varying needs of students and grounded in the number of students being retained each year, St. Louis schools began operating in quarters, allowing students to be promoted or retained in each of these quarters. The term was defined as “flexible promotion” (Lindsay, 1933). Other large school districts including New York City attempted the quarter system and flexible promotions. However, district administrators reported flexible promotions were too difficult to implement and the practice was short lived.

Flexible promotion was aimed at reducing the number of over-aged children in classrooms. It is estimated that in the early 1900s over 70% of children were over-age for their grade with yearly retention rates as high as 52% (Ebel & Damrin, 1960). During the 1910s and 1920s a majority of those being retained were African American males and males of Italian descent (Hacsi, 2002). By the 1930s classrooms were overcrowded with over-aged, struggling children. As a result, the 1930s brought in a new era of social
promotion (Hacsi, 2002; Owings & Magliaro, 1998). The practice of social promotion continued and retention rates declined into the 1950s.

In 1973, Sam Owen, Superintendent of Greensville County, Virginia, launched the first political campaign to end social promotion (Hacsi, 2002). Initial results included declining dropout rates and improved student discipline. But with the end of social promotion, Greensville saw a rapid increase in student retention rates. Parents of academically-successful children were disgruntled with the number of over-aged children in classrooms as the result of retention. With the mix of older and younger children, younger children were more likely to be exposed to sex, drugs, and vandalism at a younger age (Foster, 1993). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a lawsuit against the district of Greensville County because of the discrepancy between the numbers of African American children retained in comparison with their white counterparts. On December 31, 1981, Sam Owen resigned. Despite this controversy, Greensville County, Virginia had paved the way for other school districts. In April 1980, Washington, DC, schools ended social promotion in grades one through three (Hacsi, 2002). New York City schools followed suit by establishing promotion gates at grades four and seven. At these grades, students were required to demonstrate minimal competencies in exchange for promotion. By 1987, several students were repeating the seventh grade for the third time (Hacsi, 2002).

Educational practices and policies, including retention and social promotion, became topics for political discussions in 1980s and 1990s. Public schools were quickly blamed for the quality of the high school graduates produced. Then President Ronald Reagan responded in 1983 with a national campaign issued by the National Commission
on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*. One aspect of *A Nation at Risk* called for stricter promotion policies (National Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). Stricter promotion policies led way to increased retention rates. By 1995, it was estimated that one in seven kids was overage for kindergarten (Zill, Loomis, & West, 1998). This influx of student failure was linked to teacher shortages in high-poverty, high-minority areas and blamed on mandates stemming from *A Nation at Risk* (Grossman, 2003).

President Reagan’s campaign was followed up in the late 1990s, as President Bill Clinton and lawmakers called for an end to social promotion declaring retention the answer. In his State of the Union Addresses in 1997 and 1998, Clinton stated that a student should not be promoted “until he or she is ready” (Clinton, 1997, 1998). From the time President Reagan announced the need for stricter promotion policies until President Clinton’s 1997 State of the Union Address, retention rates declined nationally. The retention rate dropped 4% from 16% of students ever being retained in 1995 to 12% in 1999. The percentage of students ever being retained dropped again in 2004 to 10% according to NCES (2006). However, Hauser (2006) stated the most recent data indicate that retention rates are rising at the elementary level.

**Virginia**

In the 1970s and 1980s, Virginia made its first state-wide attempt to end social promotion through the creation of high-stakes tests. In 1978, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation requiring a Graduation Competency Test (GCT) for all high school seniors in the state. The 1981 graduating class was the first class for which a passing score on the GCT was required to graduate. Due to political pressures, less than
1% of students were actually denied graduation (Hess, 2002). The GCT was no longer viewed as a high-stakes test with a graduation rate of 99.86%. And, there was criticism among policy makers that it did little to demonstrate the competencies of graduates.

The state made a second attempt at high-stakes testing in 1986, under Governor Gerald Baliles. In 1987, the state established the Literacy Passport Test (LPT). The test was to be given to all students at the end of sixth grade, forcing students to demonstrate minimum competencies. However, students who failed the test were not necessarily retained. Instead, remediation services were provided and students were given additional opportunities to pass the LPT in grades seven and eight. Like the GCT, the Literacy Passport Test was unable to fulfill its intended purposes. In 1992, 5,000 students were promoted to the ninth grade, despite three unsuccessful attempts at passing the LPT (Hess, 2002). At a cost of $25 million a year and a promotion rate to ninth grade of over 99%, the test was eliminated, viewed as no longer meeting its purpose.

Governor George Allen was persistent in efforts to move Virginia towards high-stakes testing and away from social promotion. During the 1994-1995 school year new state standards, Standards of Learning (SOL), were written in the four core areas: math, reading, science, and social studies (Hess, 2002). In 1996, Harcourt Brace was contracted to develop the first SOL tests based on the state standards. Following the first year of testing in 1998, only 39 of the 1,800 schools in Virginia (2%) met the established criteria for state accreditation (Hess, 2002). Two years later only 409 schools (23%) met the benchmarks established for state accreditation (Hess, 2002). Polls conducted by The Washington Post and The Richmond Times-Dispatch indicated a lack of public support
for the SOL standards and SOL assessments (Hess, 2002). Despite public opinion the
state held its ground and the SOL tests persevered.

By the late 1900s, school districts were rewriting their local curricula and policies
to reflect the state standards. In 1999, then State Superintendent, Dr. Paul Stapleton
urged local school districts to align their promotion policies with 1999 SOA (Standards
of Accreditation) subsection 8 VAC 20-131-30.A. The result was a formal state policy
change moving the state away from social promotion and towards retention. The SOA
mandated districts to use the SOL standards and assessments as a part of the criteria for
determining grade promotion (Stapleton, 1999).

Predictors of Student Retention

Researchers have come to identify various “predictors” of retention. When social
promotion is the practice of choice, these same predictors can serve to identify the
students at risk for social promotion. The predictors represent characteristics that are
present prior to a child being retained. Some predictors are based on demographics such
as race and gender. Other predictors related to the family include parents’ level of
education, single-parent homes, family socioeconomic status, and parental involvement.
School related predictors include behavior, socialization, school attendance, and
academic achievement. The following section outlines the most common predictors of
retention found in retention research over the past fifty years. A summary of the
predictors of retention along with research studies can also be found in Table 2.1 at the
end of this section.
Race and Gender

The average retention rate in 2004 was 9.6%. The average retention rate for African Americans in 2004 was 18.7%, and the average retention rate for males was 15.5%. Both percentages are well over the national average (NCES, 2006). Research continues to demonstrate that males, and more often African American males, are more likely to be retained than any other subgroup in the population (Abidin, Jr., Golladay, & Howerton, 1971; Alexander et al., 2003; Gottfredson, Fink, & Graham, 1994; Graue & DiPerna, 2000; Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999; Thomas & Knudsen, 1965). This research is consistent with National House Household Education Surveys (NHHSE) data collected and analyzed in 1991, 1993, 1995 where African American males were found to be retained more often than any other subgroup (McArthur & Bianchi, 1993; Zill, Loomis, & West; 1998).

Some researchers have indicated gender or race to be a predictor of grade retention. Researchers that found only one predictor (gender or race) to be statistically-significant offered an alternative explanation for the discrepancy between their research findings of only one predictor and the previously stated research findings indicating both race and gender as predictors. Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle (1993) found gender to be a predictor of grade retention in their first through fourth grade study in Baltimore’s inner-city schools. Their reasoning for not finding statistically-significant data to support race as a predictor was the belief that race was over represented in socioeconomic status (SES) and parent drop-out rates. Cosden, Zimmer, and Tuss (1993) looked at the impact of age, gender, and ethnicity on the retention rates of Latino children. In their study, conducted in three very different school divisions, Cosden et al. discovered statistically
significant results for the overrepresentation of Latino males only in the district where Latino’s were in the minority. In the other districts, Latino’s represented the majority of the student population, significant results were not found. This could explain why Dauber et al. found race not to be a predictor in their inner-city Baltimore study, a school district that is predominately African American.

*Family Background*

In addition to being a minority and/or male, there are other predictors of early retention. Family background is believed to contribute to the likelihood of a child being retained in school. The NCES found that in 2004 children from low-income homes (16.9%) were more likely to be retained when compared to children from middle (10.6%) and high income homes (3.9%) (NCES, 2006). Studies conducted in large inner-city school districts, including Baltimore and Chicago, indicated that students living in poverty were more likely to be retained. Students living in poverty often have parents that were high-school dropouts and were uninvolved in school activities (Alexander et al., 2003; Grant, 1997; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999).

Poverty carries the additional burden of mobility. Students who frequently change schools have an added risk of retention (Alexander et al., 2003; Grant, 1997; McArthur & Bianchi, 1993; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999, Stringer, 1960). Powell (2005) conducted a qualitative study in which she asked adults ($N = 10$), all retained during their elementary school years, about their family life during the time leading up to the retention. Five of the participants discussed the family moving frequently during the elementary school years, or moving just prior to the retention. One participant shared
that his family moved 28 times. These case studies demonstrate the reality of retention for students of high mobility families.

Reading Ability

Academic achievement is often discussed when determining the reason for student retention. However, achievement also needs to be examined at as a predictor of student retention. Studies focused on kindergarten and first-grade academic achievement have found that students who demonstrated poor test performance during the first marking period were more likely to be retained at the end of that school year (Dauber et al., 1993; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999). This demonstrates the various levels upon which students enter school. Students exposed to the experiences schools value start off performing well in school, whereas students exposed to experiences less tightly aligned with school assessments, often enter school lacking the proficiency skills needed to demonstrate school success.

Additional research supports the findings that certain experiences prior to beginning school assist in reducing a child’s likelihood of being retained. McArthur and Bianchi (1993) found that minority males who did not attend a structured preschool program (i.e., Head Start) were more likely to be retained. Researchers recognized the limitations in McArthur and Bianchi’s statistical analysis of the NHES data, as the connection to preschool was linked only to minority populations. Similar NHES data collected in 1995, provided researchers with a more general conclusion. Subsequent research indicated that students who attended Head Start or similar program, regardless of race, were less likely to be retained (Zill et al., 1998). The authors recognized this was a new finding when compared to the previous research.
Adjustment Concerns

Yet another predictor of student retention is a child’s ability to adjust to a variety of variables such as classroom environment and peers (Abidin et al., 1971; Alexander et al., 2003; Cadigan et al., 1988; Dauber et al., 1993; Jimerson, 2001; Morris, 1993). Morris (1993) tracked retention rates across grade levels and found retention rates to be the highest during the first years of school (K-2) and also during the first year following a building transition. For most schools, this translates to the first year students are in middle school, typically grade six, and the first year of high school, grade nine. Morris believes the environmental change in juxtaposition with students’ inability to adapt to the new environment is to blame for high retention rates at the years where there is an organizational change.

Adjustment concerns leading to retention are often subjective. Several research studies have indicated that students with low marks during the first marking periods on items such as behavior and socialization are more likely to be retained (Alexander et al., 2003; Cadigan et al., 1988; Dauber et al., 1993; Jimerson, 2001). Behavior and socialization marks are given by the classroom teacher and rely heavily on the teacher’s personal judgments. Teachers’ personal judgments are also involved in labeling a child immature. On student cumulative folders of first-grade retainees, teachers listed immaturity as the reason for retention 28% of the time in one research study (Abidin et al., 1971). The cited research related to adjustment concerns supports the notion that retention is not always an objective decision. Academic achievement is not the sole determiner of retention or promotion as many subjective factors come into play.
Table 2.1.

**Key References: Predictors of Student Retention**

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<th>References</th>
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<th>High Poverty Homes</th>
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Impact of Retention on Students

Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) wrote an article serving as a summary of the consequences of student retention. The article demonstrated the negative, long-lasting impact retention had on students. Students who were retained were less likely to receive a high school diploma. Once in the workforce, retainees received less per hour and were estimated to earn $100,000 less over the course of a lifetime. Additionally, retained students experienced higher rates of substance abuse and were more likely to be involved in illegal and reckless behaviors leading to an arrest. Students who experienced retention also experienced greater levels of emotional distress. One study reviewed had children listing retention as the third most stressful event that could occur in their life, only the loss of a parent and blindness were viewed as more stressful (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). An overview of the retention research and the impact retention has on students can be found in Table 2.2 at the end of this section.

While a vast majority of published research emphasizes the negative impact of student retention, smaller qualitative studies have indicated positive effects of student retention. Powell (2005) found that some adults regarded their elementary school retention as a positive. The adults that viewed retention as a positive experience noted parental involvement in the decision making process, as well as a family relocation following the retention. The adults explained that the relocation removed some of the social and emotional stresses associated with the retention. Additionally, the retention allowed an extra year to master reading and math skills. The adults who viewed the retention as a positive event shared with Powell that had they been promoted they would have continued to struggle academically and may never have caught up with their peers.
Academic Achievement

Arguably, the greatest consequence of student retention is the impact it has on student achievement. Studies conducted examining student achievement, and its relationship to student retention, have traditionally been conducted under three different circumstances. The first method follows the performance of the retained student over two years. This method examines the retained student's achievement during the first year in grade, as compared with performance during the retention year. This methodology is flawed if the researcher does not account for maturation, in that it is only normal for students to demonstrate growth after an additional year of instruction. It would be expected that the students would demonstrate some growth, even if they were promoted. The second methodology compares retained students with similarly performing promoted students. While this method is better than the first, when comparing standardized scores, a reader must recognize that promoted students are exposed to a more challenging and complex curriculum in the higher grade. Additionally, Stringer (1960) pointed out that promoted students are often receiving an additional boost of support at home. In 40 of 50 cases of nonpromotion parents did not question the verdict or act in opposition to the decision to retain. On the contrary, when examining the 41 social promotions it was discovered that all but three students had parents who appealed the original recommendation for retention, vowing to provide additional academic support for the child at home. The discrepancy in support outside of school needs to be controlled for as part of a study. The third and best method randomly assigns students being considered for grade repetition, to retention or promotion. The students are then followed as part of a longitudinal study to determine if the retained students received any benefit to retention.
However, while this type of study has the best methodology, it is often the most difficult to conduct.

Jackson's (1975) meta-analysis on grade retention found that of the 44 studies reviewed, only two had statistically significant results favoring retention, compared with 24 statistically significant results favoring promotion. The other studies showed no statistical significance either way. Jackson pointed out that all but three of the studies contained serious flaws in designs. Most of the studies cited compare retained students' performances to the first and second year in the same grade. Other studies compare promoted students with retained students, failing to match students on predictor variables. Only three studies (Cook, 1941; Farley 1936; Klene & Branson, 1929) used experimental design and randomly assigned poor performing students to promotion or retention. However, even these studies were flawed in that they only followed students for one semester following the social promotion or retention. The results from these three studies indicated no academic advantages to retention (Jackson, 1975).

Holmes and Matthews (1984) conducted a similar meta-analysis reviewing original research at the elementary and junior high level. Reviewed were 18 published studies, 14 dissertations, and 12 master's theses. A total of 11,132 pupils participated in the 44 studies with 4,208 retained students and 6,924 promoted students. When examining the areas of reading math, social studies, work study skills and grade point average, promoted students achieved "on average .44 standard deviation units higher than the retained group" (Holmes & Matthews, 1984, p. 231).

Pierson and Connell (1992) wrote a frequently cited study on the academic benefits of retention. The study reports retained students outperform socially promoted
peers. However, retained students were measured against three groups, a socially promoted group, a matched group, and a randomly selected group. The groups were compared not only on academic achievement but also in the areas of perceived cognitive competence, perceived self worth, perceived relatedness to peers and effort. The only statistically significant results benefiting retained students were the comparisons of the retained group to the socially promoted group in the area of academic achievement. While the finding was significant, Pierson and Connell failed to identify flaws in their methodology. When creating comparison groups the researchers used IQ and report card grades to match students; there was no indication that students were matched on the known predictors of student retention such as race, gender, and family background. For example, students who had been retained at other schools during grades one through four and transferred into the schools participating in the study were eliminated from the retained group. And, students who were retained at the participating schools but transferred to another district during the course of the study were not included in the study results. The results may have been different if the study had accounted for student mobility through the replacement of missing values.

_The Earlier the Better_

In practice, teachers will argue that retention is best in the early years; or, teachers say they owe it to the next year’s teacher to only promote students who are academically and socially prepared (Jackson, 1975; Shepard, 1989). In 1982, the Gesell Institute made a recommendation that immature children be retained, allowing for another year of social growth before entering first grade. This recommendation added to the notion that children should reach or achieve some predetermined measures before promotion.
The research on retention during the early years is mixed with strong feelings at the extremes. In Shepard’s (1989) review of research on kindergarten retention, she found retention in the early years to be just as ineffective as retention later in school. Stating there was no benefit to retention academically or behaviorally. While some studies have found immediate benefits to early retention, the advantages have all but disappeared by the end of third grade (Elligett & Tocco, 1983). Qualitative studies looking at individual children, not groups of children, have found more positive results indicating that early retentions with parental support are viewed by parents and students as effective and beneficial both short-term and long-term (Powell, 2005).

**Redshirting**

Traditionally, white, middle to upper class families have delayed kindergarten entry of their sons, usually those with summer or fall birthdays (Cameron & Wilson, 1990; Graue & DiPerna, 2000). The practice, coined redshirting, is viewed as a way to provide children with the advantage of being older, and thus, more academically and socially able, once they do enter school. There are some concerns with the environment created as a result of redshirting (Meisels, 1992). First, the age differentiation in the kindergarten class expands from 12 months (a traditional classroom spread) to 24 months. With the increased variation in ages, curriculum becomes more challenging for the teacher to implement as the needs and abilities of the students are more varied. Additionally, the parents electing to redshirt their child are often more participatory in the educational process wanting to ensure their child is challenged (Meisels, 1992). What began as a way for a middle or upper class family to ensure their student was prepared for school instead increased the achievement gap before instruction even started. Districts
are left trying to analyze norm- and criterion-referenced assessments for students of varying ages with different needs and abilities (Meisels, 1992).

Other research indicates that redshirting does not provide an advantage to students (Cameron & Wilson, 1990; Graue & DiPerna, 2000). Cameron and Wilson (1990) discovered there was a relatively small achievement difference in grades K-4 between the oldest and the youngest child in a given grade. As with the nature of children, some differences are likely to be found. However, they found, "no competitive advantage in achievement as the result of delaying entry to school" (Cameron & Wilson, 1990, p. 262). Not only did Graue and DiPerna (2000) find that redshirting failed to provide students with an academic advantage, they found boys who were redshirted were more likely to be placed in programs for struggling students, such as special education.

It is important to highlight redshirting as a subset of retention because of the way researchers use preexisting and new data to draw conclusions and make inferences. For example, in the instance of a researcher collecting data on students who are overage for their grade, redshirted students would be included in this population, not just traditionally retained students. Understanding these phenomena allows researchers to think critically when reviewing studies where the data are unclear as to possible groups included in the sample population.

**Behavior**

The body of research reflecting the impact of retention on student behavior is inconsistent in the area of social adjustment. Beyond behaviors in the classroom there are other behaviors that impact a students' ability to adjust to the school environment. One important aspect of school is the ability to make and maintain friendships. Making
friends was found to be more difficult for retained students (Gottfredson et al., 1994; Sandoval & Fitzgerald, 1985). In addition, transitional students\(^5\) felt worse about themselves (self-concept) than their promoted peers (Sandoval & Fitzgerald, 1985). Holmes and Matthews' (1984) meta-analysis concluded that children who were retained averaged .27 standard deviation units below promoted students in the areas of social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and behavior.

Some researchers suggested there may be some behavioral benefits to retention. Pierson and Connell (1992) claimed that students who were struggling academically felt incompetent. They believed that through retention students achieve academic success and regain their sense of competence. Their study did not report any findings to support this claim. Another study reported that while peer relations may be more difficult for retained children, classroom behavior, as reported by the classroom teacher, improved following grade retention (Gottfredson et al., 1994). Teachers in the study described retained children as less rebellious. These studies contradict 1993 and 1995 findings by NHES (Zill et al., 1998) which indicated students repeating a grade not only demonstrated a decline in academic performance, but were also more likely to receive negative feedback from teachers.

*Special Education Placement*

A majority of children who are retained struggle academically both before and after their retention (Abidin et al., 1971; Alexander et al., 2003; Cadigan et al., 1988; Dauber et al., 1993; Gottfredson et al., 1994; Jimerson, 2001; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999). Alexander et al. followed first grade retainees over eight years. They established that

\(^5\) A transition class is an alternative form of retention. The student is still required to complete an additional year of schooling.
64% of first-grade repeaters received some form of special education services, pull-out or self-contained, during the eight-year period. Not only did the students receive services, the students tended to remain in special education. Forty-two students qualified for special education services during their first-grade retention year. By the eighth year of the study, 38 were still in special education (Alexander et al., 2003). The number receiving special education services is extremely high when considering only 9% of never retained students received some type of special education services during the eight years of the study (Alexander et al., 2003). Retention is a predictor, not a cause, of special education placement. There are likely other factors (i.e., student achievement, academic ability) that contribute to both student retention and special education placement.

**Long Term Impact**

Multiple research studies have been conducted on the relationship between student retention in elementary and junior high school and high school dropout rates (Alexander et al., 2003; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). Retention increases the likelihood of dropping out of school and the likelihood of non-completion (Alexander et al., 2003). A relationship has been established between dropout rates and retention, if retention rates increased by 5-7% the dropout rate would increase by 3-6% (Grissom & Shepard, 1989).

Thomas and Knudsen (1965) conducted an early analysis of a southern white city-school population and found that the dropout rate for students never retained in elementary school was 6.7%, as compared to 23% for students retained once in elementary school, and 27.2% for those students retained more than once. The authors
were quick at that time to point out, “Nonpromotion cannot be said to cause school withdrawal directly, but the effects of nonpromotion on the student, his family, and his peer group relations results in pressures that discourage him from continuing his education.” (Thomas & Knudsen, 1965, p. 94). While research continues to show a relationship between retention rates and high school dropout rates (Grissom & Shepard, 1989), a casual relationship is still uncertain as other variables, such as academic ability and student motivation, are likely to also have an impact.

Researchers have continued with Thomas and Knudsen’s (1965) research on the impact of student retention rates on high school dropout rates. Stephenson (1985) discovered a discrepancy in Dade County, in that students in their age appropriate grade had a dropout rate of 27%, as compared to 55% for overage students. In 1989, Grissom and Shepard examined overage students in three school systems: Austin, Chicago, and a northeast suburban school system. They found that in Austin the drop out rate was increased by 27% for retained students. In the northeast district, the dropout rate for females in high SES families increased by 21%, if the girl was retained for just one year in school. The National Center for Educational Statistics reports that 24% of students ever retained dropout of school, compared to 10% of students never retained (NCES, 2006).

When looking at individual children, there is some evidence to indicate retention can be beneficial. A qualitative study conducted as part of a dissertation study interviewed adults ($N = 10$), ages 21 – 70, who were retained once during grades K-6 and asked questions pertaining to the retention (Powell, 2005). Six of the ten adults participating in the study felt there were no long-term effects of student retention.
However, it is difficult to justify these results as “typical.” The sample was acquired through a snowball effect (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) in which “[the sample was] obtained from population of university students, university personnel, and their friends, acquaintances, and/or family members” (Powell, 2005, p. 61). In addition, those cases where the adult identified retention as not having a negative impact were decisions that were made jointly between the teacher and the parent (Powell, 2005). It is clear that the extreme sample, retainees with university ties and strong parental involvement, is not representative of most retainees. Thus, while the research opens up the possibility that retention is not always ineffective, it’s small sample \(N = 10\) and extreme cases does not allow for generalizations. If anything, it points to the importance of school and home communication.

Despite a growing body of evidence, most teachers do not believe there are academic, emotional, or social consequences for students who are retained. Smith (1989) reports, “Given opportunities and prompts for any negative effects that retention might produce, few teachers could name even one” (p. 145). Following up, “Almost all [teachers] stated clearly they would rather err on the side of retaining a child who possibly might not need it than to promote one who might have needed to be retained” (Smith, 1989, p. 145). While the research indicates that teachers are aware that retention is ineffective, it is possible that teachers are not aware of the serious consequences that are connected to retention (Tomchin & Impara, 1992).
Table 2.2.

**Key References: Impact of Retention on Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Declined Academic Achievement</th>
<th>Increased Negative Behavior</th>
<th>Decreased Self-Concept</th>
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Teachers and Retention

Teacher Beliefs

Jackson conducted one of the first extensive meta-analysis on student retention in 1975. At that time, only one of the 44 studies he reviewed contained any statistical differences in favor of student retention. Since Jackson’s meta-analysis, research has continued to indicate student retention is unsuccessful in providing the needed gains to children, allowing them to overcome academic struggles and emotional and developmental delays (Cosden, et al., 1993; Elligett & Tocco, 1983; Foster, 1993; Gottfredson, et al., 1994; Grissom, & Shepard, 1989; Jimerson, 2001; Thomas & Knudsen, 1965; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999; Sandoval & Fitzgerald, 1985; Shepard & Smith, 1989; Thompson & Kolb, 1999). The question then is, if research indicates that in most instances retention as a practice is not only ineffective, but harmful to students (Grissom & Shepard, 1989; Sandoval & Fitzgerald, 1985; Shepard, 1989), why do teachers continue to retain students?

Smith (1989) examined teachers’ beliefs on student retention. In her study, she conducted interviews and observations to further grasp teachers’ beliefs regarding retention. Through her study she was able to divide teacher beliefs into two main groups: nativist, those who believe, “children become prepared for school according to an evolutionary, physiological unfolding of abilities...largely outside the influence of parents and teachers.” (p. 136) and the non-nativists, who believe what they do has an impact on students’ readiness and ability to learn. The terms nativist and non-nativist can be loosely coupled with Rotter’s construct of external and internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966). However, no further research was conducted based on Smith’s findings.
When studying teachers’ beliefs on grade retention researchers found that over half of the teachers surveyed felt that retention was ineffective in improving academic achievement (Bonvin, 2003; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). Despite these feelings that the practice was ineffective, “responses indicated that teachers at all grade levels believe retention is an acceptable school practice that prevents students from facing daily failure and motivates them to work harder” (Tomchin & Impara, 1992, p. 199). This indicates a philosophical difference between what teachers believe (the practice is fails to improve student achievement) and what teachers actually practice (student retention). Teachers indicated they were aware that the practice of retaining students in grade was ineffective. However, when questioned further, not only did teachers indicate retention was an acceptable form of remediation, they believed it added the benefit for motivating students to work harder and preventing student failure. In addition, 91% of teachers in Tomchin and Impara’s (1992) study believed that retaining students in grades K-3 was not harmful and in fact would not pose any lasting harmful effects. These research studies assists researchers in understanding that there are underlying beliefs that drive teachers and their decision making process.

*Reasons for Retention*

The reason teachers elect to retain students varies by grade level. Tomchin and Impara (1992) found that all teachers in K-7 deemed academic performance as the most important criterion when considering a student for retention. Maturity, ability, and effort, in that order, were the three other factors described by K-3 teachers as impacting their decision making. Teachers in grades 4-7 listed the order as ability, effort, and maturity. However, while teachers furnished the previous lists, researchers found when teachers
were given a vignette describing a student and asked for input, teachers added the student’s weight and size to the factors included as part of their decision making process.

In 1996, Bergin, Osbum, and Cryan presented 252 teachers in Ohio with eight student profiles. The purpose of the study was to “determine what factors other than achievement or competence influence kindergarten teachers when making placement decisions for children in their classes” (p. 157). Teachers were asked to make a recommendation for retention or promotion based on the given profiles. The results of the study showed that next to academic achievement teachers considered birth date, student independent level, and maturity when determining placement. Thirty-four teachers made a recommendation for retention despite the student meeting all academic requirements.

In 2003, Bonvin’s research focused on the teacher’s role in student retention. The study asked 234 teachers the criteria they used when recommending a second grade student for retention. Teachers ranked developmental maturity as the most important criteria to consider. This was followed by academic achievement and intellectual potential. The studies presented demonstrate the complexity of the decision making process as well as the variability that exists when making decisions.

**Biases**

How do teachers determine which students are retained and which students are promoted at the end of each school year? Teacher perception of children could play a big role. Reynolds’s (1992) Chicago study on predictors of student retention ignored the correlation between teacher ratings and student characteristics in the discussion. (See Appendix A). Teacher ratings for students were predictable based on student gender.
(male), race (minority), and socioeconomic status (low-SES). The study found that teachers had greater expectations for white, middle to upper-class students than for black, lower-class students. This study points to the impact of teacher bias could have on retention practices.

Research demonstrates teachers’ biases towards student retention have a great impact on the likelihood of a student being retained (Bonvin, 2003). Two-hundred thirty-four teachers were given a set of questions, using a four-point Likert scale, regarding their beliefs on the efficacy of student retention. The study found that an increase by one point on the four-point Likert scale translated to a 50% increase in the likelihood of a child being retained. When examining the extremes, having a teacher at one extreme of the scale versus the other extreme, “amounts to a 180% rise of retention risk, all other parameters being equal” (Bonvin, 2003, p. 287).

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Efficacy is a powerful indicator of what an individual is likely to believe and how an individual is likely to act. It is defined as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Studies demonstrate that, “efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act” (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Individuals with high self-efficacy focus on success and the steps needed to achieve predetermined goals; individuals with low self-efficacy dwell on what may or could fail or go wrong (Bandura, 1995).

In 1995, Hackett discovered self-efficacy to be a greater predictor of occupational choices being considered by college students than the students’ actual academic achievement. Bandura (2002) had similar findings. He found that the higher one’s level
of perceived efficacy towards fulfilling academic and occupational requirements the
greater the number of career choices the individual considered. Self-efficacy beliefs not
only influence the choices one makes, but also the effort and persistence the individual
attaches to those choices (Bandura, 2002). Self-efficacy is a motivational construct.

While self-efficacy beliefs are often discussed in terms of generalizations, they
are situation specific (Bandura, 1986; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992). A
teachers’ level of expertise in a given subject area or grade, or students’ level of academic
ability, can all influence a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy (Raudenbush et al., 1992).
Raudenbush et al. (1992) found that teachers instructing academic-tracked students and
honors students had higher levels of self-efficacy when compared to teachers teaching
nonacademic-tracked students. Ashton and Webb (1986) found that teachers with more
challenging (behavior) and lower-achieving (academically) students tended to have lower
self-efficacy beliefs.

Theoretical Background

Teacher self-efficacy is a subset of social cognitive theory. This section of the
literature review briefly identifies, defines, and describes social learning theory, social
cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory; theories that have molded the current beliefs
and ideas surrounding teacher self-efficacy.

Social learning theory. Rotter (1966), the father of social learning theory,
believed that an individual was not separate from his or her environment. He believed
that personalities were influenced by both the person (internal) and the environment
(external). According to social learning theory, behaviors can be acquired in two ways:
actual experience and observation of similar behaviors by others (Barclay, 1982). The
actual learning of the behaviors then occurs through reinforcement and eventually reinforcement becomes the motivator for the behavior. Experienced and observed behaviors do not always fit clearly in the realm of positive and negative, other factors including cultural differences (Bandura, 2002) and organizational differences (Barclay, 1982) can impact the lens through which behaviors are viewed. Barclay (1982) argued that individuals within an organization look to the organization to determine what behaviors are and are not acceptable. If Barclay is correct that there is a connection between social learning theory and discriminatory behaviors, it could be argued that within certain organizations there is a predisposition towards the failure of poor, African American males in educational settings. The discrimination comes from a system that is dominated by white, middle-class values.

Social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory moves beyond actions of social learning theory to a level of consciousness. According to the theory there is a subjective nature to each individual that allows him or her to reflect, guide, and react (Bandura, 2001). Connecting to the social learning theory, all of these ideas are linked to the individual’s experiences (Bandura, 2001). Social Cognitive Theory,

...distinguishes among three modes of agency: personal agency exercised by the individual; proxy agency in which people secure desired outcomes by influencing others to act on their behalf; and collective agency in which people act in concert to shape their future. (Bandura, 2002; p. 269)

The theory is rooted in the belief that one has the ability to choose the actions of him or herself, the ability to get others working on one’s behalf, and the ability to choose to work with others for the good of the whole. The theory calls for all three aspects: personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency to work interdependently, each
piece as instrumental to the whole as the others. The theory is social in nature, recognizing that individuals do not live in isolation (Bandura, 2001, 2002). The theory recognizes that people have the capability to act and react in various ways. It is this flexible nature that allows individuals and groups to adapt to their environment.

Self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy was first defined by Bandura (1977) as one's personal belief in his or her ability to perform a task and achieve the desired outcome. In 1989, Bandura expanded his definition of self-efficacy to, “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercises control over events that affect their lives” (p. 1175). Maddux (1995) further explains self-efficacy theory:

The crux of self-efficacy theory is that the initiation of and persistence at behaviors and courses of action are determined primarily by judgments and expectations concerning behavioral skills and capabilities and the likelihood of being able to successfully cope with environmental demands and challenges. (p. 4)

Self-efficacy should not be confused with self-concept and/or self-esteem (Maddux, 1995). Self-efficacy is a cognitive theory not an affective theory. It is focused on what one believes or thinks rather than the values or motivations behind those beliefs and thoughts. Self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from a collection of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1995).

Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) nicely summarized previous definitions of teacher self-efficacy in relation to teacher efficacy, “A teacher’s efficacy is a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or
unmotivated” (p. 783). A teacher who believes he or she ultimately has control over a student’s learning is referred to as a teacher with high self-efficacy. Whereas, a teacher who considers his or her ability to impact students as limited by external factors in students’ lives (i.e., family economics, parental support, student motivation) is a teacher with low self-efficacy. Teachers with low self-efficacy believe that no matter the effort they put forth to help a student the above listed external factors will ultimately determine the student’s success.

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been linked to several variables within the school environment demonstrating that there are external forces that play a role in shaping a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy. School variables, including level of collaboration and shared decision making, have an impact on a teacher’s self-efficacy beliefs (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Raudenbush et al., 1992). Instructional practices, such as responsive classroom practices, are also linked to teacher self-efficacy (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). Researchers have found all these areas: strong collaboration, shared decision making, and quality instructional practices, lead to higher levels of teacher self-efficacy. On the contrary, teachers struggling with classroom management and poor student achievement report lower levels of teacher self-efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Summary

Student retention has traditionally been researched examining students’ shortcomings. Research has identified various predictors of student retention including race, gender, SES, and academic achievement (Dauber et al., 1993; Jimerson, 2001; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999). In addition to the predictors of student retention, the long-
term consequences of student retention have been identified: increased likelihood of school dropout, decreased work earnings, and increased likelihood of disorderly behavior (Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). In looking at the teacher’s role in student retention, various studies attempted to understand how teachers go about making decisions to retain students. Studies indicated that while most teachers identify student achievement as the main indicator, other concerns including maturity, social adjustment, and age factor into the decision (Bergin et al., 1996; Smith, 1989; Tomchin & Impara, 1992). Finally, when examining the role of the teacher in student retention, teacher beliefs regarding student retention were found to be one of the strongest predictors of student retention (Bonvin, 2003).

The evolution of the concept of teacher sense of self-efficacy was followed from Rotter’s (1966) social learning theory to Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy theory, and later teacher self-efficacy beliefs, evolved out of Bandura’s the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy beliefs were reported as influencing the decisions one makes, examples included decisions regarding career paths (Hackett, 1995). Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been connected to classroom management, student achievement, and special education referrals.
Chapter 3: Research Methods

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a correlation between the number of students a teacher recommends for retention and a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy. In addition, accompanying questions were posed regarding years of teaching experience and school status (i.e., Title I, non-Title I) in an attempt to better understand a possible larger relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and student retention rates. To better understand student retention practices, the researcher also compared the student demographics, as reported by the classroom teacher, of retained K-2 students to the previously discussed predictors of student retention, including race, gender and socioeconomic status (SES).

Research Questions

Based on the previously discussed focus and purpose, six research questions guided this study.

1. Is there a significant relationship between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention over the last two years?

2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs among primary teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools?

3. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience?

4. Is there a significant relationship between retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools in grades K-2?
5. Is there a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and the number of recommendations for retention?

6. What are the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 as reported by the teachers who made the recommendation for retention?

Data Collection

Sample

A convenience sample was used in selecting the district to participate in the study. The 236 K-2 full-time and part-time teachers in this urban district were invited to participate in the study. Teachers in the selected district worked in both Title I and non-Title I schools. Surveys were made available via an email with the online survey link included. The units of analysis for this study included both the teacher level and the school level. Teacher-level analysis was used to determine the relationship between K-2 teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention. The teacher-level of analysis was also used to determine if there was a relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience and years of teaching experience and mean number of recommendations for student retention. The school-level of analysis was used to compare the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools and in determining if there was a relationship between the retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools.

Procedures

Permission to collect data in the district was requested through the district's Director of Instruction and Accountability and the district's Research Committee. All district procedures pertaining to research were followed. K-2 teachers were solicited to
participate in the online survey via an email with the survey link included. A thank you email was sent to all respondents at the conclusion of the first week. A follow-up email was sent to non-respondents after the first week with the hopes of increasing participation. The timeframe for follow-ups and the timeline for keeping the survey tool active was based on previously published research finding that a majority of respondents (over 50%) respond within the first six days of receiving the invitation to participate and that the timing of a follow-up email (e.g., three days, two weeks) does not have a statistical impact on the final response rate (Deutskens, deRuyter, Wetzels, & Oosteveld, 2004). The length of the data collection for this electronic survey was shortened from the recommended two months for mail surveys to 15 days because of the quicker turnaround allotted by online surveying methods (Fowler, 2002).

A lottery incentive was used to increase participant response rate (Deutskens et al., 2004, Fink, 1995; Gaddis, 1998). Deutskens et al. (2004) found that the use of lottery incentives statistically increased participant response rates when compared to other types of incentives, although no comparison was made to the absence of incentives. Two $50 gift cards to a local book/music store were purchased for the lottery incentive. The online survey tool indicated which participants responded without matching participant responses to specific email accounts. All respondents' names were placed in a bowl and two names were drawn for the gift cards. After receiving permission from the winners, all teachers were notified of the selection of the winners.

Instrumentation

The study's main aim was to determine the relationship, if any, between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and student retention rates. To complete the research, Tschannen-
Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) short form *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)* was used. The short form was selected as an alternative to the long form because of the need to add supplemental questions related to student retention. Research suggests that shorter surveys have a statistically higher response rate than longer surveys (Deutskens et al., 2004).

*Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale*

In 1997, Bandura, the father of social cognitive theory, created a new instrument for measuring teacher self-efficacy, a 30-question scale with seven sub areas: efficacy to influence decision making, efficacy to influence school resources, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental involvement, efficacy to enlist community involvement, and efficacy to create a positive school climate. Using Bandura's recommendations to improve and expand the scale, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) created a new instrument for measuring three areas of teacher self-efficacy: efficacy for student engagement, efficacy for instructional strategies, and efficacy for classroom management. The new scale was originally entitled *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES)*; however, the authors renamed the scale as the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)*. After careful review of the literature, the TSES is to date the published instrument with the greatest content validity and reliability.

*TSES* has both a long and short form. In their study, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) found similar reliabilities between the two instruments. Because of the addition of the *Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument (RRCI)* and the desire for a high response rate, the short form of the TSES was selected for this study. The reliabilities for the short form the authors found in their sample are listed in Table 3.1.
Table 3.2 includes sample questions from each of the TSES subcategories. For each question, the teacher is asked, "How much can you do?" and is then presented with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 9 with the following descriptors: 1= nothing, 3= very little, 5= some influence, 7= quite a bit, and 9= a great deal.

Table 3.1.
*Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Short Form Reliabilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001)

Table 3.2.
*Sample Questions from Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument*

The *Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument (RRCI)* was created to gain information from teachers regarding their recollection of student retention. The instrument asked teachers to recall the number of students both recommended for
retention and the number of students actually retained during the past two school years. In addition, the RRCI asked teachers to recall various student characteristics for each of the students actually retained during that two-year period. After each student’s information was entered by the teacher, the teacher was prompted to respond “yes” to enter data for another student or “no” to be redirected to the next part of the survey. Appendix B provides a complete list of questions, including student information for Student A. The same questions were provided in the survey for up to fifteen students. The items included were drawn from previous research on the predictors of student retention as discussed in Chapter 2. These items included: gender, race, SES, behavior, age, attendance, mobility, academic achievement, and parental involvement. Teachers having difficulty recalling various details for each retained child were provided the option, “I don’t recall.” Sample questions are provided.

- During the 2004-2005 school year, how many students did you recommend for retention? (One or more of those students recommended for retention may have been promoted.)
- During the 2004-2005 school year, how many of the students recommended for retention were actually retained?
- Student A, when compared to classmates was (choose one)
  - younger
  - older
  - same age
  - I don’t recall.
• How would you describe Student A's prompt arrival at school? (choose one)

Student A had a lot of tardies. (about +10)
Student A had a moderate number of tardies. (about 6-10)
Student A had few to no tardies. (about 0-5)
I don’t recall.

To increase both the reliability and the validity of the RRCI questions, multiple revisions were made to the original instrument. First, a focus group of graduate students with surveying experience reviewed the instrument and provided feedback. Changes made based on the feedback included the rewording of several questions related to student characteristics, as well as the deletion of questions the group felt were too subjective and/or too difficult for a teacher to recall after two years. Next, the revised instrument was piloted online in a Virginia K-2 school with a total of 32 kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. After each section of the pilot survey, teachers were asked for input regarding question clarity and understandability. Teachers were also provided an opportunity to provide suggestions. Again, the feedback was reviewed and considered when final changes to the survey instrument were completed (See Appendix B). Providing participants in a pilot study the opportunity to provide feedback and make suggestions increased the validity of the instrument (Fink, 1995). This method also reduced measurement error and created a better worded and better constructed survey (Dillman, 2000).

The online survey tool this study utilized was SurveyMonkey.com. The survey tool allowed the researcher to send out an initial email with the survey link embedded in the email. It also monitored who had and had not responded, allowing for individualized
email reminders. In addition, when reporting which participants had and had not responded the tool separated email addresses from responses allowing the participants’ responses to remain anonymous.

**Teaching Demographics**

The final piece of data collected were demographics related to teaching experience. Three questions were asked at the end of the *TSES* and *RRCI* online survey. The questions provided the researcher with the school, grade, and years of teaching experience for each teacher completing the survey. These three questions were not included in the discussion with the focus group, but were included in the piloted survey. (See Appendix B).

**Development of Online Survey**

The organization of the survey questions followed suggestions by Gaddis (1998) to place objective questions at the beginning of a survey instrument followed by subjective questions, and ending with demographic questions. The survey tool created began with objective questions related to student retention rates. The next section of the survey contained more subjective information from the *RRCI* and the *TSES*. The survey ended requesting teacher demographics. Each question in the survey was reviewed for structure, answerability, accuracy, specificity, exclusivity of answers as suggested by research (Dillman, 2000). It is believed that objective questions at the beginning of the survey make the respondent more comfortable with the actual survey. Demographics, a considerably personal aspect of the questionnaire, at the end of a survey allows the respondent to establish a feeling of comfortableness and trust with the survey questions being asked before having to provide personal information (Gaddis, 1998).
Survey response rates can be increased making initial contact through a prenotice letter. The response rate can further be increased when the notice comes from a legitimate authority (Dillman, 2000). When conducting the pilot of the survey instruments, teachers were sent a prenotice email from the principal one week before the start of the pilot study. At that time teachers were provided with background information on the pilot study. As part of this study, the researcher secured an internal email address for communication. The prenotice email included both the endorsement of the Director of Instruction and Accountability and basic information on the study.

The inclusion of a cover letter with each survey is another way to boost return rates (Moser & Kalton 1972). Thus, both the email including the survey link and the first page of the survey included information related to the purpose of the survey and the estimated time to complete the survey. Multimodes of data collection may be used to increase the response rate (e.g. following up with non-respondents via telephone survey) (Dillman, 2000; Fowler, 2002). However, because of the potential for variance in actual participant responses multimodes of data collection were not used in this study.

Data Analysis

Table 3.3 outlines each of the research questions, data sources, and data analysis that were used for the study. Data were obtained from two sources: Bayside City Schools technology department and teachers participating in the online survey. The online survey contained the RRCI and TSES as well as three demographic questions, referred to as Demographics in Table 3.3. All data analysis were run using the program SPSS.

Question 1 examined the correlation between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention. Data for Question 1 were
collected from the RRCI and TSES. Analyses were conducted using correlation statistics for the whole population and the population extremes (teachers with five or more recommendations for student retention and teachers with no recommendations for student retention). Question 2 was answered using data from the RRCI and TSES. An independent t-test was run to determine the difference, if any, between teacher self-efficacy beliefs at Title I and non-Title I schools. For Question 3, to determine the extent to which teacher self-efficacy beliefs vary with years of teaching experience a correlation coefficient was run. The TSES and Demographics were the sources of data. An independent t-test was run for Question 4 to determine the difference between retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools. This information was collected directly from the school district. A correlation coefficient was run for Question 5 to determine the relationship between years of teaching experience and the number of recommendations for student retention. Data for Question 5 were collected using the RRCI and Demographics. The characteristics of retained students, Question 6, were reported using descriptive statistics and frequency counts. The data were obtained from the RRCI.

Ethical Safeguards

Approval to conduct the study was sought from The Human Subjects Review Committee at The College of William and Mary. Following approval from the College and before data were collected; the participating school district was contacted. All district procedures for obtaining research approval and conducting research were followed accordingly.

All data collected were handled in a confidential manner to protect the identity of the individual participants and the school district. As an additional layer of protection the
online survey tool, SurveyMonkey.com, detached participants’ email address from their responses. Upon conclusion of the study both an executive summary and a copy of the full-text dissertation were provided the Director of Instruction and Accountability in the participating district. The school district may disseminate the results as the district deems appropriate.
Table 3.3.

**Plan for Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Is there a significant relationship (p<.05) between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention over the last two years? | RRCI  
TSES | Pearson r  
Pearson r |
| a. whole sample                                                                   | RRCI  
TSES | Pearson r  
Pearson r |
| b. extreme quartiles                                                              | RRCI  
TSES | Pearson r  
Pearson r |
| 2. Is there a significant relationship (p<.05) between teacher self-efficacy beliefs among primary teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools? | RRCI  
TSES | Independent t-test |
| 3. Is there a significant relationship (p<.05) between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience? | TSES  
Demographics | Pearson r |
| 4. Is there a significant relationship (p<.05) between retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools in grades K-2, and is the difference statistically significant? | School District | Independent t-test |
| 5. Is there a significant relationship (p<.05) between teachers’ years of teaching experience and the mean number of recommendations for student retention made by teachers over the past two years? | RRCI  
Demographics | Pearson r |
| 6. What are the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 as reported by the teachers who made the recommendations for retention? | RRCI | Descriptive Statistics  
Frequency Counts |

*RRCI, Retention Rates Characteristics Instrument  
TSES, Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale*
Chapter 4: Analysis of Results

Findings from the Research Questions

A total of 131 (57.71%) of primary teachers in Bayside City Schools completed useable surveys. Where single items were missing, a mean score by subscale was taken. Nine participant surveys submitted were unusable either because the surveys were incomplete or because the teacher did not meet the requirements for the project (e.g., primary teacher with a homeroom). The final analysis represents 42 kindergarten teachers (32% of respondents), 43 first grade teachers (33% of respondents), 41 second grade teachers (31% of respondents), and five teachers (4%) not indicating their current grade assignment. When considering school Title I status, five teachers (4%) did not report their current schools' Title I status, 53% of teachers reported teaching at a Title I school and 43% reported teaching at a non-Title I school for the 05-06 school year.

Teachers reported the characteristics of 107 kindergarten, first, and second grade students actually retained between 2004 and 2006. When looking at recommendations for retention, participating primary teachers reported recommending 124 students for retention for the 2005-2006 school year and 109 students for the 2004-2005 school year. This represents 61% and 51% of all students retained for the 2005-2006 and 2004-2005 school years respectively. This compares to a total of 203 primary students recommended for retention in the district for a mean of .86 students recommended per primary teacher (N=236).

The mean number of recommendations for student retention (2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years) as reported by the classroom teachers ranged from zero to four
students (mean = 1.29, SD = 1.09). Extreme samples for student retention recommendations were also reviewed as part of the study. Extreme samples were formulated based on the total number of recommendations for student retention over the two year period (2004-2006), increasing the range from four to eight. Teachers with recommendations for student retention at least ± 1 SD (mean = 2.6, SD = 2.2) were included in the extreme sample. This included teachers with no retention recommendations for two years at the low-extreme (n= 22) and teachers with five or more retention recommendations for two years at the high-extreme (n=17). (See Table 4.1).

Actual student retention rates for the district were collected directly from the school district. During the 2005-2006 school year, Title I schools retained 129 (4.5%) students out of an enrollment of 2,864. The number of retentions by school at Title I schools ranged from 1 to 24. Non-Title I schools retained 74 (3.7%) students out of an enrollment of 2,003 during the same period. The number of retentions by school at non-Title I schools ranged from 4 to 14. (See Table 4.2).

The TSES teacher means ranged from 4.5 to 9.0 (mean = 7.56, SD = 1). Teachers’ Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Subscale means were also analyzed. The TSES Subscale means were as follows: Instructional Strategies Subscale means ranged from 3.0 to 9.0 (mean = 7.33, SD = 1.22), Classroom Management Subscale means ranged from 4.5 to 9.0 (mean = 7.45, SD = 1.08), and Student Engagement Subscale means ranged from 3.75 to 9.0 (mean = 7.25, SD = 1.08). (See Table 4.1). Additional findings from the research are reported by question.
### Table 4.1.

**Recommendations for Student Retention Means and TSES Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range Min. – Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES Mean</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>4.5 – 9.0</td>
<td>7.565</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>3.0 – 9.0</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subscale</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>4.5 – 9.0</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement Subscale</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>3.75 – 9.0</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2004-2006 Two Year Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Recommendations for Student Retention</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range Min. – Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Recommendations</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0 – 4.0</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2004-2006 Two Year Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Range Min. – Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Extreme Sample</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0 - 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Extreme Sample</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.0 – 8.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.

**Number of Student Retentions 2005-2006 School Year as Reported by School District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title I Status</th>
<th>Retentions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min. – Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>Retentions</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1 - 24</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Student Population</td>
<td>&lt;1%-12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>Retentions</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4 - 14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Student Population</td>
<td>1%-7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=14 Title I Schools, n=9 Non-Title I schools

**Question 1:** Is there a significant relationship between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention over the last two years?

A Pearson $r$ correlation was conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention over the last two school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). The mean number of recommendations ranged from zero to four with a mean of 1.29 ($SD = 1.09$). The $TSES$ mean was 7.43 ($SD = .93$) with a range of 4.5 to 9.0. There was no evidence of a significant relationship between K-2 teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and the mean number of recommendations for student retention. (See Table 4.3). The data were further analyzed by school status (i.e., Title I, non-Title I) and by $TSES$ Subscale means (i.e., Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, and Student Engagement). The results again indicated no significance. (See Table 4.4).
Table 4.3.

*Correlation (Pearson r) Between Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Mean Number of Recommendations for Student Retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mean Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TSES Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>.818**</td>
<td>.906**</td>
<td>.904**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Instruction Subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.640**</td>
<td>.667**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management Subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.766**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Engagement Subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

*N=107 Students Recommended for Retention; N=124 Teachers*
Table 4.4.

*Correlation (Pearson r) Between Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Mean Number of Recommendations for Student Retention by Title I School Status*

(Note: Title I Schools are reported above the diagonal, Non-Title I Schools are reported below the diagonal.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Retention Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TSES Mean</td>
<td>-.089</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.819**</td>
<td>.893**</td>
<td>.863**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.798**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.629**</td>
<td>.634**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management Subscale</td>
<td>-.227</td>
<td>.906**</td>
<td>.607**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.693**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Engagement Subscale</td>
<td>.055*</td>
<td>.933**</td>
<td>.657**</td>
<td>.809**</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

n = 57 Title I Schools, n = 46 Non-Title I Schools

As indicated in Chapter 3, the population extremes in regards to number of recommendations for student retention were analyzed. Teachers having recommendations for student retention that were at least ± one standard deviation from the mean were included in the sample (n = 39). The TSES mean for the 17 teachers at the high-extreme, five or more retention recommendations, was 7.79 (SD = .73) and the TSES mean for the 22 teachers at the low-extreme, no retention recommendations, was 7.57 (SD = .75). As with the whole sample, the data were split by school status (i.e., Title I, non-Title I) and by TSES Subscale means (i.e., classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement). While no significance was found at Title I schools

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when looking at extreme cases, significance was found at non-Title I schools when comparing extreme samples for the Student Engagement Subscale mean. (See Table 4.5). With the Engagement Subscale ($r = -.599, p<.05$), there was a significant relationship between the number of students recommended for retention and mean Student Engagement Subscale scores at non-Title I schools. These results indicated that among non-Title I schools in classes where there were five or more recommendations for student retention over two years as the number of students recommended for student retention increased the Student Engagement Subscale mean increased. The small sample size ($n = 22$ Title I, $n = 17$ non-Title I) may have had an impact on the results.

Table 4.5.

*Correlation (Pearson r) Between Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Number of Recommendations for Student Retention, Extreme Samples*+

(Note: Title I teachers are reported above the diagonal, Non-Title I teachers are reported below the diagonal.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSES Mean</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.709*</td>
<td>.778*</td>
<td>.823*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.788*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>.568*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subscale</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.881*</td>
<td>.579*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.437*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement Subscale</td>
<td>.599*</td>
<td>.910*</td>
<td>.568*</td>
<td>.725*</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$*

$N = 22$ Title I Extreme Sample, $N = 17$ Non Title I Extreme Sample

+ Extreme samples are at least ±.1 $SD$ from sample mean.
**Question 2:** Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs among primary teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools?

An independent t-test was conducted using the mean score received by individual teachers on the *TSES* and the type of school, Title I or non-Title I, in which the teacher was assigned for the 2005-2006 school year. Only data collected from teachers completing both the *RRCI* and the *TSES* were included in the analysis. Teacher surveys for teachers who did not teach during the 2005-2006 school year and teachers who did not know their school’s Title I status were also omitted from the analysis. Teachers at Title I schools (*N* = 69) had a mean *TSES* score of 7.49 (*SD* = .89), compared to a mean *TSES* score of 7.38 (*SD* = 1.02) for teachers at non-Title I schools (*N* = 55). The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between primary teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in Title I and non-Title I schools. (See Table 4.6).

The findings from question one led to further analysis for this question to determine if mean scores differed by school Title I status on any of the *TSES Subscales* (i.e., *Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, Student Engagement*). To conduct the analysis an ANOVA was conducted. The results indicated that there were no statistical significances between Title I and non-Title I teachers’ mean scores on any of the *TSES Subscales*. (See Table 4.7).
Table 4.6.

Relationship Between Mean TSES Score and School Title I Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th>School Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min. Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES Mean</td>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.5 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.67 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.0 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.0 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subscale</td>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.5 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.0 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement Subscale</td>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.75 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.0 - 9.0</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 4.7.

ANOVA for Mean TSES Subscale Scores and School Title I Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES Mean</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>109.71</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subscale</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>149.87</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement Subscale</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>146.90</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>191.63</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01
**Question 3:** Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience?

A Pearson $r$ correlation was conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience. The results indicated a TSES mean of 7.426 ($SD = .929$) and years of teaching experience mean = 10.28 ($SD = 9.427$). The correlation was found to be non-significant. (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8.  

*Correlation (Pearson r) Between Mean TSES Score and Years of Teaching Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Subscales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Years of Experience</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>-.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TSES Mean</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.818(**)</td>
<td>.906(**)</td>
<td>.904(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Instruction Subscale</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.640(**)</td>
<td>.667(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management Subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.766(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Engagement Subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

$N = 131$ Teachers

**Question 4:** Is there a significant relationship between retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools in grades K-2?

An independent t-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between K-2 retention rates at the 14 Title I and 9 non-Title I schools in
Bayside City Schools. The number of retained students in grades K-2 at a given school was divided by the number of students enrolled in grades K-2 at that same school for the 2005-2006 school year. The analysis revealed that with a mean retention rate of 4.3% ($SD = .023$) at Title I schools and a retention rate of 3.9% ($SD = .018$) at non-Title I schools the difference in retention rates was non-significant. (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9.

*T-Test Between Retention Rates and School Title I Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title I Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Title I</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

**Question 5:** Is there a significant relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience and the mean number of recommendations for student retention made by teachers over the past two years?

As part of completing the *RRCI*, teachers were asked to identify both the number of students recommended for retention and the actual number of students retained over the past two years (i.e., 2004-2005, 2005-2006). The purpose of asking for both the number of students recommended for retention in addition to the number of students actually retained was to help teachers draw attention to the requested difference. This distinction also recognized that some retention recommendations were overruled by school principals, district administrators, and/or parents. Thus, the actual number of students retained may or may not have reflected a teacher's beliefs regarding which
students should have been retained. Teachers having taught less than two years, or teachers not having taught during both the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, were omitted from the data analysis for this question.

The results of the Pearson $r$ conducted pertaining to the correlation between years of teaching experience and the mean number of students recommended for retention were not found to be significantly significant ($r = -.07$, n.s.). Further analysis was conducted splitting the data by grade level and again running the Pearson $r$. The results again were not found to be statistically significant. (See Table 4.10).

Table 4.10.

*Correlation (Pearson r) Between Number of Years of Teaching Experience and Mean Number of Students Recommended for Retention by Grade Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Teachers ($n = 40$)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Years of Experience</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Retention Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Recommendations</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Years of Experience</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Retention Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Recommendations</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Years of Experience</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Retention Recommendations</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Recommendations</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01*
Question 6: What are the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 as reported by the teachers who made the recommendations for retention?

Frequency counts and descriptive statistics were used to determine the characteristics of retained students in grades K-2 as reported by the classroom teacher. In addition to gathering information on the characteristics of retained students, information was also gathered regarding student performance on the state-wide Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) and parental involvement. (See Table 4.11). Data were included representing 164 (or 40%) of the 415 primary students retained from 2004-2006.

According to the teacher-reported data collected, males (68%) were more frequently retained in Bayside City Schools when compared to females (32%). Black students (55%) were more frequently retained than all other races, including whites (38%), Hispanics (5%), and students of other races (2%). Most retained students were reported as receiving free/reduced lunch (55%). When teachers were asked about the retained student’s age, retained students were most commonly reported by the teacher as similar in age to their classmates (68%). (See Table 4.11).

In Bayside City Schools only 11% of retained students were reported to have been suspended during the year they were recommended for retention and their behavior was reported by the classroom teacher as sometimes (43%) to almost never disruptive (37%), with only 18% of retained students reported as being almost always disruptive. When asked if the retained student was in the teacher’s class for the entire year leading up to the retention, 87% of students were in the same class for the entire school year. Parental involvement was high with 81% of parents available for school-to-home communication.
and 82% of parents attending parent-teacher conferences regarding the student’s academics. Only 4% of the 164 retained students were reported as having a previous retention.

Overwhelmingly, retained students did not meet the fall and/or spring Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) summative benchmark(s) for the year in which they were recommended for retention. Only 10% of students recommended for retention were reported as having passed the fall PALS, and only 12% of students recommended for retention were reported as having passed the spring PALS. When questioned about parental involvement, teachers reported that the parents of retained students were almost always (48%) or sometimes (33%) available for school to home communication and 82% of retainees’ parents participated in conferences regarding academic performance.

The study found that teachers reported most students (55%) as having few to no (0-5) tardies. This was compared with 18% of students reported as having a lot (10+) of tardies and 23% of students reported as having a moderate (6-10) number of tardies. Similar data were collected regarding student absences. Teachers reported most students has having few to no (52%) absences. This was compared to 18% of students reported as having a lot (10+) of absences and 25% of students reported as having a moderate (6-10) number of absences.

When 2005-2006 district data were available to the researcher, teacher-reported data regarding retained primary students were compared to the 2005-2006 district data on all primary students in the district. During the 2005-2006 school year, there were 4,867 students in grades K-2 in Bayside. Of the 4,867 primary students, 203 primary students
were actually retained. It is unknown how many students were recommended for retention.

Males were overrepresented in the district in regards to teacher-reported student retention. Overrepresentation is defined by Reschly (1997) as 10% over the base population. Teachers reported 68% of retainees as males, whereas males made up only 52% of the K-2 population. In regards to race, 61% of primary students in the district were black, 55% of students retained were black. Low SES primary students comprised 48% of the primary student population compared to 55% of retained students.

Most of the descriptive statistics reported by the classroom teachers in Bayside fails to support the research discussed in earlier chapters. The students retained were more likely to be male with indications of academic weaknesses. However, there was no overrepresentation of minority or low SES students. While the proportion of black students retained was not disproportionate to the district percentages, this was consistent with the findings of Alexander et al. (2003) and Cosden et al. (1993). These researchers found that in districts where minority populations were in the majority, such as Bayside, it was difficult to get an overrepresentation of the minority population.
### Table 4.11.

**Retained K-2 Students as Reported by Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Characteristics</th>
<th>I don't Recall</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other Race</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>Same Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>Student Prior Retentions</td>
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<td>Student Met Fall PALS Benchmark</td>
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<td>Student Met Spring PALS Benchmark</td>
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Numbers reported in percentages, N= 164

*K-2 District percentages provided when available.*
Table 4.11. continued

*Retained K-2 Students as Reported by Teachers*

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<th>Student Characteristics</th>
<th>I don’t Recall</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Few (0-5)</th>
<th>Moderate (6-10)</th>
<th>A Lot (10+)</th>
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<td>Student’s Parent Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences for Academics</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Student Tardies</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Retained Students’ Behavior Disruptive</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
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Numbers reported in percentages, N= 164
Summary

This study looked for a relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and the number of teacher recommendations for student retention. Of the 237 kindergarten through grade 2 teachers in the district, 131 (57.71%) of teachers completed usable surveys. Teachers completed student information on 164 (40%) retained primary students.

The findings indicated that there was not a statistical significant relationship between the mean number of recommendations for student retention and teacher self-efficacy beliefs as self reported on the TSES short form when looking at the entire sample. However, teachers at non-Title I schools had a statistically significant correlation between the TSES Student Engagement Subscale mean and the mean number of recommendations for student retention over the past two years. This indicated that non-Title I teachers with high instances of student retention believed more in their abilities to impact student engagement.

There was no statistically significant relationship found between teacher-self efficacy beliefs based on school Title I status. No statistically significant relationship was found between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience. And, there was no statistically significant relationship between the retention rates at Title I and non-Title I schools. Finally, no statistically significant relationship was found between years of teaching experience and mean number of recommendations for student retention over the past two years.

When looking at the data regarding retained students as reported by the classroom teacher, retained students were more likely to be male and more likely to have failed to
meet the PALS summative benchmark. A majority of retained students were reported as
having few to no absences and few to no tardies. Retained students’ behavior was
reported as somewhat to never disruptive a majority of the time; with no substantial
difference in the number of suspension. When looking at parental involvement, over
80% of parents of retained students were available for school to home communication
and attended meetings regarding student academic performance. Consistent with
previous research, teacher-reported data indicated that there was a significant deficiency
in retained students’ academic performance.
Chapter 5: Conclusions
Discussion of the Findings

**Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Student Retention Rates**

It was expected that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy would have fewer recommendations for student retention than teachers with a lower sense of self-efficacy. This hypothesis was based on previously published research suggesting that teachers with a lower sense of self-efficacy referred more students for special education than teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy (Meijer & Foster, 1998; Soodak & Podell, 1993). Additionally, Alexander et al. (2003) found that following grade retention many retained students were later found eligible for special education services. Believing that at times teachers view special education and student retention as comparable alternatives for struggling students, it was thought that the same teachers referring students for special education would be referring students for grade retention, possibly those students not found eligible for special education.

In addition, previous research on teacher self-efficacy beliefs has found that teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs fostered higher student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Other studies unrelated to teacher self-efficacy have identified the important relationship between the teacher and student achievement. For example, Brophy (1985) found that teachers who provided encouragement to low achievers actually cultivated greater achievement gains from their students than teachers who believed the failing students needed to try harder.
Retention research has produced many studies focused on teachers and their beliefs surrounding student retention. Tomchin and Impara (1992) revealed that a majority of teachers believe student retention is ineffective. However, teachers admitted they would still recommend a student for grade retention. The researcher hypothesized that a teacher with high self-efficacy would not recommend an intervention believed to be ineffective.

Reynolds' (1992) and Smith (1989) revealed the role of teacher perceptions in recommending students for retention. These studies looked at both the teachers' perception of retention and the teachers' perception of the student in light of retention. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are nothing more than a teacher's perceptions of his or her abilities to impact student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Thus, it was believed that there may be a relationship between student retention and teacher self-efficacy beliefs. However, the study revealed that there was not a relationship between mean Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) scores and the number of recommendations for student retention within the sample for this study.

In looking for possible explanations for the non-relationship between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and the number of students recommended for student retention, the researcher was drawn back to an initial concern with the study, the possibility of a lack in range. The range was restricted for both the TSES mean and the mean number of recommendations for student retention. The range of 4.5 for the TSES could have played a role in the findings. None of the participants in the study self-reported a mean score on the lower half of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale.
The researcher also looked at the restricted range of four for the number of students recommended for student retention. Teachers were asked to report the number of students recommended for retention, not the number actually retained. It is possible that while the researcher intended for teachers to report the number of students recommended for retention between January and March, the teachers may have actually reported only those students in the final recommendations in May. In Bayside, students can be removed off the retention list between January and May if teacher deadlines are not met, parents or administrators are unsupportive, or student academic achievement improves. The reporting of the initial students recommended for retention between January and March and not the final recommendation in May could have increased the range for this study and possibly altered the results. Some teachers may not have viewed the names submitted between January and March as a true representation of the students that were actually recommended for retention. Teachers may have recommended students during this time as a way to get parents’ attention or to acknowledge to the school administration that a child was not performing at the level of his or her peers. However, even while submitting the name, teachers may have had no true intention of retaining the child. On the other hand, teachers may not have reported the true numbers submitted between January and March out of embarrassment or fear of judgment. Teachers may have recognized the number of students recommended for retention as high in relation to the total number of students in the class.

Lack of variability was also explored as a possible reason for the lack of statistically significant findings. The researcher reviewed the TSES results by teacher and excluded teachers who selected the same response (e.g., 9) for all Teacher Sense of
Efficacy Scale questions. The tests were then re-run. The results for the study sample remained non-significant following the analysis.

Another consideration for the lack of significant results was sample size. It is expected that with a larger sample size correlations of .3 and .4 will be found to be statistically significant. (See Table 4.5). The small sample size was a great concern for the analysis that required the sample to be broken into subpopulations (e.g., extremes, Title I). However, even recognizing the increased likelihood of statistically significant findings with a larger sample, the findings would still explain less than 9% of the variance.

Subscale reports. The results of the TSES Subscale analysis by school Title I status for this study revealed that non-Title I teachers had significantly higher mean scores on the Student Engagement Subscale. These results were very surprising, as it was expected that teachers believing strongly in their abilities to engage students in learning would have fewer recommendations for student retention. Based on previous research, teachers demonstrating higher levels of student engagement produced students with higher academic achievement when compared to teachers demonstrating lower levels of student engagement (Dolezal, Mohan, Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). Thus, it was expected that engaged students would make the academic gains necessary to avoid student retention.

There is, however, a plausible explanation for the unexpected results. Teachers who are in tune to their students and seek engagement from their students are likely to be more familiar with a student’s academic weakness and strengths. These teachers may be less likely to associate poor performance with lack of motivation or disruptive behavior.
Instead, the teachers with high Student Engagement Subscale means likely foster student engagement through a positive school environment and “authentic instructional work” (Marks, 2000) and eliminate motivation and behavior as factors influencing achievement. Teachers reporting high student engagement may realize the true academic struggles of their students. These teachers may feel obligated to recommend struggling students for retention believing that the students are not equipped for the academic demands of the next grade. Low-engagement teachers may be less likely to make referrals for retention because they may feel a student’s struggles are related less to their ability and more to their own laziness or lack of motivation. These teachers may find no benefit in retention as grade retention has been found to decrease, not increase, student motivation (Holmes & Matthews, 1984).

Years of Teaching Experience

This study confirmed the recent findings of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (in press) regarding teacher self-efficacy beliefs and years of teaching experience. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are shaped and formed during the first few years of teaching. Once teacher self-efficacy beliefs begin to take hold during the first few teachers of teaching, teachers whose teacher self-efficacy beliefs remain low often leave the profession. Thus, it is not surprising that when looking at the entire spectrum of years of teaching experience there was no correlation to teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

It was surprising, however, that there was no relationship between years of teaching experience and the number of students recommended for retention. Rockoff (2004) found that teacher quality increased with years of teaching experience. Thus, it was believed that student retention rates would decline with increased years of teaching
experience. A possible answer as to why this hypothesis did not hold true may be found in an older study conducted by Haberman and Raths (1968). Their study found that teachers’ perception of which students were low-achieving was measured in relation to a student’s current class. Thus, according to Haberman and Raths it is possible that an average-performing child placed in an overall high-performing class might be viewed as a low-achiever by his or her teacher. On the other hand, the same average-performing child placed in an overall low-performing class might be perceived as a high-achiever by his or her teacher. Because classes are always made up of a spectrum of abilities in Bayside, no matter the quality of the teacher, every class will always have low-achieving students relative to the other students in the class. Effective teachers will continue to have a spectrum of abilities in their classrooms, because they do not teach the same lessons to all students. They differentiate instruction and continue to allow the exceptional students to excel while moving the struggling students along (Dolezal et al., 2003). Thus, at the end of the year when it is time to recommend students for retention an effective teacher who finds value in student retention will recommend students for retention based on a student’s performance relative to other students in the class, not in relation to other students in the school or even past classes. This may possibly explain why both experienced and novice teachers with high self-efficacy have high and low numbers of recommendations for student retention. Further research is needed to determine the discrepancy, if any, in academic performance among retained students in Bayside.
School Title I Status

The study sought to determine if there was a relationship between school Title I status and actual student retention rates. Title I schools in urban settings traditionally educate minority students from low-income homes. It would be expected that retention rates would be higher in schools where poverty was more common and pre-school experiences were less common. However, this was not the case. While Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (in press) found the setting (i.e., urban) to be unrelated to teacher self-efficacy beliefs, the issue of student achievement cannot be ignored.

The network of support for teachers in Bayside at Title I schools (e.g., Title I math teachers, Title I reading teachers, city reading teachers, curriculum leaders) in conjunction with high teacher self-efficacy beliefs may be enough to account for the difference in student-body demographics. Bayside City Schools prioritizes its resources to the schools that are the most needy, that is, Title I schools. This unbalanced distribution of resources may account for the consistency in retention rates from Title I to non-Title I schools. However, one should be cautious in placing too much confidence in the above argument, believing that the distribution of district funds and resources somehow places student achievement on an even playing field. Federal and state agencies for decades have attempted, without success, to determine a ratio for equitable funding distribution.

The previously discussed issue of student achievement relative to other students in that same classroom may be responsible for the non-significant findings (Haberman & Raths, 1968). Students may find themselves an average-performing student in one class in the district and a low-performing student in another class in the district. While this
study determined that most retained students (90%) had failed to meet the spring PALS benchmark, the study did not indicate how many promoted students failed to meet the spring PALS benchmark. This may be an area for further study.

Demographics

Consistent with previous research findings, retained students in Bayside City Schools were more likely to be male (Alexander et al., 2003; McArthur & Bianchi, 1993). When using Reschly's (1997) definition of overrepresentation as 10% over the population percentage males were overrepresented in Bayside primary grade retentions. African American and of low SES, two demographics reported to be overrepresented in earlier retention research, were not overrepresented in this study. Alexander et al. (2003) Dauber et al. (1993) and Cosden et al. (1993) previously found in settings where a majority of the population was a minority (e.g., African American, Hispanic), it was difficult to find overrepresentation based on race. This study did not find an overrepresentation of minority students when examining student retention in Bayside, as 60% of the entire student population was African American. With over 60% of the Bayside student population on free or reduced lunch, an overrepresentation was not found. The researcher believes that for this study the same phenomenon presented for race holds true for SES, demographics in which over 50% of the entire population are represented are difficult to find overrepresentation in a research study.

Further examination of the characteristics of retained students as reported by the classroom teachers revealed more surprises. Previous research suggested that retained students' parents were uninvolved and retained students were disruptive to the learning environment (Grant, 1997; Jimerson, 2001; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999; Morris, 1993).
The previous research findings would be expected to hold true in an urban district such as Bayside. However, in Bayside 81% of retainees’ parents were available for school-to-home communication and 82% of retainees’ parents attended parent-teacher conferences focused on student achievement. This contradiction to previous research may be the result of changes in the Bayside City Schools Elementary Promotion-Retention Policy. (See Appendix C). The current district policy requires teachers to make contact beginning at the end of the first nine weeks with parents of struggling students. Teachers are then required to make several more contacts regarding student achievement throughout the remainder of the school year. Another explanation for the high level of parental involvement may be the result of a relatively new staff position in the school district, Parent Involvement Facilitator. Parent Involvement Facilitators (PIF) are found in each of the Title I schools throughout the district, schools that traditionally are known for their low parental involvement. PIFs are responsible for improving parental involvement and serving as a resource for parents.

In addition to the surprising percentage of parents involved in schools, only 18% of the retained students were reported by the classroom teacher as being almost always disruptive to the learning environment, and only 11% of retained students were suspended from school. Again, district initiatives may be responsible for the low incidences. There has been a push in the district to reduce the overall number of discipline referrals. To help support teachers in reducing the number of discipline issues, professional development has focused on Marzano’s research Classroom Instruction that Works and Classroom Management that Works, two very popular books being used in school districts around the country. In addition, the district has focused on reducing class
sizes and increasing the number of support personnel. This would include teacher assistants, administrators, and instructional staff that are able to come into the classroom and assist teachers on a variety of levels.

With the increase in parental involvement and the decrease in disruptive behavior, the question still remains, as to why the number of student retentions in Bayside City Schools continues to remain stagnate, in spite of national and state trends indicating a decline in student retention rates. The answer may lie in student achievement. Teachers reported only 10% of retained students met the fall PALS summative benchmark and only 12% of retained students met the spring PALS summative benchmark for the year in which they were recommended for retention. It appears that while teachers in Bayside are not retaining students for traditional purposes (e.g., low SES, disruptive behavior), they are retaining students based on academic achievement. Recommendations for student retention may be the result of the Bayside City Schools Elementary Promotion-Retention Policy that requires teachers to take Standards of Learning (SOL) scores into account when considering a student for retention. While K-2 teachers do not have SOL scores to consider, they may be substituting the PALS screening as an indicator of student achievement. Teachers may be feeling the pressure of state-wide assessments and want to ensure that students are fully prepared, academically, when they reach the intermediate elementary grades in which they will be tested on high-stakes tests.

Leadership

The PALS may be a driving force for some primary teachers when it comes to recommending students for retention, and it serves as a possible explanation as to why retention rates have not fallen in the school district when state and national retention-rate
averages have fallen. However, what cannot be explained by the demographics is the
difference in retention rates across schools. For the 2005-2006 school year, the number
of primary children retained at Title I schools ranged from 1 to 24. The number of
primary children retained at non-Title I schools ranged from 4 to 14. This study did not
match teachers with individual schools to determine if teacher self-efficacy or collective
efficacy (a separate measure) was different in the schools with higher percentages of
retentions compared to schools with low incidences of retention. However, this study did
find that there was not a statistically significant difference between teacher self-efficacy
at Title I and non-Title I schools. This finding was consistent with Tschannen-Moran and
Woolfolk Hoy’s (in press) study which also found that the setting was unrelated to
teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

The personal beliefs of the principal or school leader are another aspect to
consider when looking at the variance between schools. It is possible that just as Bonvin
(2003) found teacher’s beliefs regarding student retention to play a large role in
determining the number of students retained, the beliefs of the school leader in regards to
the effectiveness of student retention may impact the number of students actually retained
at that school. Christman and Puch’s (1989) research focused on the role of the principal
in implementation of retention policies. They discussed how principals’ personal
viewpoints often influenced how the retention-promotion policy was carried out.

School-level leadership may also impact the quality of the intervention programs
offered at various schools. It is possible that teachers at some schools may be less
inclined to retain a student because of the quality and effectiveness of the intervention
and remediation programs offered at that school. The role of the school leader in regards
to student retention is not completely understood at this time. This is an area that could be explored in future research.

Impact of Teacher Beliefs

As discussed in Chapter 3, the TSES created by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) is currently the best measure of teacher self-efficacy beliefs. However, it does not measure the accuracy of those beliefs, self-perception verses observed-reality. Based on the findings of this study, one aspect of teacher self-efficacy that needs to be further examined is the difference between the teacher’s perception of their abilities (self-efficacy) and their actual performance. Bandura (1997) found that people perform at their optimal state when their self-efficacy beliefs are just slightly higher than their ability. How does functioning in or out of this optimal state impact decisions teachers make or impact their outlook on teaching? One example of perception verses reality is the construction of student examinations. Some teachers may believe that if they create an exam where 50% or more of the students fail, then they created a good exam. Those teachers take pride in giving “challenging exams” that in their opinion only the best prepared can pass. These teachers blame the failure on the students not being prepared for the exam. On the other hand, another teacher may have 50% of the students fail and feel as if he or she failed as a teacher. Such a teacher might spend time reteaching the information and provide students an opportunity to retake the exam. In this second instance the reflection is inward and focused on the teacher. As a self-perception construct, the measures of teacher self-efficacy beliefs do not distinguish between the perceptions and realities of both types of teachers described. A high-stakes environment centered on standardized test scores may lead teachers to overestimate their capability.
To better understand the calibration of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs, an evaluation study is needed. An evaluation study would allow the researcher to not only examine \textit{TSES} beliefs as reported by the classroom teacher, but then compare those beliefs against actual classroom practices. Such a study would allow researchers to compare \textit{TSES Subscale} scores to actual practices in the classroom.

**Practical Implications**

Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) concluded their meta-analysis on student retention by suggesting that any future research on student retention would be irrelevant. They claimed that research had continually demonstrated retention was ineffective and that future research hours would best be spent focused on alternatives to grade retention and social promotion. As previously stated, the researcher disagrees with the Jimerson and Kaufman on the point that no future research regarding student retention is needed. The best solutions come when a problem is fully understood. Obviously, researchers do not fully understand all aspects of student retention. As this study found, the possible relationship between student retention and school leadership has yet to be fully explored.

Student engagement is another area that has possible implications for student retention. While Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) were incorrect in declaring retention research complete, the researcher believes they were correct in stating alternatives to retention and social promotion need to be instituted. Retention and social promotion may in fact be the oldest dichotomy in education. The either-or-approach has left educators running in a continuous circle for over a century as one ineffective practice increases and then decreases in popularity on the heels of the other. Realizing the ineffectiveness of both practices (student retention and social promotion), alternatives need to be explored.
While there may be no clear alternatives to grade retention and social promotion at this time, there is promising research.

Research conducted for purposes of special education, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and instruction in social-emotional intelligences provides possible insight and promise for general educators. Alexander et al. (2003) found in Baltimore that many struggling students who were retained were later found eligible for special education services. It seems only natural that programs focused on earlier identification and superior services for special education students would assist in the search for appropriate services for all struggling learners. In addition to examining the role of special education research in assisting struggling learners, the researcher proposes additional focus be placed on the classroom teacher. Just as this study initially focused on examining the relationship between the teacher and student retention, alternatives to student retention should also focus on the teacher.

Response to Intervention

School districts around the country have begun implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. As part of No Child Left Behind, school districts will no longer be able to identify children with a specific learning disability (SLD) by waiting for children to fail. This means that districts will no longer be able to find children with SLD eligible for special education services based on a discrepancy between ability and achievement. Instead, districts will be required to provide interventions to all students not meeting grade-level academic standards. According to RTI guidelines, data are collected as students receive a specified intervention. Students who fail to respond to the intervention can be found eligible for special education services under the category SLD.
RTI has the potential to provide needed remedial services to all children, not just children with a SLD, not meeting grade-level academic requirements. Good RTI instruction will involve a three-tier intervention program (Gersten & Dimino, 2006). Tier 1 instruction is whole group instruction, Tier 2 is small group instruction, and Tier 3 is one-to-one or one-to-two instruction. Gersten and Dimino (2006) point out that for RTI to be effective, the intervention provided to students cannot involve a new curriculum. Students should receive the remediation services from the same curriculum used as part of daily classroom instruction. RTI involves collecting data on a regular basis and providing targeted instruction based on the data (Gersten & Dimino, 2006). This focused intense instruction serves as one alternative to retention.

Social-Emotional Intelligences

Another current topic in special education is research focused on social-emotional intelligence. Research conducted by Elias (2004) and Elknin and Elknin (2004) suggests that there is a connection between social-emotional learning and SLD. These researchers stress that instruction focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential for students with SLD. Elias stated that SEL is, "the missing piece, [helping] bridge a gap in both theory and practice with regard to improving outcomes for students with learning disabilities," (p. 56). Elias believes there are three skill areas for SEL instruction:

- Recognizing emotions in self and others
- Regulating and managing strong emotions
- Recognizing strengths and areas of need

These three areas align with what most would recognize as intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence according to Gardner’s multiple intelligences (Armstrong,
2003). Elias points out special education students have a need for focused instruction in the area of SEL. This is an area that has been less explored with struggling regular education students. However, research does indicate that teachers often retain students based on maturity and social skills, in addition to academic concerns (Abidin et al., 1971; Cadigan et al., 1989; Jimerson, 2001; Morris, 1993). Elknin and Elknin (2004) reported that, “between 15 and 20% of youth in the United States have social-emotional problems serious enough to require intervention” (p.5). This percentage is well above the percentage of students in the United States diagnosed with SLD, 5.3% for boys and 3.8% for girls (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). If in fact such a large percentage of children demonstrate deficiencies in the area of social-emotional intelligence, it is likely that many children are undiagnosed and due to lack of resources unable to make the necessary academic gains due to such deficiencies.

**Teacher Quality**

The results of the TSES from this study indicated that there was little variance in teachers’ perceptions regarding their effectiveness. Most teachers participating in this study had the self-perception that they effectively implement instructional strategies and have a positive impact on student learning. As previously stated, teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been reported to have an impact student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). However, when looking at teacher quality, Rockoff (2004) found great variance within schools. How can teacher quality vary so greatly and teacher self-efficacy not?

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (in press) found support for the contention that teacher self-efficacy beliefs are established in the first few years of teaching and rarely shift from that point. Teachers who sustain poor self-efficacy beliefs though the
first few years of teaching often leave the field. However, this does not completely explain the variance in teacher quality and the lack of variance in teacher self-efficacy beliefs among experienced teachers.

One explanation may be teacher evaluations. School administrators responsible for evaluating staff may find it difficult to discuss areas for improvement with experienced teachers. Also, many times teacher evaluations present little distinction between the lowest and highest performing teacher in the school. Thus, all, or nearly all, teachers may feel they are quality teachers. Schools may also falsely report teacher quality because of deficiencies in recognizing and evaluating the qualities of effective teachers. Stronge’s (2002) research assists school districts in identifying some common qualities that have been linked to effective teachers. His research indicated:

- Certified teachers were more effective than uncertified teachers
- The number of college courses in education positively correlated to teacher effectiveness
- Teaching experience impacted teacher effectiveness
- Content knowledge was linked to teacher effectiveness

Realizing that effective teachers have a greater impact on student achievement, school districts need to be more proactive in assuring that the teachers in the classrooms are quality teachers.

Researchers have found a clear link between empathy and student engagement and student achievement (Dolezal, Mohan, Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). Effective teachers demonstrate caring, listening, and understanding. They take the time to build relationships with students (Stronge, 2002). To better prepare teachers for the classroom...
and to better equip them for dealing with struggling students, school districts may need to place more emphasis on hiring and developing effective classroom teachers. This emphasis on hiring and retaining highly effective teachers may translate to a reduction in student retention rates. Effective teachers are more likely to not just believe they have effective strategies for working with struggling students, but actually have the effective strategies needed to reach struggling learners.

Conclusion

The study originated with the idea to investigate student retention rates by looking at variables related to the classroom teacher. It was originally believed that teacher self-efficacy beliefs would influence the number of students recommended for student retention. Previous research revealed that teachers' beliefs regarding the effectiveness of student retention influenced the likelihood of a child being recommended for retention (Bonvin, 2003). Research also linked teacher self-efficacy beliefs to student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Understanding that teacher self-efficacy beliefs impacted student learning and teachers' beliefs regarding the effectiveness of student retention impacted student retention rates, it seemed the next step was to determine if teacher self-efficacy beliefs impacted student retention rates. The researcher felt that in light of special education research, where teacher self-efficacy beliefs influenced the likelihood of a child being referred to special education (Soodak & Podell, 1993), the study being conducted would most likely produce similar results.

While the study did not reveal a relationship between the mean TSES score and the number of recommendations for student retention, the study did reveal that teachers at non-Title I schools with recommendations for student retention one standard deviation or
more above the mean, self-scored significantly higher on the *Student Engagement Subscale*. Student engagement is a newer field of study. Emerging research does suggest that there is a strong link between student engagement, student motivation, and student achievement. A teacher’s lack in confidence in his or her ability to engage students in learning may then reflect in the lack of achievement for students in his or her class. Lack of achievement was found to be a predictor of retention in this study.

As previously stated, the results of this study regarding the non-relationship between teacher sense of self-efficacy and recommendations for student retention may be related to the restriction in range and small sample size. It is recommended that school districts with high retention rates, or referral rates, reexamine the relationship between teacher sense of self-efficacy and recommendations for student retention.

In this study, student achievement was found to be the greatest predictor of student retention. It is recommended that future research look closer at the relationship between student engagement and student achievement and what impact each may or may not have on teacher sense of self-efficacy and student retention rates. Also, it is recommended that researchers and school districts look again at Haberman and Raths’ (1968) study to determine the implications for today. Understanding that teachers with high retention rates may be basing their referrals for student retention on comparisons to this year’s class and not standards established by the district or state. This reexamination may impact the way retention decisions are made in some districts. In juxtaposition with evaluating how teachers make decisions regarding student retention, there is the need to evaluate how administrators make decisions regarding student retention. This is another
area in need of additional research in terms of leadership and alternatives to student retention.
Appendix A

Reynolds’ 1992 Predictors of Student Retention
TABLE 4  
Regression Coefficients of Model Predicting Grade 4 Reading Achievement, Mathematics Achievement, Teacher Ratings, and Perceived Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Grade 4 outcomes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading achievement</td>
<td>Mathematics achievement</td>
<td>Teacher ratings</td>
<td>Perceived competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade retention (1 = retained)</td>
<td>-.77**</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociodemographic factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (1 = girls)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>1.31**</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at school entry</td>
<td>-.03**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free lunch (3 = not eligible)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School SES</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.08**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity (1 = Blacks)</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-3.29**</td>
<td>-.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-readiness attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-Parent Center preschool</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start preschool</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-2.03*</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten cognitive readiness</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early adjustment factors (baseline)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 reading achievement</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 math achievement</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.96*</td>
<td>.96**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 teacher ratings</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>.04**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening school-based factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement in school</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School mobility</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.16**</td>
<td>3.85**</td>
<td>19.99**</td>
<td>27.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Models were estimated separately and are based on pairwise-present cases (see note 1 for details).  
*p < .05; **p < .01

(Reynolds, 1992; p. 111)
Appendix B

Pre -Pilot Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument

and

Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument
Pre-Pilot Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument

Questions Added to Survey

There are two parts to this survey. Part I provides me with information about you, your recent work environments, and the students you’ve worked with recently. Part II is a Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. Please answer every question to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers.

Part I

1. Name

2. What school do you currently teach at? ____________________________

3. What grade do you currently teach? _______________________________

2005-2006 School Year

4. Which type of school describes where you taught during the 2005-2006 school year? (Circle one)
   a. Title I School
   b. Non-Title I School

5. Number of students you recommended for retention for the 2005-2006 school year. (Students may or may not have actually been retained.) ________

2005-2004 School Year

6. Which type of school describes where you taught during the 2004-2005 school year? (Circle one)
   a. Title I School
   b. Non-Title I School

7. Number of students you recommended for retention for the 2004-2005 school year. (Students may or may not have actually been retained.) ________
Pre-Pilot Retention Rates and Characteristics Instrument

**Student Profile Sheet**

Please complete as much information as you know on each of the children you retained during the past two school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Please circle one answer describing the retained child for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Race</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Age before retention when compared to classmates</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Same Age</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Was the child on free/reduced lunch?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did the child have any previous retentions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How many schools had the child attended from kindergarten to the retention?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Was the child disruptive to the learning environment?</td>
<td>Almost Always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How many parent-teacher conferences did the parent attend?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How many absences did the child have?</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How many tardies did the child have?</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Did the child pass the fall PALS?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did the child pass the spring PALS?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome! As a doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary, I need your help. Each year teachers in Hampton City Schools are asked to make recommendations for student retention. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship, if any, between teacher self-efficacy and student retention rates.

Your participation involves the simple completion of this online survey. The expected time needed to complete the survey is 10 minutes. Your response is anonymous, as the computer program used to create the survey instrument separates your email from your survey responses before downloading the information to my account.

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact me directly at 540-710-0284 or ndpear@wm.edu. You may also contact my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran at 757-221-2187 or mxtsch@wm.edu.

If you are a kindergarten, first, or second grade regular education teacher and you agree to participate in this study, click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you'd like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit this survey". Your answers will be saved.

In recognition of your time, teachers completing the survey will be entered in a drawing for one of two $50 gift cards.
2. 2005-2006 School Year

1. During the 2005-2006 school year, which type of school best describes where you taught?

- Title I School
- Non-Title I School
- Title I Target Assistance
- Not Sure
- I did not teach during the 2005-2006 school year.
3. 2004-2005 School Year

Please let us know what you think about our web site.

* 1. During the 2004-2005 school year, which best describes the school in which you taught?

- Title I
- Non-Title I
- Not Sure
- I did not teach during the 2004-2005 school year
- Other (please specify)
* 2. During the 2004-2005 school year, how many students did you recommend for retention? (One or more of those students recommended for retention may have been promoted.)

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] Other (please specify)
* 3. During the 2004-2005 school year, how many of the students recommended for retention were actually retained?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Other (please specify)
2. During the 2005-2006 school year, how many students did you recommend for retention? (One or more of those students recommended for retention may have been promoted.)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. During the 2005-2006 school year, how many of the students recommended for retention were actually retained?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Other (please specify)
4. Student Profile - Student A

Please complete as much information as you know on each of the children actually retained during the past two school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006). Please answer all the questions for one child, then you'll be prompted to reanswer the questions for each subsequent retained child.

If you have had no retentions during the past two years, question one will redirect you to the next portion of the survey.

* 1. Was Student A

   ☐ Female
   ☐ Male

   ☐ I had no retentions during the past two years. Please take me to the next part of the survey.
2. Was Student A

- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- I don't recall.
- Other race

3. Was Student A on free/reduced lunch

- No
- Yes
- I don't recall.
4. Student A, when compared to classmates was
   - Younger
   - Older
   - Same Age
   - I don’t recall.

5. Was Student A disruptive to the learning environment?
   - Almost Always
   - Sometimes
   - Never
   - I don’t recall.
6. Was Student A suspended from school when in your class?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't recall.

7. How would you describe Student A's prompt arrival at school?

☐ Student A had a lot of tardies. (about +10)

☐ Student A had a moderate number of tardies. (about 6-10)

☐ Student A had few to no tardies. (about 0-5)

☐ I don't recall.

8. How would you describe Student A's attendance?

☐ Student A missed a lot of school. (about 10+ days)

☐ Student A missed a moderate number of days of school. (about 6-10 days)

☐ Student A missed little to no school. (about 0-5 days)

☐ I don't recall.
9. Was Student A in your school for the entire school year?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don't recall.

10. Did Student A have any retentions prior to this retention?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I don't recall.

11. Did Student A pass the fall PALS?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I don't recall.
12. Did Student A pass the spring PALS?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don’t recall.

13. Was the parent (or guardian) available for school to home communication?
   - Almost Always
   - Sometimes
   - Almost Never
   - I don’t recall.

14. Did the parent (or guardian) attend parent-teacher conferences regarding academic performance?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don’t recall.

Just a few more quick questions.

* 1. In which school do you currently teach? (Select one from the drop down menu below.)
2. What grade do you currently teach?

Kindergarten  First  Second

3. This is your_____ year of teaching. This includes years of experience outside of Hampton City Schools.

4. This is your opportunity to provide any additional information you may choose to provide.
Appendix C

Bayside City Schools Promotion-Retention Policies Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC ALL STUDENTS K-5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance with Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives for that grade level in English and math</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences/history and science may be retained.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student intervention team (SIT) meeting will be held the first month of school for all retained students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory performance is defined as 80% mastery on the specific SOL objectives listed in the policy.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC STUDENTS GRADES 3 and 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 was added to the grade 3 and 5 requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with satisfactory classroom performance and a proficient level on the English and math SOL assessment will be promoted.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with satisfactory classroom performance and a proficient level on either the English or math SOL and just below proficient in the other assessment area will be promoted. The student may be required to participate in an intervention.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who demonstrate satisfactory classroom performance and below proficient on the English and math SOL assessment may be promoted. Promotion contingent on summer school/intersession attendance.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory classroom performance and, yet achieve proficient level on the English and math SOL may be promoted. SIT meeting required the first month of school. Summer school/intercession may be required.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory classroom performance and below proficient on the English and math SOL assessment will be retained. SIT meeting required the first month of school.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who do not pass any of the core SOL assessments must attend summer school/intersession/intervention.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARENT NOTIFICATION**

| End of first grading period | X | X | X |
| End of first semester | X | X | X | X |
| March 1st retention will be documented | X | X | X | X |

**Grades K-2**

- Final notification of retention will be communicated no later than 10 calendar days prior to the last day of school.

**Grades 3-5**

- Final notification of retention will be communicated no later than 3 working days of school receipt of SOL assessment results.

**RIGHT TO APPEAL**

| Parents first appeal is to the principal. | X | X | X |
| Parents can appeal the principal’s decision to the regional director. | X | X | X | X |
References

References marked with an asterisks indicate studies included in Jackson’s 1975 meta-analysis.


*Elementary School Journal, 41*, 430-437.*


