

Assessing the Benefits of Extended Learning Programs: A Study of  
Georgia Public Elementary Schools.

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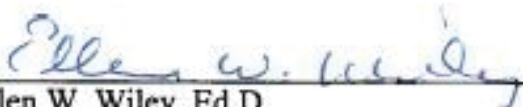
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large public elementary schools in Georgia. The researcher also sought to identify principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. Although some data and literature exist relating the effect of extended learning programs to student achievement, additional data are needed at the state level. This study provides valuable information related to the characteristics and benefits of extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools. The researcher compared third-grade mathematics Criterion Reference Competency Test mean pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that did not. The researcher also compared third-grade mathematics CRCT mean pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools.

The researcher used a causal-comparative research design. A single survey instrument was used to collect data from elementary school principals across the state of Georgia. Two hypotheses were proposed to examine the effects of extended learning programs on mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percentages. Neither hypothesis was supported. An overall comparison of schools, either by program utilization or size, suggested no group experienced any greater degree of increased mathematics pass rate. However, principals surveyed in this study indicated that these types of programs were beneficial to their schools. Principals perceived that student performance had increased in mathematics and reading. According to principals surveyed in this study, extended

learning programs provide students with opportunities to improve basic skills not available during the regular school day. One must consider if program success can solely be determined by standardized test score improvement.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Analiese, without your continued support and encouragement I would not have been able to complete this journey. I cannot express my appreciation for the many days, nights, and weekends she sacrificed in order for me to complete this research.

In addition, I dedicate this work to my sons, Aiden and Tuck. Although I cannot regain the time I have missed, my prayer is that the sacrifices made to complete this work will enable us to share many new experiences that would not have been possible with the completion of this journey. I hope that one day this will serve as an inspiration for you to set goals and pursue your dreams.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout time, families pass down skills needed for survival. Fathers taught their sons trades such as hunting, fishing, and farming. Meanwhile daughters learned how to cook, sew, and care for family members by their mothers. As technology progressed, each generation passed on knowledge for future preservation. Advancements in technology led to a need for basic education and formal schooling. Today, a job that does not require a high school diploma is hard to find.

In the proposed reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), President Barack Obama (2011, May 27) stated that now, more than ever, education is essential for future success. Today, however, the United States no longer thrives as the dominant educational superpower of the world (Hanushek, 2012). The 1983 report, published by The National Commission on Excellence in Education, warned that our nation was at risk of being taken over by zealous competitors throughout the world (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Education Reform* (1983) identified many problems that existed in schools throughout the country and provided ideas for how to change education in America. Although America once led the world in education, other countries have now surpassed America in educating students (Obama, 2011, May 27). Education serves as the driving force behind a nation's economy and success in a global society (Hanushek, 2012). Setting the mark

high, President Obama (2011, May 27) set a new goal for the United States when he stated that by 2020, America would lead the world in college completion.

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, signed into law by President George W. Bush, was developed to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). The blueprint for reform, the proposed reauthorization of the ESEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, May 27) proposed by President Barack Obama, specified that instructional supports would be provided to meet the needs of all diverse learners. These acts ensured that all students have a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). NCLB raised the bar for school systems around the country by requiring them to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on student test scores, graduation rates, and other indicators (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Since the passage of the NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a) and the proposed reauthorization of the ESEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), the educational landscape has drastically changed. These measures brought about sweeping changes in accountability for school systems and created pressure on schools, administrators, and teachers to perform at consistently high levels. One area of both the NCLB and ESEA that has caused controversy is the emphasis placed on the collection of data through high-stakes testing. Based on the increase in demand for higher test scores, schools are examining new ways to improve student academic success.

As schools search for new ways to reach students, single parent and dual employed homes have increased over the last half-century, creating a need for structured after school time (Afterschool Alliance, 2014b). Adelman (1996) stated that “a former



Assistant Secretary of Education often pointed out, time in school actually represents only 9% of a child's life from birth to age 18" (p. 4). The United States (U.S) Department of Justice (2014) indicated that juvenile crime peaks at 3 p.m. on school days. During these after school hours, more than 15 million children across the U.S. are without direct adult supervision (Afterschool Alliance, 2013). In Georgia over 400,000 or 25% of school aged children are alone during after school hours (Afterschool Alliance, 2014, May). The increase in need for supervised out-of-school-time (OST) and the federally mandated NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a) to close the achievement gaps between high- and low-performing students led to an increased necessity for student academic success. One such avenue for ensuring student success established under NCLB Title IV Part B, is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup>CCLC). These centers provide low-performing students and schools with academic enrichment and tutoring services in core subject areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Schools and parents recognize the important role that extended learning programs play in providing a safe, quality support service and environment, and provide enrichment opportunities that compliment regular student academic programs (Malone, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

#### Statement of the Problem

Education reform has been an issue of public discussion for many years. *A Nation at Risk* and NCLB brought renewed attention to the need for educational reform and accountability. NCLB changed how states and school systems identified schools that needed academic improvement (Mathis, 2004). Schools were no longer able to use averages from all students to determine performance level; instead, schools were forced

to focus on student sub-groups through the disaggregation of test scores by student characteristics (Education Week, 2004). Initially, NCLB focused on reading and mathematics as subjects for improvement. Over time, this accountability expanded into other core subject areas. Even with the dramatic changes brought about by NCLB, students failed to show acceptable improvements in test scores. These changes left schools and administrators searching for ways to improve student achievement and meet the rigorous demands set forth under NCLB.

Although great strides had been made to close the gap between minority and nonminority students, a separation still existed (Education Week, 2004). These disparities could be attributed to many different factors: socioeconomic factors, race, school policies, and funding were just a few of the possible reasons (Education Week, 2004). In today's economic climate, students are expected to compete globally. Some recommend that the school year or school day should be extended to help meet the needs of struggling students, and to help prepare students to compete in a global economy (Caldwell, 1982; Fashola, 1998; Leal, 2012, February 23). However, Adelman (1996) found that increasing the amount of time in school could have adverse effects on other important changes. Due to the economic downturn, many schools are cutting days from their school year to stay within budget. The loss of academic time was a great concern for many educators and placed more importance on the quality of time spent in learning. Schools were transitioning their focus to improving the quality of time spent in school (Caldwell, 1982)

Current educational reform seeks to raise the performance level of all students, develop better assessments, implement school accountability measures, and ensure a

complete education for all children (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a, 2011, May 27). Under NCLB, schools are required to meet specific standards each year. Failure to meet those standards requires schools to follow certain procedures to ensure future student success. The proposed *Blueprint for Reform* shadows the NCLB act by holding schools accountable for meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and other diverse learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, May 27). The standards set forth by NCLB led school districts to invest in extended learning programs as a mechanism for meeting the needs of low performing students and diverse learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a).

One approach to improving student achievement and raising the performance level of students came under NCLB, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC were established as a strategy to improve lower performing students by offering high quality education during after school hours (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Extended learning programs offer a variety of ways to engage students academically beyond the regular school day.

Over the last 10 years, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative has served as a national model for providing high quality extended learning programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Parsad and Lewis (2009) reported that public elementary school extended learning programs account for an estimated 4 million students. Approximately 1.6 million students were served in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs during the 2009-10 school year with an average funding per student of \$595 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Programs are often designed to meet the needs of each community they serve and help student's meet state academic standards. Although 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs established under NCLB help students in all core subjects, a study of program practices found that during the

2006-07 school year 94% of all centers provided mathematics activities and 98% of all centers provided reading activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, 2012).

Extended learning programs can serve four key functions: (a) provide opportunities for academic assistance and enrichment, (b) develop social skills and self-esteem, (c) provide a safe learning environment, and (d) reduce school absences and behavior problems (Afterschool Alliance & MetLife Foundation, 2011; Harris, Malone, & Sunnanon, 2011; Lauver, 2004, July; Malone, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Extended learning programs usually serve one or more of these goals based on the needs of the students and community in which they serve.

#### Conceptual Framework for the Study

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* created unprecedented accountability for schools throughout the United States. The law required that all students perform on grade level based on a state testing system, meeting federal requirements, by the 2013-14 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Since the 2001 requirement, Georgia and other states have worked to establish ways of increasing student achievement for all students not meeting state academic standards. One avenue that schools have used to increase achievement is the implementation of an extended learning program. Extended learning programs provide an opportunity to keep students safe, close the achievement gap by increasing student academic skills, and provide students with an alternative approach to academics (Beckett et al., 2009; Malone, 2007). Studies by the Afterschool Alliance (2014a), Black, Somers, Doolittle, Unterman, and Grossman (2009), Harris et al. (2011), and Lauver (2004, July) indicated that extended learning

programs provide an effective means for improving student academics and closing the achievement gap between low- and high-achieving students.

The extended learning programs established today can be traced to the late nineteenth century when America saw a decline in the need for child labor in the growing urban economy and the increased focus on a child's educational experiences (Halpern, 2002). Religious and non-religious organizations began to develop extended learning programs that focused on keeping children off the streets (Halpern, 2002). The expansion of urban neighborhoods and new regulations affecting child labor created a need for safe environments for children during afterschool hours (Mahoney, 2009). Over time, these programs began to serve specific ethnicities or religious views (Halpern, 2002).

All levels of k-12 education utilize extended learning programs. Programs are structured in many different ways and provide students with many different enrichment opportunities. According to Beckett et al. (2009), extended learning programs can improve academic achievement if they align curriculum with school day, maximize participation in the program, adapt instruction to individual needs of participants, provide engaging learning experiences, and regularly assess program performance. These factors provide schools, educational leaders, and other organizations with guidance when establishing and maintaining extended learning programs.

Extended learning programs provide students with unique learning opportunities, outside of the regular school day, that help to improve academic achievement and allow students to compete at a global level (Malone, 2007). According to Adelman (1996), students are actually willing to commit their free time to activities provided by the school

if the activities are well constructed. The Afterschool Alliance (2012b) found that students who regularly attend extended learning programs have shown increases in academic achievement and a reduction in behavior problems during regular school hours.

The reauthorization of the ESEA of 2002 brought a renewed focus to out-of-school time learning and provided schools with additional options to improve student academic achievement (Penuel & McGhee, 2010). The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC was established to provide students with academic enrichment opportunities outside of the regular school day (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). As the only federally funded extended learning program, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is dedicated to improving low-performing and high-poverty schools, by providing community support and education (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a). The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC focuses not only on providing students opportunities to improve academically, but aids families with improving literacy and educational development (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, & Policy and Program Studies Service, 2010).

The latest proposed changes to educational reform have come under current President Barack Obama's, *A Blueprint for Reform*, which was introduced in 2010 as a way to reform the NCLB legislation of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, May 27). Although this new legislation continues to focus on student growth, a new approach was taken by offering incentives for success rather than punishment for not meeting goals set forth through the legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, May 27). A major component of *A Blueprint for Reform* is that all students will be college and career ready upon graduating high school. The Obama administration recognizes the importance that early intervention programs play a role in creating future student success (U.S.

Department of Education, 2010). The U.S. Department of Education (2011, May 27) challenges states and local districts to identify low performing schools.

### Purpose of the Study

As the importance of education continues to grow in our society, some students need extra time and help beyond the regular school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2014a). The Afterschool Alliance (2009a), reported that 25% of Georgia's K-12 students are responsible for taking care of themselves during after school hours. Extended learning programs help fill a void by enriching the academic lives of students, providing a safe after school environment, and improving the social skills of students attending these programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a; Harris et al., 2011; Lauver, 2004, July; U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Maximizing the effectiveness of extended learning time could lead students to greater success in and outside in the classroom (Afterschool Alliance, 2014a).

The purpose of this study was to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large public elementary schools in Georgia. The study also sought to identify principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. Although some data and literature exist relating the effect of extended learning programs to student achievement, additional data are needed at the state level. This study provides valuable information relating to the characteristics and benefits of extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools. The study compared third-grade mathematics CRCT mean pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that did not. The study also compared third-grade

mathematics CRCT mean pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools.

#### Research Questions

This study was guided by six research questions:

##### *Research Question 1*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilize extended learning programs?

##### *Research Question 2*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size?

##### *Research Question 3*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding?

##### *Research Question 4*

What are principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary extended learning programs?

##### *Research Question 5*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not?

##### *Research Question 6*



Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools that implement an extended learning program?

### Research Design

This study utilized quantitative measures to examine the effects of extended learning programs on student achievement. A survey was used to gather data describing teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in extended learning programs in Georgia public elementary schools. The survey was conducted electronically and distributed using Qualtrics. A survey research design was implemented to address Research Questions 1 through 4 of the study. These questions focused on determining how small, medium, and large schools utilize extended learning programs. The survey was also implemented to understand how these programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding. Open-ended survey questions were used to determine how principals perceived the benefits of extended learning programs in their schools. A causal-comparative research design was utilized to address Research Questions 5 and 6. Question 5 was used to determine if a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not. Question 6 was used to determine if a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools.

### Procedures

The survey was conducted electronically using Qualtrics. CRCT data were collected through the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) website. The researcher sent an initial email to all public elementary school principals in Georgia serving third-grade students. After a 2-week wait period, principals who had not responded to the initial survey received a reminder email.

### Definitions

#### *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*

Established through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AYP was developed to measure student achievement on state assessments on a year-to-year basis. AYP is used as a tool for measuring school progress (Georgia Department of Education, 2014c).

#### *Characteristics*

The staff qualifications, student-teacher ratio, accountability, and program focus of extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a; Chatterji, Kwon, & Sng, 2006).

#### *Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)*

The criterion referenced competency test is designed to measure student strengths and weaknesses based on state mandated standards in the areas of reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The CRCT was used to measure student academic achievement at the individual, district, and state level (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.)

#### *CRCT Pass Score*

A passing score on the Georgia third-grade mathematics CRCT is an 800 or above (Georgia department of Education, 2012).

#### *Extended Learning Programs*

These activities occur outside of the normal school day or the regular school year. Extended learning time is defined as early morning, evening, weekend, or summer activities. The program supplies supplemental educational activities focused on increasing student achievement in critical needs areas (Fashola, 1998; Learning Point Associates & Berkeley Policy Associates, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

#### *Prevalence*

The number of summer, weekend, before, and afterschool programs utilized in Georgia public elementary schools (Afterschool Alliance, 2009a; Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, 2007).

#### *School Size*

The number of small, medium, and large elementary schools in Georgia. The following was used to identify school size based on student enrollment in Georgia public elementary schools based on a design utilized by the Illinois department of education. Schools were coded 0 (0-473), coded 1 (474-759), and coded 2 (greater than 759) (Durlinger & Haefele, 2011).

#### *Structure of Funding*

The funding control and the source of funding: private, local, and federal (Afterschool Alliance, 2009a; Halpern, Deich, & Cohen, 2000).

#### *Staff Qualifications*

Extended learning program utilize many different types of staff members to meet the needs of their students. Professional teachers, school support personnel, community and parent volunteers can all serve as staff members in an extended learning program (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

### *21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center*

Community learning centers designed to provide enrichment and academic support for students in non-school hours in a public school building. The programs are operated by a school district in conjunction with other service organizations (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

### Significance of the Study

Principals and administrators play a vital role in creating school success and ensuring student achievement (Soehner & Ryan, 2011). A principal must often approve many policies and school programs before implementation. Principals often communicate with their colleagues during the decision making process. This study could provide principals and other educational leaders with valuable insight into extended learning programs that currently exist in Georgia public elementary schools.

The study could provide administrators and educators with valuable insight into the role that extended learning programs play in increasing student achievement. The information gathered through this study could inform principals of potential barriers associated with conducting an extended learning program and possible solutions to overcoming these barriers. A study conducted throughout the state of Georgia could provide valuable knowledge for principals planning to implement an extended learning program in their school. Schools and educational leaders could use the results of this

study to increase student achievement by implementing extended learning programs. Furthermore through this study, educators will gain an understanding of how extended learning programs in the state of Georgia are being conducted, the characteristics of those programs, and the challenges they face.

#### Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed that Georgia public elementary school principals have direct knowledge and/or involvement with their schools extended learning program. Principals are directly exposed to the day-to-day operations of the program and have knowledge of the teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding. The study assumed that the self-reported survey data is reliable and truthful.

#### Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. This chapter focuses on introducing the topic and discusses the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature related to the teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in Georgia public elementary extended learning programs. Chapter 3 focuses on a discussion of the methods and procedures used to collect data including the design, survey participants, data collection, and analysis of data. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study, and in Chapter 5, the researcher indicates the conclusions, implications and recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter II

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

A renewed focus toward increasing student achievement was brought about by, *A Nation at Risk*, in the early 1980s. This influential study transformed the way students were taught in and out of the classroom (Hunt, 1996). In the early 2000s NCLB brought about new and drastic changings to the field of education by requiring that all students be on grade level (No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, 2002). Common Core Curriculum has been the most recent driving force to increase student achievement and prepare students to compete at a global level (Mathis, 2010)

One major focus for improving student success at the federal, state, and local level has been on the use of extended learning programs as a tool for improving student achievement (Afterschool Alliance, 2014a; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Extended learning programs can be found in many different forms. These programs are offered at different times and operated by many different organizations. One major focus of extended learning programs is to meet the needs of students in the local community (Thirteen, 2015).

### Historical Overview of Extended Learning Programs

Extended learning programs emerged in the late 1800s as the educational expectations of children increased and the need for child labor decreased (Halpern, 2002; Mahoney, 2009). Compulsory education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century required that students attend school for longer periods of time and established truancy officers to enforce

attendance (Katz, 1976). Often charities and day nurseries provided childcare as a way to help assimilate immigrant children and provide troubled youth with safe care (Seligson, 1983; Seppanen, 1993). Halpern (2002) described the 1930s as a time when school became a focus among parents and many children began to attend school through the eighth grade. The decrease in child labor and a desire for children to have formal school led to free time during after school hours (Mahoney, 2009). With the influx of immigrant families around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many children needed a safe environment in which to play (Halpern, 2002; Seppanen, 1993). Halpern (2002) described how children would often gather at local churches or storefronts during after school hours. He wrote that the first extended learning programs were simply a meeting place for young boys. These *boys' clubs*, as described by Mahoney (2009) and Halpern (2002), eventually became known as *play school* during the 1920s and 1930s (Schwendiman, 1999).

#### *Development of Extended Learning Programs*

Religion was the focus of many initial programs. Most served as a tool for removing children from the dangerous inner-city streets and neighborhoods (Halpern, 2002). These first programs lacked goals, any real academic expectations, and were mainly run by private organizations (Halpern, 2002; Schwendiman, 1999; Seppanen, 1993). Early extended learning programs set their own policies and varied based on location (Halpern, 2002). During the 1920s and 30s private schools began offering arts and crafts, recreational activities, and other activities for students during after school hours (Schwendiman, 1999; Seppanen, 1993). Around this time many new educational policies were established and professionals in the field of education began pushing a new progressive stance toward the education of youth (Seppanen, 1993). As educational

policy evolved, extended learning programs expanded their role beyond, care and protection, to providing enrichment opportunities for children (Halpern, 2002). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the role of extended learning programs evolved because of several factors: (a) changes in workforce, (b) neighborhood changes and self-care of children, and (c) social and political influences (Halpern, 2002; Mahoney, 2009; Schwendiman, 1999; Seppanen, 1993).

### *Workforce Changes*

With the emergence of an urban economy, child labor was no longer needed (Mahoney, 2009). This led to an increase in school participation among children (Halpern, 2002). The idea of children attending school rather than working became a commonly accepted practice in the early 1900s (Katz, 1976). The country began to see an increase in women in the workforce as rural families began migrating towards urban areas looking for jobs and a better way of life (Mahoney, 2009). An increase in single-parent homes and mothers forced to enter the workforce led to a decrease in parental supervision during after school hours (Halpern, 2002; Mahoney, 2009; Seppanen, 1993). Halpern (2002) stated that a distinct childhood culture, with its own norms, locations, and rules, was created due to these factors.

### *Neighborhood Changes and Self-care*

The lack of need for child labor and compulsory education led to an increase in free time for children during non-school hours. Many children known as *latchkey kids* found themselves without adult supervision during after school hours (Mahoney, 2009; Seppanen, 1993). Halpern (2002) noted that self-care for pre-adolescent children can be physically dangerous, as well as, have negative developmental impacts. As urban areas



became a primary place to live, small living quarters led to overcrowding (Halpern, 2002). Tight quarters combined with an increase in free time forced children to find new places to gather and socialize (Halpern, 2002). The surrounding streets became a play area for many children during this time period (Mahoney, 2009). During this time automobiles became readily available to the masses making streets a more dangerous place to play (Halpern, 2002). By the 1960s a drug culture had developed and the streets of inner cities were no longer a safe harbor for playing children (Halpern, 2002). Halpern (2002) described the streets as an unhealthy place for children that exposed them to *unsavory characters*.

Data from the U.S. Department of Justice indicated that juvenile crime peaks during non-school hours (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010). The Afterschool Alliance (2009b) indicated that over 15 million children are without adult supervision during after school hours. In Georgia, 25% (446,650) of the youth were unsupervised after school (Afterschool Alliance, 2009a). With the lack of supervision during after school hours children were in danger of being victims of crimes, as well as, being involved in substance abuse, gang activity, and other illegal activities (Afterschool Alliance, 2009b).

### *Social and Political Influences*

Politicians have been at odds for many years over the role of government in education and family related matters (Mahoney, 2009). As the Great Depression devastated most of the country, the federal government made efforts to create jobs for men and women by funding extended learning programs (Schwendiman, 1999; Seppanen, 1993). During World War II, notes Schwendiman (1999), the government's

support of extended learning programs increased drastically again because many women entered the workforce. Seppanen (1993) stated that over 3,000 extended learning programs were developed during these war years to provide services for school-aged children. During this time almost 95% of all extended learning programs were funded and controlled by the federal government (Seppanen, 1993). However, by the end of World War II many women had returned home which created a decline in the number of extended learning programs (Schwendiman, 1999).

During the Nixon administration, the proposed *Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1971* would have provided the right to quality child care services for of all socioeconomic status, however this legislation was vetoed by President Nixon after being passed by congress (Mahoney, 2009). The 1970s saw a growth in the number of young children due to the baby boomer generation, an increase in the employment of mothers with young children, an increase in single-parent homes, and a decrease in the number of extended family members available to care for school-age children (Schwendiman, 1999). Although childcare continued to be a political discussion throughout the 70s and 80s, no major increases to funding for afterschool childcare were established (Mahoney, 2009). Beginning in the 1990s extended learning programs saw continued growth and interest in using these programs as a tool for improving education (Mahoney, 2009). President Clinton successfully passed the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC legislation and President Bush reauthorized this legislation under NCLB, however, studies have shown that these types of programs were continually underfunded at the state and federal level (Mahoney, 2009).

#### Educational Reform and Extended Learning Programs

In 1983, The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) delivered an eye opening view about the problems in education and proposed solutions to create a better educational system (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* sought to assess the quality of education throughout the country to ensure that the United States did not lose its world dominance in science, technological innovation, and industry. The 18-month report found that over 23 million adults were functionally illiterate. The report claimed that in 1983, the average high school student scored lower on most standardized test scores than students did 26 years earlier. The report went on to state that about 13 percent of all 17-year-olds can be considered illiterate in the United States and that these individuals do not possess the *higher order* thinking skills that were expected of them. During this time, educational emphasis changed from the quantity of courses students were taking to the quality of the curriculum being taught (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

The *Nation at Risk* report received national attention and renewed suspicions that the United States was no longer educating students at a higher level than the rest of the world (Gardner, 1983). The commission believed that problems facing education in America could be corrected if immediate action was taken. The report found that education in the United States had become mediocre and lost sight of the purpose of schooling. Concern for economic ruin and global dominance by other countries, as reported by *A Nation at Risk*, did not resonate well with the American people. The commission made recommendations for improving education in five major areas: content, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support. *A Nation at Risk* suggested schools strengthen graduation requirements: (a) four years of

English, (b) three years of math, (c) three years of science for all students, (d) three years of social studies, and (e) half a year of computer science. It was also recommended by the commission that rigorous and measurable standards be established to create a challenging environment that supports learning. The report went on to suggest that more effective use of class time, increasing the school day, or extending the school year would increase student achievement. The document also suggested that colleges and universities must improve teacher preparation programs. Finally, the commission recommended that educators and elected officials be held responsible for providing leadership in education and that citizens provide the fiscal support necessary to improve education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

Kartal (2007) indicated that basic education must begin at birth. The health and care for a child's early life have been major contributing factors to a child's mental, physical, and social development (Kartal, 2007). The skills needed to learn in later years, noted Kartal (2007), were learned at home during a child's early years. Kartal (2007) stated that most developmental learning theories indicated that a child completed a great deal of development before entering school. These basic skills needed for learning and future development during a child's formal education years must be taught at an early age (Kartal, 2007). In 1988, Congress endorsed the Even Start Family Literacy Program to ensure that the needs of children from all socio-economic backgrounds started school with the proper skills to compete with their peers. The program served as a mechanism to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy throughout the United States (Iowa Department of Education, 2014).

The Even Start Family Literacy Program provided grants to support family literacy projects for low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The 1989 program was established under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as a means to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy in America (Iowa Department of Education, 2014; St. Pierre, Swartz, Murray, & Deck, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The program focused on four core components of family literacy: early childhood education, adult literacy, parenting education, and interactive literacy activities (St. Pierre et al., 1996). The Even Start Program provided funding to public entities, as well as, private and public community-based organizations to improve literacy skills for adults and children from low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Participants in the program had to include an eligible adult with a child under the age of eight (St. Pierre et al., 1996). These programs helped to empower parents in becoming full partners in their child's education (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

In March of 1994, President Clinton signed into law a set of eight educational standards that were to be met by the year 2000 (National Center for Home Education, 2014, September). According to Heise (1994), this landmark educational reform was started by President Bush in 1989 when he met with the nation's governors to create national goals for education. These standards were developed to combat the mediocrity towards education in an ever-changing economic world (Heise, 1994). *Goals 2000: The Educate America Act* was seen as a solution to the ailing public schools of the time and were developed to help rectify the illiteracy problem in America (Campbell, 2003). According to Campbell (2003), the program brought together federal, state, and local

governments with the purpose of reallocating the fiscal responsibility in education to the federal level. Although the *Goals 2000* was initially passed into legislation in 1994, the law was amended in 1996 after the law's biannual report (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The U.S. Department of Education (1998) stated that *Goals 2000* encouraged a commitment from states and local communities to improve education, that states and districts utilized coordinated planning, and ensured that all students were held to high academic standards. Below is a list of the goals and objectives set for by the U.S.

Department of Education (1994) in the *Goals 2000: The Educate America Act*.

By the year 2000:

1. All children will start school ready to learn. The goal provided parental training, preschool, nutrition, and healthcare to ensure that all students enter school with equal developmental skills.
2. The high school graduation rate will be at least 90%. The goal ensured that the disparity between non-minority and minority graduation rate would be eliminated.
3. All students in grades 4, 8, and 12 will have demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter. The goal ensured that all students would demonstrate reasoning skills, good citizenship, access to physical education, an increased number of bilingual students, and knowledge of the cultural heritage of our Nation.
4. The Nation's teachers will have access to professional development for adequately preparing all American children for the future. The goal provided educators with the proper training to meet the increasingly diverse population of

students in America. Staff development opportunities were provided introducing new teaching methods, forms of assessments, and technology.

5. United States students will be the first in the world in mathematics and science achievement. The goal ensured that students would have a better understanding of the metric system, that teachers in mathematical and science backgrounds would be recruited to teach, and more women and minorities would graduate college with mathematics, science, and engineering degrees.
6. Every adult American would be literate and have knowledge to compete in a global economy. The goal ensured that businesses would be involved in creating a connection between education and work. There would be an increase in the number of programs available for adult learners and all programs would better prepare students for entering the workforce.
7. Every school in America would be drug and violence free. The goal ensured that schools would be a safe place that is conducive to learning and provide drug and alcohol prevention programs for students of all ages.
8. Every school will increase parental participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of students. The goal provided policy for increasing partnerships between schools and the home. Parents would share in educational decisions of their child (Sect, 102).

*Goals 2000* set forth very ambitious goals for American education, but the goals called for a renewed focus on education that one could not easily argue against (Campbell, 2003). President Clinton saw that our Nation's students were falling behind other countries and called for a renewed focus towards educational reform (Heise, 1994).

According to Campbell (2003), these goals became a catalyst for change at the local, state, and newly created National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) (Heise, 1994). With the new goals, a national framework for education was to be developed, all students would be provided equitable educational opportunities, and necessary changes would be made to ensure that all students learn at high levels (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Less than a year into his first term in office, President George W. Bush, signed into law the *NCLB Act*. NCLB, which was intended to strengthen the objectives, set forth by *Goals 2000* through school accountability and assessments (Kress, Zechmann, & Schmitten, 2011). The NCLB was a revision of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965* and was regarded as one the most significant pieces of educational legislation in generations (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). NCLB was highly supported throughout the country by conveying the idea that every child can learn (Florida Department of Education, 2015). The law went on to emphasize how we, as a nation, would not accept public schools that failed to educate all students regardless of race, religious preference, ability, or socio-economic status (Aske, Connolly, & Corman, 2013; Florida Department of Education, 2015). This bipartisan piece of legislation sought the following purposes: (a) statewide accountability systems through testing of challenging state standards in mathematics and reading; (b) more school choice for parents if students who attended failing schools; (c) flexibility for how federal funds were used by states and school districts; and (d) increased emphasis on reading in younger grade levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b, pp. 1-3).



One major component of NCLB was to provide parents with relevant information regarding their child's school so the best possible choice could be made regarding where to send their children (Aske et al., 2013). To adequately inform parents, NCLB required school systems to annually report test scores in grades 3 through 8 in mathematics and reading (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.; New America Foundation, 2014, April 24; U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). The law required that all students be on grade level in mathematics and reading, so districts were required to report scores for specific subgroups; low socio-economic status, students with disabilities, English language learners, and by racial group (Georgia Department of Education, 2014c; New America Foundation, 2014, April 24).

NCLB required schools to meet AYP or yearly testing goals set forth in the state's educational plan (Kress et al., 2011). Kress et al. (2011) went on to note that if a school did not meet AYP it was identified as *needing improvement* and must implement interventions to rectify the problems (Georgia School Council Institute, 2004, July). Students attending schools that failed to meet AYP were given the option to attend other schools that were meeting AYP status (Florida Department of Education, 2015; Kress et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). The Georgia Department of Education (2014c) stated that schools and districts within Georgia met AYP through the following criteria:

1. All student subgroups with at least 40 students must have a participation rate at or above 95% in mathematics and reading/language arts testing.
2. Each school and student subgroup must meet or exceed the State's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) based on the percentage of students meeting or

exceeding in mathematics and reading/language arts testing. AMO can be met through the following:

- a. direct comparison of student performance to AMO,
  - b. confidence interval,
  - c. multiyear averaging,
  - d. safe harbor.
3. Every school must meet the standard or show progress on a second indicator.  
(para. 3)

AYP was a significant tool used to ensure that the needs of all students were being met under NCLB and that disparities in the achievement gaps between students were being closed (Georgia Department of Education, 2014c). The premise behind NCLB was to hold schools and districts accountable for all students by creating competition among the schools based on test scores (Aske et al., 2013). According to the Georgia department of Education (2012) this data-driven approach to educational reform held schools accountable for the success of all students.

In 2010, President Barack Obama introduced *A Blueprint for Reform*, the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as a platform for overhauling the NCLB legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, May 27). Although NCLB brought education to the forefront of America and highlighted achievement gaps between student subgroups, it allowed for little flexibility while focusing on punishment for failure over rewarding success (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). President Obama's *Blueprint for Reform* focused on student growth rather than solely on student test scores. Schools were charged with preparing all

students to be college and career ready when they graduated high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Based on the response to the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* the U.S. Department of Education (2011, May 27) noted that this reform focused on four key areas: (a) improving the effectiveness of teachers and principals; (b) helping parents to evaluate and improve their child's school by providing information about the school; (c) implementing college and career-ready standards; and (d) providing support and interventions in low performing schools to improve student achievement. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) stated that to meet these goals, states and districts needed to be given flexibility in determining the best methods for intervention based on individual needs.

#### Overview of Extended Learning Programs

Although extended learning programs have existed for many years in different forms, NCLB helped bring them to the forefront as a way to establish supplemental educational services to low-performing schools (Chatterji et al., 2006). Today, extended learning programs can be found in many different forms. Before, after, weekend, and summer programs have all existed to meet the needs of students (Malone, 2007).

Extended learning programs can vary greatly in focus, philosophy, and the structure of programming (Shumow, 2001). Some programs focused on simply providing safe and supervised activities for students, while others focused on academics through tutoring and homework assistance. Dynarski et al. (2004) reported that some extended learning programs have increased academic achievement and reduced negative behaviors.

However, the report went on to state that some extended learning programs had no effect and even worsened certain outcomes.

*Two Together, Inc.*, is a highly regarded extended learning literacy project in Albany, New York (Fleming, 2005). The goal of *Two Together* was to strengthen the social, cultural, and intellectual growth of children by improving literacy skills. The one-to-one tutoring program was conducted in conjunction with a local YMCA program, which helped to alleviate transportation issues. The program actively worked to involve parents in the literacy project by hosting social suppers with the tutors. Tutors in the program were from local colleges and high schools in the Albany area. *Two Together* has observed an increase in student reading ability and noted that students showed an increased enjoyment of reading (Fleming, 2005).

The Providence After School Alliance (PASA) created the AfterZone to meet the needs and interests of youth in Providence, RI (Kauh, 2011). Many of the youth served by PASA have been forced to overcome economic and educational challenges. The AfterZone utilized sports, skill building, educational enrichment, and art activities in their extended learning programs. The program utilized many community facilities, however the school environment was at the core of the program. Kauh (2011) noted that the yearlong program is conducted 4 days per week for 4 hours a day. With funding from the Wallace Foundation, a 2-year study was conducted on the AfterZone program model. Findings from the study indicated that participating in AfterZone benefited students in relationship to school. However, this study also found that many of the benefits were not long lasting. Participant school attendance increased at the end of year one, but the increase in attendance had diminished by Year 2. One significant benefit from attending AfterZone was the increase in math grades when compared to students that did not attend the program (Kauh, 2011).

Project HOPE, Having Opportunities Promotes Excellence, was a kindergarten through fifth grade extended learning program conducted on Saturdays (R. Miller & Gentry, 2010). Participants in the program were from five school districts within commuting distance of Purdue University. The program was funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which provided all expense and transportation for the Super Saturday program. Project HOPE was designed for gifted and talented students as an enrichment program. Students are able to choose classes of their interest and are taught the material at two or more grades above the students' actual level. The HOPE program is designed to expose students of low socio-economic background with high potential to above grade level work in their areas of interest. Miller and Gentry (2010) stated that courses are offered in science, math, technology, engineering, and the arts. The study was conducted on participants that attended Super Saturday sessions for three hours on six consecutive Saturdays (R. Miller & Gentry, 2010)

The Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning, better known as CORAL, is a five-city initiative designed to improve academic achievement for at-risk students (Arbreton et al., 2008). The initiative utilized flexibility when implementing the extended learning program by allowing site coordinators to implement strategies based on the needs of students in their geographic location. The CORAL program was funded by the James Irvine Foundation and supplemented with additional funding from the host cities and private donors. Over time, the initiative focused all programs under CORAL to literacy-focused sites. Students participated in 60 to 90 minute session for 3 to 4 days per week. According to Arbreton et al. (2008), a 2-year study of the CORAL program found that engagement in the program showed positive changes in a child's attitude towards

reading, participants performed better on standardized tests, English language learners showed similar gains as their peers, and many other positive attributes contributed to the program.

Vandell, Reisner, and Pierce (2007) conducted a longitudinal study of 35 high-quality extended learning programs. Participants in the study were from low socioeconomic backgrounds that regularly attended an extended learning program throughout the school year. The study found that elementary students who regularly attended high-quality extended learning programs over a 2-year period showed significant gains of up to 20 percentile points on standardized math tests. Participants of the program showed a decrease in aggressive behaviors toward their peers and showed significant gains in social skills with their peers. When compared to students not attending an extended learning program, participants had a reduced number of school misconduct reports (Vandell et al., 2007).

NCLB created an increased amount of funding and a renewed focus for extended learning programs as a method for increasing student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). Because of this legislation, communities established 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC across the country to provide academic enrichment for low-performing students.

Dynarski et al. (2004) conducted a 2-year study of the federally funded extended learning initiative to determine the outcomes from this program's implementation. Year 2 findings were consistent with results of Year 1. Elementary students' reading test scores or grades were not affected by program participation. However, students reported that they felt safer during after school hours when participating in a program. The report goes

on to note that parents were more likely to attend school events if their child participated in a program (Dynarski et al., 2004).

### Funding for Extended Learning Programs

Extended learning programs would not have existed without proper funding and resources. Not only have these programs required funding for teachers and administrators, the logistical concerns for transporting students home, in some cases providing meals for students, were taken into consideration when budgeting for an extended learning program (Parsad & Lewis, 2009; The Wallace Foundation, 2014). Parent fees, foundation grants, federal tax monies, and local tax monies have all been sources of funding for supporting extended learning programs (The Wallace Foundation, 2014). Although many programs utilized volunteers and donations, funding has been a crucial element in meeting the needs of students served by extended learning programs.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative was the only federally funded source designated exclusively to extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a). According to the Afterschool Alliance (2012a), funding from the NCLB for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs were distributed to states based on their share of Title I funding for low-income students. They also noted that in 2010 the U.S. Department of Education appropriated \$1.166 billion for extended learning programs throughout the United States, which served just over 1.5 million students. The money provided through the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative helped operate over 10,000 programs with nearly half of these programs serving elementary age students (Afterschool Alliance, 2012a).

Georgia currently receives just over \$38 million in funding from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative, which has served over 38,000 students (Afterschool Alliance, 2014, May). In

2009, Georgia allocated \$14 million in state funds for school- and community-based extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2009a). Vouchers and subsidies for low-income Georgia families have been provided by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to pay for childcare, preschool, summer care, and extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2014, May). The Afterschool Alliance stated that funds provided for Georgia families through the CCDF were just under \$238 million in 2013.

Private funding for extended learning programs has been found at the local and national level. Many standalone programs that were not affiliated with a school and were fee-based in nature accounted for almost half of all extended learning programs (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). The amount of funding, at the local level has been limited based on location, but often has come from the generous donations of community stakeholders (Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, 2007). Many national foundations and companies have offered grants to improve the academic of achievement of students. The Wallace Foundation, the Mott Foundation, Verizon, and Target have been just a few of the many organizations that offered grant money throughout the United States (The After-School Corporation, 2014). Most organizations required an application process and offered grant funds based on the socioeconomic needs of the communities that the extended learning program served (Thirteen, 2015).

#### Perceptions and Outcomes of Extended Learning Program Studies

The research associated with extended learning programs has seen mixed results. Lauver (2004, July) noted that students with high attendance in extended learning programs have seen improvements in academic achievement, less regular school absences, increased effort in school, and teachers reported improved student behavior.



With a lack of adult supervision during out of school hours, extended learning programs provided a safe and orderly environment for students (Malone, 2007). A study conducted by Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010) found that students attending extended learning programs not only scored higher classroom grades, but also scored higher on standardized tests when compared to non-participating students.

Researchers at the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) (2012) conducted a longitudinal study using qualitative and quantitative measures to examine the similarities and differences of extended learning programs throughout California. The overall findings of the study were neutral, however positive effects were seen with increases in physical fitness of participants, students' perceptions toward academic work, and in school attendance rates. Additionally, when CRESST researchers further analyzed the data they found that African American, special education, and below average students who attended programs performed better on academic measures than students not participating in a program.

Vandell et al. (2007) examined the relationship between high-quality extended learning programs and desired academic and behavioral outcomes for low-income students over a 2-year period in the third and fourth or sixth and seventh grade level. The researchers described high-quality programs as those that were free of charge, operated at least 4 days per week, and strong community involvement. The researchers analyzed 35 programs with 2,914 students at the middle school and elementary level participating. According to the study, elementary students who regularly attended the extended learning programs saw gains of 20 percentiles on standardized math test scores. Students who

attended the program showed a reduction in aggressive behaviors and increased social skills with peers.

Rothman and Henderson (2011) conducted a pre-post nonequivalent control group study to determine the impact of an extended learning program on eighth grade students' New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) test in language arts and mathematics. The study was conducted in a large, ethnically diverse school district with low socioeconomic status. Forty-three of the eighth grade students from the only middle school in the district participated in the study. Twenty-three students were assigned to the language arts group and 20 students were placed in the math group based on their previous NJASK scores. The student's pretest consisted of his seventh grade NJASK scores and the posttest used the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). Students in the treatment groups attended 90-minute tutoring sessions twice per week, directly following the end of the regular school day from October to March. The researchers conducted an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on the initial NJASK to determine any differences in test scores, which enabled the researchers to analyze any differences on the eighth grade GEPA. The results of the study indicated that students tutored in language arts and math significantly outperformed the control group.

Allen and Chavkin (2004) found that students who received increased amounts of tutoring were more likely to pass core academic subjects than students who received less tutoring. The researchers conducted a within-program control group design study on a tutoring program that was created to help students who failed a core subject (math, reading or ELA, science, or social studies) during the previous school year. The study included 256 middle school students with 61% being male and 79% of the tutored

population was eligible for free/reduced lunch. Students were placed into groups based on students receiving above 13.5 hours and those receiving less than 13.5 hours of tutoring. The researchers stated that ethnicity and free/reduced lunch status did not affect the results, however gender did. Female participants tended to be more likely to pass than males. A paired *t* test showed that students made significant improvements from their previous grades ( $t = 19.254$ ,  $df = 216$ ,  $p < 0.00025$ , two-tailed). The researchers were unable to find any differences in pre- and post-grades by subject or grade level.

### Keys to Successful Extended Learning Programs

Successful extended learning programs demonstrated several key attributes that enabled them to be successful. Each key was no more important than the other, but these keys worked in unison to create program success. The vision and leadership of an extended learning program were two key factors that ensured a successful program (Fletcher, 2004, May; Huang et al., 2008; Learning Point Associates & Berkeley Policy Associates, 2006; The American Association of School Administrators, 2005). Fletcher (2004, May) noted that a vision clarified the purpose of the program and ignited passion in others towards making the program a success. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) (2004) indicated that the vision of the program should be understood by all stakeholders and extended to superintendents at the top of the district. Learning Point Associates and Berkeley Policy Associates (2006) extended this notation by stating that the school district's role in planning for the program was essential for program success. Strong leadership was an essential element for the success of almost any business or program. Extended learning programs were no different. Strong involvement from the principal and other leaders was a contributing factor to successful

extended learning programs (Learning Point Associates & Berkeley Policy Associates, 2006). Successful programs with a great vision needed leadership to ensure the vision's execution (Fletcher, 2004, May). Often one leader cannot meet the demands of a program; therefore, teams of leaders have been established throughout the program (Fletcher, 2004, May).

The structure and content of an extended learning program were also key elements for ensuring success (Fashola, 1998). Fashola (1998) indicated that structure was essential to the achievement of the program and leaders must decide whether the program was an extension of the school day or an academic enrichment program. Beckett et al. (2009) indicated that programs were most successful when aligned with the regular school day and connected with classroom activities to improve academic performance. Instructional practices should be adapted to meet the needs of individuals in small group settings (Beckett et al., 2009). Fashola (1998) recommended a recreational component for programs to help develop all aspects of the child's life. The author stated that recreational activities provided students with academic downtime and a safe environment in which to play. The ultimate decision for content and structure of a program is meeting the needs of the children. Fashola (1998) recommended that children, parents, and community members should have been included in the planning process when establishing a program. The ultimate goal of an extended learning program was not to extend the school day, but rather expand instructional opportunities to reinforce what was learned throughout the regular school day (Fletcher, 2004, May).

Ensuring success of a program required continual evaluation of the program and navigating the changes needed to ensure continued success (Fletcher, 2004, May). The

evaluation and assessment of performance has been a key element for improving and maintaining the success of extended learning programs (Beckett et al., 2009; Fashola, 1998; Fletcher, 2004, May; Huang et al., 2008). Fletcher (2004, May) stated that leaders should use a variety of techniques for assessing program performance and not solely rely on student progress through test scores. Program evaluation should be seen as a tool for program improvement and a way to identify areas of improvement (Beckett et al., 2009). Fashola (1998) indicated that assessment should be built into extended learning programs and the evaluation of a program should be tied to its vision to ensure that the program's goals were being met. Leaders used multiple forms of evaluation and ultimately used the results to make appropriate changes and build on the established strengths of the program (Fletcher, 2004, May).

## Chapter III

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large, public elementary schools in Georgia. In this study, the researcher also sought to identify principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. The study was divided into two parts: principal data and student data. A researcher-created survey was used to collect principal data regarding teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in Georgia extended learning programs. The survey also addressed information regarding the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools. Student data consisted of third-grade student CRCT mathematics mean pass rates from the Georgia Department of Education.

This chapter describes the purpose for the study, research questions, and design of the study. The chapter includes information pertaining to the participants and setting, instrumentation, the process used to gather data, and data analysis.

#### Research Questions

This study was guided by six research questions:

*Research Question 1*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilize extended learning programs?

*Research Question 2*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size?

*Research Question 3*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding?

*Research Question 4*

What are principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary extended learning programs?

*Research Question 5*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not?

*Research Question 6*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools that implement an extended learning program?

Research Design

This study utilized quantitative measures to examine the effects of extended learning programs on student achievement. A survey was used to gather data describing teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in extended learning programs in Georgia public elementary schools. The survey was conducted electronically and distributed using Qualtrics.

### *Survey Design*

Survey research provides an economical way for researchers to gather information from a large number of participants throughout a large geographical location (Creswell, 2009). Survey research allows researchers to survey a sample of respondents and make inferences about a general population based on survey results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). The use of electronic surveying allowed the researcher to access all elementary principals in Georgia. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2010), response rates from non-personal survey methods (i.e., mail or electronic) can vary by location and population subgroups.

### *Threats to Validity*

The researcher must be aware of the threats to internal and external validity in survey research. Creswell (2009) described internal validity as threats to the procedures, treatments, or experiences that influence the researcher's ability to draw correct inferences from data about a population. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) stated that attrition, location, instrumentation, and instrument decay are the four major threats to internal validity. Attrition did not pose a threat because the study was not conducted over a long period. Internal validity was not influenced by instrumentation due to the survey being conducted online. Respondents were not influenced or contacted by the researcher during the instrumentation process. Instrument decay would only become a threat to the



survey if proper time were not given for respondents to complete the survey. Location did not influence survey results because all elementary principals in Georgia were asked to complete the survey. To help ensure an adequate response rate the researcher made a second attempt to solicit a response from all principals who failed to complete the survey. Location could affect survey results if only principals from a particular geographic location responded to the survey. According to Creswell (2009) external validity threats arise when the researcher draws incorrect inferences from the sample data to other persons, settings, or situations. I understood that information gathered from the study was not generalizable beyond the target population. Another threat to validity is nonresponse from the population. A lack of response may reduce the validity of the information gathered and produce bias in the results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

#### *Causal-Comparative Design*

To address research questions five and six a causal-comparative design was implemented to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between third-grade CRCT mathematics mean pass rates, between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that did not. A comparison was also conducted among small, medium, and large schools that implemented an extended learning program. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) stated that casual-comparative research is used to determine the cause of differences that currently exist between groups of individuals. Causal-comparative research is occasionally referred to as ex post facto research because the causes and effects have already occurred (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

The causal-comparative design is considered an economical and fast alternative to experimental research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) noted

that causal-comparative research frequently leads to future experimental studies. Although this type of study has its strengths, there are limitations that must be taken into account when conducting causal-comparative research. Threats to internal validity are a major weakness of causal-comparative research because the manipulation of the independent variable has already occurred (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Causal-comparative research can be used to identify relationships, however, causation cannot be established (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) stated that unidentified variables can pose a threat to the internal validity in causal-comparative research. Another threat to internal validity is the lack of randomization when assigning test subjects to groups (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). The lack of randomization in grouping could lead to unequal groups based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or intelligence (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

#### Instrumentation

To address research questions one through four a survey design was implemented to determine how small, medium, and large schools utilize extended learning programs. The survey was also implemented to understand how these programs compared on teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding. Open-ended questions were included in the survey to understand principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs.

#### *Principal Data*

A 12-item survey (Appendix A) was used to acquire Georgia elementary school data regarding the prevalence of extended learning programs, characteristics of extended learning programs, and structure of funding of extended learning programs. Identical self-report surveys were used to collect data from all Georgia elementary school principals. The survey was conducted electronically using Qualtrics. The survey consisted of descriptive items with Yes/No answers, multiple response items, and open-ended questions. Dr. Kimberly Byars was contacted via electronic mail (Appendix B) to request permission to use a modified version of her dissertation survey.

Survey Questions 3-5 addressed how extended learning programs were being utilized in Georgia public elementary schools. These questions were used to determine the prevalence of extended learning programs throughout the state of Georgia and when the programs were being operated. Questions 6-8 were designed to gain insight into the characteristics of the extended learning programs. These three questions were used to determine the specific focus of the program, the facilities used to house the program, and staff utilized to conduct the program. Survey Questions 9 and 10 solicited information regarding the structure of governance and funding of extended learning programs. Principals were asked questions pertaining to the funding sources used to conduct the program and to identify the title of the person directly in charge of the program. Two questions on the instrument consisted of dichotomous (yes/no) questions. The responses were coded 1 (yes) and coded 0 (no). Eight questions consisted of multiple response answers. The survey also contained two open-ended questions to determine the principals' perceptions of the extended learning program in their school, including reasons why schools were not utilizing an extended learning program.

### *School Data*

The Georgia CRCT is a test used to determine how well students obtain the skills and knowledge designated by the state standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2007). The information gathered through the test is used to determine individual strengths and weakness of a student in relation to the state defined standards (Georgia department of Education, 2012). Questions in the CRCT item bank are rigorously tested to insure that valid and reliable results are collected (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). CRCT items are developed through committees of educators and field test to ensure that questions reflect the standards in which they address (Georgia Department of Education, 2007, 2013). Educators and other academic professionals continually review questions and compare them with state standards to certify that questions used for the test adequately reflect standards set forth by the Georgia Department of Education (Georgia Department of Education, 2007). Through rigorous testing the Georgia CRCT has a high degree of validity because it serves to measure mastery of state designated curriculum (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). The third-grade mathematics CRCT has been shown to be reliable using the standard error of measurement and Cronbach's alpha which is computed using the Crocker and Algina's formula (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). With a standard error of measurement score of 3.02 and a reliability coefficient of .93, the third-grade CRCT mathematics test is sufficiently reliable (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). The third-grade mathematics CRCT validity is established through a rigorous test development process and backed by strong reliability indicators (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

### Participants and Setting

### *Setting*

The target population for this study was state public schools serving third-grade students during the 2013-2014 school year. According to the Georgia Department of Education Georgia Department of Education (2014b), 1,233 schools serve third-grade students. Elementary schools in Georgia are designed to meet the needs of students in the urban settings of inner city Atlanta to the rural farm country of south Georgia. With almost 62% of all Georgia students qualifying for free/reduced lunch, extended learning programs can be found throughout the state (Georgia Department of Education, 2014a). The Georgia Department of Education does not rank schools according to enrollment size. Elementary schools were categorized as small, medium, or large based on a method used by the Illinois Department of Education (Durflinger & Haeffele, 2011). Schools that serve third-grade students were listed in descending order based on enrollment size. The top 25% were categorized as large, the middle 50% were categorized as medium, and the lower 25% categorized as small (Durflinger & Haeffele, 2011).

### *Principal Data*

Participants for this study were principals in Georgia public elementary schools. The names and email addresses of principals were provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Principals willing to participate completed the online survey. Some school districts do not allow surveys to be distributed to their employees which limited the accessible population of Georgia elementary school principals. Another limitation of the accessible population was principal turnover from the 2014 school year.

### *School Data*

Students were not considered active participants in the study. Third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rate for the 2013-2014 school year were collected through public record at the GADOE website. School pass rate data were collected based on principal participation in the study.

### Procedures

Prior to beginning this study, an application was submitted requesting approval from the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix C). Upon receiving permission from the IRB, an email was sent to all Georgia elementary principals working in districts allowing surveys. The email briefly described the purpose of the study and the importance of completing the survey. The names and contact information for survey candidates was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. A follow-up email was sent to principals that had not responded after a two-week period (Appendix D). All reasonable steps were taken to maintain confidentiality.

### Data Analysis

The number of small, medium, and large elementary schools were tabulated based on a design utilized by the Illinois department of education (Durflinger & Haeffele, 2011). Schools were ranked from least to greatest based on enrollment size. The top 25% of school were considered large, the middle 50% considered medium, and the lower 25% consider small. Based on this method schools were coded 0 (0-473), coded 1 (474-759), and coded 2 (greater than 759). This method of tabulation was used to answer Research Question 1 by determining the percentage of small, medium, and large schools that utilize an extended learning program. Descriptive measures were used to determine which size schools utilize extended learning programs most often. The tabulation of

schools and descriptive measures was also used to answer Research Question 2 by determining the teacher quality, program focus, and program size. Research Question 3 was answered by utilizing the tabulation of small, medium, and large schools to compare the structure of funding used to support extended learning programs throughout the state. Research Question 4 was answered using two open-ended survey questions to understand principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary school extended learning programs. The results of the open-ended survey questions were grouped according to theme. Using open-ended questions, I sought to understand reasons for schools not utilizing extended learning programs. I also sought to understand the principals' perceptions toward the benefits of their school's extended learning program. Research Questions 5 and 6 were answered using an ANOVA. A factorial ANOVA (2 x 3) determined if the main effect of extended learning program implementation was significant and the main effect of school size was significant at the 0.05 level. The factorial allowed me to examine the effect of extended learning programs and school size on third-grade CRCT mathematics scores. I also computed effect size estimates for each factor analyzed using partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ).

This chapter focused on the discussion of the methods and procedures used to collect data including the design, survey participants, data collection, and analysis of data. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Conclusions and implications of the findings and recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large, public elementary schools in Georgia. The study utilized a survey to assess teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in Georgia extended learning programs among small, medium, and large schools. The Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) third-grade mathematics mean pass rates for the 2013-2014 school year were used to compare schools that utilize extended learning programs with schools that do not.

Descriptions of the instrumentation, data collection procedures, and descriptions of the samples are reported in this chapter of the study. Results and discussion are presented for each research question. An overview of the study and significant findings are presented in the chapter summary.

#### Instrumentation

##### *Principal Data*

Principal perceptions of extended learning programs were obtained through a 12-question survey, using open-ended, dichotomous, and multiple response questions. The survey was used to gather responses relative to teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding in Georgia extended learning programs. Table 1 describes principal response rate based on school size.

##### *School Data*



Examination of research questions relating to student data was conducted using the CRCT third-grade mathematics mean pass rates for the 2013-2014 school year. Scores were obtained through the GADOE website using the school report card. I gathered third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percent rates of schools with principals responding to the survey.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for School Size*

| School Size | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Small       | 40        | 26.1    |
| Medium      | 73        | 47.7    |
| Large       | 40        | 26.1    |

Data Collection Procedures

*Principal Data*

Principal perceptions of extended learning programs were examined through the researcher-created survey. The survey was also used to gather information regarding teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding. Principals were sent an email that included an overview of the study, directions for completing the survey, and a survey link. Reminder emails were sent every 2 weeks for 6 weeks until the survey was closed. Principals were not required to complete any questions they did not feel comfortable answering (Appendix E).

*School Data*

The third-grade mathematics CRCT mean pass rates for the 2013-2014 school year were collected through the Georgia Department of Education school report card for all schools with principals participating in the survey.

### Sample

The sample for this study was Georgia public elementary school principals responding to the survey. One hundred fifty-three principals responded to the survey. The accessible population for the study were principals (N = 459) from school systems that do not utilize a local IRB policy, which created a 33% response rate. Of the respondents, 112 utilized an extended learning program, while 41 did not. The school sample was collected based on principal participation. Schools were categorized as small, medium, or large based on student enrollment (Durflinger & Haefele, 2011).

### Quantitative Data Analysis and Results

#### *Research Question 1*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilize extended learning programs?

Responses to survey items 3 through 5 addressed the prevalence of schools utilizing extended learning programs. The results of these questions are described in Table 2. Examination of total percentages of schools that operated extended learning programs indicated that 93% of programs offered were during after school time. During after school hours 97% (31) of large schools, 93% (42) of medium schools, and 89% (24) of small schools operated a program. Summer programs were offered by 37% of schools. Further inspection of schools offering summer programs indicated that 48% (13) were small, 29% (13) were medium, and 38% (12) were large schools. Weekend programs

were only utilized by 14% of schools. Results by school size indicated that 11% (3) of small, 16% (7) of medium, and 13% (4) of large schools operated programs on weekends. Programs offered before school hours were utilized by 12% of schools. Further examination by school size indicated that 22% (6) of small schools offered before school programs, while only 9% (4) of medium schools and 6% (2) of large schools offered before school programs. School facilities were used by 100% of programs and community locations were used by 7% of programs. All students are served in 37% of programs, while 64% of programs served specific groups such as: migrant, ESOL, low SES, or low academic students. Analysis of school size indicated that 48% (13) of small, 29% (13) of medium, and 36% (12) of large schools served all students. Specific subgroups were served by 52% (14) of small schools. However, 71% (32) of medium and 63% (20) of large schools served specific subgroups.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Program Prevalence*

| Variable             | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Time                 |           |         |
| Before               | 12        | 11.5    |
| After                | 97        | 93.3    |
| Weekend              | 14        | 13.5    |
| Summer               | 38        | 36.5    |
| Location             |           |         |
| School Facilities    | 104       | 100     |
| Community Facilities | 7         | 6.7     |
| Students Served      |           |         |
| All Students         | 38        | 36.5    |
| Other                | 66        | 63.5    |

A majority of schools (93%) offered extended learning programs during after school hours; however, small schools tended to be the most diverse with 22% (6) of schools offering before school programs and 48% (13) offering summer programs. School facilities were the obvious choice with 100% of schools using their facilities to operate a program. Almost half of small schools (48%) served all students, while medium (71%) and large (63%) schools tended to focus on meeting the needs of specific subgroups.

*Research Question 2*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size?

Responses to survey items 6 through 9 addressed how schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in teacher quality, program focus, and program size. This information is described in Table 3. Examination of total percentages of schools that operated extended learning programs indicated that 100% of schools utilize certified teachers to conduct their extended learning program. Paraprofessionals or support staff were used by 50% of schools to serve students in their extended learning program. Further inspection by school size indicated that 63% (17) of small, 47% (21) of medium, and 44% (14) of large schools utilized paraprofessional or support staff. Community volunteers were utilized by 10% of programs. Of schools utilizing community volunteers, 19% (5) were small, 9% (4) were medium, and 3% (1) were large. Parents were used by one medium-sized school. Student remediation was offered in 93% of programs. Further examination by school size indicated that 93% (25) of small, 96% (43) of medium, and 91% (29) of large schools offered student remediation as part of their extended learning program. Enrichment activities were offered by 48% of programs. While 48% (13) of small, 49% (22) of medium, and 47% (15) of large schools offered enrichment activities. Homework was considered a focus in 33% of programs. Of programs focused on homework, 41% (11) were small, 13% (13) were medium, and 33% (10) were large. Programs ranging from 0-50 students were utilized by 21% of schools, 51-100 students by 51%, 101-150 students by 17%, 151-200 students by 5%, and more than 200 students by 6% of schools. Programs ranging from 0-50 students consisted of

26% (7) small, 22% (10) medium, and 16% (5) large schools. Programs ranging from 51-100 consisted of 48% (13) small, 58% (26) medium, and 44% (14) large schools. Results indicated that 15% (4) of small, 16% (7) of medium, and 16% (7) of large schools utilized programs with 101-150 students. Programs with 151-200 students consisted of 4% (1) small, 2% (1) medium, and 9% (1) large. Of schools with programs larger than 200 students, 7% (2) were small, 2% (1) were medium, and 9% (3) were large. A school administrator directed 50% of extended learning programs, while another member of the school staff directed the other 50%. Further examination indicated that 59% (16) of small, 56% (25) of medium, and 34% (11) of large schools utilized a school administrator to direct their extended learning program, while 40% (11) of small, 44% (20) of medium, and 66% (21) of large schools used another member of the school staff.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Characteristics*

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|                           | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Teacher Quality</b>    |           |         |
| Certified Teachers        | 104       | 100     |
| Para-pros / Support Staff | 52        | 50.0    |
| Parents                   | 1         | 1.0     |
| Community Volunteers      | 10        | 9.6     |
| <b>Program Focus</b>      |           |         |
| Student Remediation       | 97        | 93.3    |
| Homework                  | 34        | 32.7    |
| Enrichment Activities     | 50        | 48.1    |
| Other                     | 10        | 9.6     |
| <b>Program Size</b>       |           |         |
| 0-50 Students             | 22        | 21.2    |
| 51-100 Students           | 53        | 51.0    |
| 101-150 Students          | 18        | 17.3    |
| 151-200 Students          | 5         | 4.8     |
| More than 200 Students    | 6         | 5.8     |
| <b>Director</b>           |           |         |
| Administrator             | 52        | 50.0    |
| Other Person              | 52        | 50.0    |

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A comparison of results indicated that a high number of small schools (63%) tended to use paraprofessionals or support staff. Small schools (19%) were more inclined to use community volunteers in their programs. All schools tended to focus on remediation and enrichment as key features of their extended learning program. Interestingly, a higher percentage of small (41%) and large (31%) schools indicated homework as a focus of their program. A majority of schools (51%) served between 51-100 students; however, small schools (7%) and large schools (9%) had the greatest number of programs serving more than 200 students. Further analysis of program directors indicated that 66% (21) of large schools utilized someone other than the school administrator as the program director.

### *Research Question 3*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding?

Responses to survey item 10 addressed how small, medium, and large schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding. This information is described in Table 4. Examination of total percentages of schools that operated extended learning programs indicated that 33% of schools were funded through local monies, 65% of schools utilized federal funding, 4% of schools used private funding, and 18% of schools utilized *other* funding sources. Further examination by school size indicated that 22% (6) of small, 22% (10) of medium, and 56% (18) of large schools utilized local funding. Total percentages by school size indicated that 59% (16) of small, 69% (31) of medium, and 66% (21) of large schools used federal funding. Private funds were utilized by 7% (2) of small schools, while only 2% (1) of medium and 3% (1) of



large schools used this form of funding. Results indicated that 30% (8) of small schools, 16% (7) of medium schools, and 13% (4) of large schools used *other* funding sources.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Structure of Funding*

| Source  | School Size % |        |       |
|---------|---------------|--------|-------|
|         | Small         | Medium | Large |
| Local   | 22.2          | 22.2   | 56.3  |
| Federal | 59.3          | 68.9   | 65.6  |
| Private | 7.4           | 2.2    | 3.1   |
| Other   | 29.6          | 15.6   | 12.5  |

Analysis of funding structure indicated that federal funding (65%) was the primary source of monies used by schools to support extended learning programs across Georgia. Medium (69%) and large (66%) schools were able to secure a larger quantity federal funding than small (59%) schools. Overwhelmingly, larger schools (56%) tended to use more local funds to support their programs.

*Research Question 4*

What are principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary extended learning programs?

Responses to survey items 11 and 12 addressed principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary school extended learning programs and reasons for schools not utilizing a program. The results of the open-ended survey questions were grouped according to theme. Meeting the academic needs of students, small group, enrichment, mathematics, and increase learning time were the recurring themes

associated with principal responses. Of the 112 schools responding that utilized an extended learning program, 83% cited meeting the academic needs of students as a benefit of their program. Academic needs included remediation, tutoring, closing the achievement gap, and improving test scores. One principal noted that the program “provides students who need remediation an opportunity to close gaps in particular content,” while another principal stated extended learning programs “provide additional remediation for students that are struggling in their core academics.” Mathematics or reading was considered a program focus by 19% of respondents. Extended learning programs provide an opportunity to remediate students’ deficits in the areas of reading and math,” noted a principal. Enrichment activities were considered a benefit by 15% of respondents. One principal stated, “the extended learning program provides social opportunities and exposure.” Principals cited small group (13%) and extended time with students (11%) as a benefit of extended learning programs.

Of the 41 schools responding that did not utilize an extended learning program, 49% cited funding as the reason for their school not utilizing a program. An additional 7% of principals cited transportation issues as a factor in not utilizing an extended learning program. One principal stated “our community struggles with transportation needs,” while another noted, “if transportation was not offered, students would not attend.” Of principals not utilizing an extended learning program, 37% did not indicate a reason for not having a program.

### *Research Question 5*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not?

### *Null Hypothesis 5*

There is no statistically significant difference in mean pass rates between schools that implement extended learning programs and those that do not.

### *Research Question 6*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools that implement an extended learning program?

### *Null Hypothesis 6*

There is no statistically significant difference in the mean pass rates among small, medium, and large schools.

A 2 (extended learning program implementation) X 3 (school size) ANOVA was used to address Research questions 5 and 6. Effect size estimates were calculated using partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ). Homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test, which suggested samples met the criterion for the assumption of equal variances,  $F(5,147) = 1.52, p = .18$ . I utilized the factorial ANOVA to analyze the interaction between extended learning program status and school size. Results indicated a non-significant interaction effect between extended learning program status and school size on third-grade mathematics CRCT scores,  $F(2,147) = 0.61, p = .54, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . No

statistical significance was found for the effect of extended learning program status and mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percent,  $F(1,147) = 0.01, p = .92, \eta_p^2 < .001$ .

Finally, the factorial also allowed me to examine the effect of school size on mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percent. Results indicated there was a non-significant main effect of school size on mean third-grade mathematics CRCT scores,  $F(2,147) = 1.08, p = 0.34, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . Descriptive statistics were used to compare the mean pass rate of schools utilizing a program with those that did not and compare the mean pass rate based on school size. This information can be found in Table 5. Further examination indicated that mean pass rate was similar based on school size.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for School Size and Program Status*

| Program Status | School Size |           |          |           |          |           |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                | Small       |           | Medium   |           | Large    |           |
|                | <i>M</i>    | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Program        | 78.1        | 17.1      | 78.7     | 14.6      | 79.96    | 12.1      |
| No Program     | 73.7        | 15.7      | 80.1     | 18.1      | 83.5     | 6.6       |

### Summary

This chapter reported procedures and results of this study. Data analysis and discussion of outcomes were proposed for each research question. Research Questions 1 and 2 used descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation to determine how extended learning programs were utilized and how schools that utilize extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size. Findings of this study indicated that small, medium, and large schools utilizing an extended learning program were mostly

similar in teacher quality, program focus, and program size. The only differences found were a majority of large schools (66%) utilized non-administrative personnel as program directors.

Research Question 3 investigated how small, medium, and large schools compare in structure of funding for extended learning programs. Findings of this study indicated that small, medium, and large schools utilizing an extended learning program were similar in structure of funding. The only major difference was the use of local funds by large (56%), medium (22%), and small (22%) schools. Research Question 4 investigated principal perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. Meeting the academic needs of students was cited as a benefit by a majority (83%) of principals utilizing an extended learning program. Of schools not utilizing an extended learning program, 49% cited funding as the reason for not conducting a program.

Research Question 5 investigated mean third-grade mathematics pass rates between schools that utilized an extended learning program and those that do not, while Research Question 6, compared the mean pass rate between small, medium, and large schools that utilized an extended learning program. Results indicated no significant difference in pass rates was found for either main effect.

Conclusions, implications of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter 5. Following Chapter 5 is a list of references and appendices.

## Chapter V

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Educational reform and the role of the federal government plays in education has been a topic of conversation for many years. In the early 1980s, *A Nation at Risk* brought education to the forefront by identifying problems within public education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). The findings of *A Nation at Risk* altered the way students were taught (Hunt, 1996). These changes were overshadowed by the implementation of NCLB in the early 2000s by changing school accountability through standardized testing (No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). Recently, Common Core Curriculum has become the newest effort to reform education and increase student achievement (Mathis, 2010).

Although our nation serves as a leader throughout the world, the United States no longer thrives as the dominant educational superpower (Hanushek, 2012). In 2011, President Obama stated that education has now become essential for future success (Obama, 2011, May 27). The increased focus on improving student achievement and the importance of education for a child's future has left schools searching for new ways to improve education.

One approach for improving student success at the federal, state, and local level has been with extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2014a; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Under NCLB, a renewed focus was placed on out-of-

school time as a means for improving academic achievement (Chatterji et al., 2006; Penuel & McGhee, 2010). These programs offer high quality education through a variety of activities during after school hours and are designed to meet the needs of students in the local community (Thirteen, 2015). Extended learning programs can provide academic assistance and enrichment, improve social skills, provide a safe learning environment, and reduce school absences and behavior problems (Afterschool Alliance & MetLife Foundation, 2011; Harris et al., 2011; Lauver, 2004, July; Malone, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2002a).

Extended learning programs began with the simple intention of providing a safe place for children (Halpern, 2002). Although many early programs were developed with a religious mindset, over time the programs developed academic expectations. The role of extended learning programs evolved due to several factors: (a) changes in workforce, (b) neighborhood changes and self-care of children, and (c) social and political influences (Halpern, 2002; Mahoney, 2009; Schwendiman, 1999; Seppanen, 1993).

As the need for child labor decreased in the late 1800s due to the emergence of an urban society and the introduction of compulsory education laws, extended learning programs were created for children during after school hours (Halpern, 2002; Katz, 1976; Mahoney, 2009). Many of the first extended learning programs were run by charities to provide childcare for immigrant families and a safe environment for troubled youth (Seligson, 1983; Seppanen, 1993). Education became a priority among parents and many required children to attend school through the eighth grade (Halpern, 2002; Katz, 1976). In the 1920s and 30s, professionals in education established new policies and pushed a new progressive stance to education (Seppanen, 1993). Extended learning programs

began to expand beyond basic childcare to providing educational opportunities outside the regular school day (Halpern, 2002).

As rural families began migrating towards urban areas, seeking a better way of life, many women began entering the workforce creating a need for afterschool care (Mahoney, 2009). An increase in single-parent homes and mothers entering the workforce led to a lack of supervision for children known as *latchkey kids* (Halpern, 2002; Mahoney, 2009; Seppanen, 1993). The migration of families to urban areas led to overcrowding as children were forced to find new places to gather and socialize (Halpern, 2002). As children used the streets as an escape for the tight living quarters, the increase in automobile use created a dangerous situation (Halpern, 2002).

The Afterschool Alliance (2009b) indicated that over 15 million children are without adult supervision during afterschool hours. In Georgia, almost 450,00 children are unsupervised each day after school (Afterschool Alliance, 2009a). The U.S. Department of Justice stated that juvenile crime peaks during non-school hours (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010). The lack of adult supervision creates an increase risk for children to be involved in substance abuse, gang activity, and other illegal activities (Afterschool Alliance, 2009b).

The role of government in education has been a debated topic for many years (Mahoney, 2009). During the Great Depression, the federal government helped create jobs by funding extended learning programs (Schwendiman, 1999). As the United States entered World War II, the government once again increased funding for extended learning programs because of the number of women entering the workforce



(Schwendiman, 1999). Seppanen (1993) reported that close to 95% (over 3000) of all extended learning programs were funded by the federal government during World War II.

The *Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1971* could have provided the right to quality childcare for all children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Unfortunately, the legislation was vetoed by President Nixon (Mahoney, 2009). Childcare remained a political topic through the 1980s, however no major increases to funding were established (Mahoney, 2009). In the 1990s, schools began using extended learning programs as a method for improving student achievement (Mahoney, 2009). The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC legislation initiated by President Clinton, later reauthorized by President Bush under NCLB, established funding for extended learning programs to be used as a tool for improving education (Mahoney, 2009).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) sought to assess the quality of education in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). The results of the report, *A Nation at Risk*, received national attention and changed the focus of education in America (Gardner, 1983). The report indicated that students did not possess *higher order* thinking skills and changed the focus from the quantity of courses students took to the quality of the curriculum taught (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The report suggested a more effective use of class time, increasing the school day, or extending the school year would increase student achievement. The commission further recommended that educators and elected officials be held responsible for providing leadership in education and the fiscal support necessary to improve education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

The Even Start Family Literacy program established in 1998, provided grants to support family literacy projects for low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The program, developed as an attempt to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, provided funding to private and public entities to improve literacy skills in adults and children in low-income families (Iowa Department of Education, 2014; St. Pierre et al., 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). By including adults, the program sought to empower parents to become active stakeholders in their child's education (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

*Goals 2000: The Educate America* was signed into law under President Clinton as a way to combat the mediocrity towards education in the United States (Heise, 1994). The eight standards developed under this legislation were to be met by the year 2000 and encouraged a commitment from states and local communities to improve education (National Center for Home Education, 2014, September; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). President Clinton recognized our students were lagging behind students of other countries and initiated *Goals 2000* as a way to create a renewed focus towards education reform (Heise, 1994). The ambitious goals set forth in the legislation became a catalyst for educational reform at the local, state, and federal level (Campbell, 2003).

The *No Child Left Behind Act* was developed to strengthen the objectives set forth by *Goals 2000* through assessments and school accountability (Kress et al., 2011). The 2001 legislation was signed into law by President George W. Bush and is regarded as one of the most significant pieces of educational legislation in generations (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). The notation that every child can learn drew overwhelming support from across the country for the legislation (Florida Department of Education,

2015). Under the NCLB, schools were required to annually report test scores so parents could make the best possible choices regarding their child's education (Aske et al., 2013). The data-driven approach to educational reform and school accountability, established under NCLB, was developed to create competition among schools and theoretically improve student achievement (Aske et al., 2013).

Extended learning programs have existed for many years and can be found in many different forms (Chatterji et al., 2006). However, NCLB helped bring extended learning programs to the forefront, through 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, as a tool for meeting the individual needs of learners and improving low-performing schools (Chatterji et al., 2006). Extended learning programs can vary in focus, philosophy, structure of programming, and when they are conducted (before, after, weekend, or summer) (Malone, 2007; Shumow, 2001). Some extended learning programs have seen increases in academic achievement, while others have had an effect on increasing student achievement (Dynarski et al., 2004).

Dynarski et al. (2004) conducted a 2-year study of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC extended learning programs, which found that elementary students' reading test scores or grades were not affected by program participation. The researchers found that students attending the program felt safer during after school hours while attending a program and those parents were more likely to attend school-sponsored events if their child participated in a program. Vandell et al. (2007) found that regular participation in high-quality extended learning programs can increase standardized test scores, improve work habits, and reduce behavior problems among disadvantaged students. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study of 35 high-quality extended learning programs and found that some

students increased their scores up to 20 percentile points on standardized math tests. A 2-year study of the Communities Organizing Resources of Advanced Learning (CORAL) found that program participation improved students attitudes towards reading and increased standardized test scores (Arbreton et al., 2008). In a 2-year study of the AfterZone extended learning program, researchers saw no improvements in student school attendance and only slight improvements in math grades when compared to students that did not attend the program (Kauh, 2011). The Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS) conducted a study of 78 extended learning programs comparing program features and youth outcomes (B. M. Miller, 2005). The study indicated that staff background and training are keys to program quality. The study also indicated that high quality programs were found to have a low student to teacher ratio. However, the study indicated that many extended learning programs lack rigorous activities that provide long-term student engagement.

### Purpose

The importance of education continues to grow and some students need extra time and help beyond the regular school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2014a). According to Soehner and Ryan (2011), principals play a fundamental role in creating a successful school and ensuring student achievement. Principals and administrators are continually searching for new ways to improve student success. Continued research could provide valuable insight for the planning, implementation, and running of extended learning programs. A study conducted throughout the state of Georgia could provide knowledge to principals of the potential barriers that currently exist when implementing an extended learning program.

The purpose of this study was to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large public elementary schools in Georgia. The researcher also sought to identify principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. Some data and literature does exist comparing the effects of extended learning programs on student achievement, however this study provides valuable information, at the state level, relating to the characteristics and benefits of extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools. This study compared third-grade mathematics CRCT mean pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that did not. The researcher sought to also compare this relationship between small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools.

#### Overview of Study

Accessible public elementary principals serving third-grade students throughout the state of Georgia were invited to respond to a 12-item researcher-created survey, comprised of dichotomous, multiple response, and open-ended questions. In this study, the researcher examined the prevalence of extended learning programs, characteristics of extended learning programs, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large schools utilizing extended learning programs. The researcher also examined principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. The collected data, categorized based on extended learning program participation (yes/no) and school size (small, medium, or large), were compared with third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rates from the 2013-2014 school year for each school responding to the survey. School size was determined using a method utilized by the Illinois Department

of Education. Schools in the top 25% of enrollment or greater than 760 students were considered large, between 474 and 759 students or the middle 50% were considered medium, and the lower 25% or less than 474 students considered small (Durflinger & Haeffele, 2011).

The survey was disseminated to 459 accessible principals in school districts that do not utilize a local IRB policy. Approximately 33% or 153 of the target population completed the survey. Of the respondents, 112 (24%) utilized an extended learning program, while 41 (9%) did not. Respondents were adequately represented by school size based on the method used to determine school size, with 26% being small from schools, 48% medium schools, and 26% represented large schools. Mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rate data for this study were obtained from the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) school report card for the 2013-2014 school year.

The researcher, utilizing a causal-comparative research design, examined the effects of extended learning program status on mean third-grade mathematics student achievement. The 12-item survey consisted of two dichotomous that determined program status. Eight multiple response questions were used to determine the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for schools utilizing extended learning programs. Finally, two open-ended questions were used to investigate principals' perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs.

The quantitative data were compiled and analyzed to determine if the mean mathematics pass rate of schools utilizing an extended learning program was compared with the mean mathematics pass rate of schools that did not utilize a program. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the percentage of small,

medium, and large schools that utilize an extended learning program. Descriptive measures were also used to determine teacher quality, program focus, program size, and structure of funding for schools utilizing an extended learning program. A (2 x 3) factorial ANOVA was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference, at the 0.05 level, between the mean third-grade CRCT mathematics pass rate between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that do not. The factorial ANOVA also compared school size and mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rates, to determine if a statistically significance existed, at the 0.05 level. Effect size estimates were computed for each factor using omega squared ( $\omega^2$ ). Data collected from the open-ended questions were analyzed and grouped according to theme to determine any trends in the data.

#### Research Questions

The study was guided by six research questions:

##### *Research Question 1*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilize extended learning programs?

##### *Research Question 2*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size?

##### *Research Question 3*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding?

##### *Research Question 4*

What are principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary extended learning programs?

*Research Question 5*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not?

*Research Question 6*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools that implement an extended learning program?

Summary of Findings

*Research Question 1*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilize extended learning programs?

Survey items three through five were used to address Research Question 1. The purpose of the research question was to determine how schools utilize (time, location, students served) extended learning programs. Descriptive statistics were used to determine total percentages. Results indicated that 93% of schools offered programs during after school time. This was followed by summer (37%), weekend (13%), and before school (12%). A surprisingly lower number of extended learning programs are offered during the summer even though a majority of parents indicate that the summer is the hardest time to find productive activities for their children (Duffett & Johnson, 2004). A national study conducted by the Afterschool Alliance (2012c) indicated that 44% of



extended learning programs offer services during holidays or intersession. The study further noted that 35% of programs are offered during before school hours and 19% are open on weekends. No studies were found comparing school size and extended learning programs.

Large schools (97%) reported the highest degree of frequency (31) offering programs during after school hours, while medium (93%) and small (89%) followed in succession. Parsad and Lewis (2009) indicated that 56% of extended learning programs were located on school property. Results from this study indicated that 37% of programs were open to all students, while 64% of programs were only open to a specific subgroup (i.e. migrant, ESOL, low socio-economic status, or low academic students). Afterschool Alliance (2012c) reported that 68% of students participating in extended learning programs qualify for free or reduced lunch, 16% of participants have special needs, and 14% are Limited English Proficient (ELP). Duffett and Johnson (2004) found that low-income (67%) and minority (61%) are more likely to want their children to participate in extended learning programs.

### *Research Question 2*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size?

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to determine how small, medium, and large schools compare on teacher quality, program focus, and program size. Responses to survey items 6 through 9 were used to address this question. In assessing the descriptive statistics, 100% of respondents operating an extended learning program

utilized certified teachers to serve students in their program, while 50% of schools used paraprofessionals or support staff. Small schools (67%) utilized paraprofessionals or support staff most often, while medium (47%) and large (44%) followed in succession. Miller (2005) found that the use of certified teachers is an indicator of a high quality extended learning program. Huang et al. (2011) in support of Miller stated that well qualified staff members are needed to maintain the quality of an extended learning program. Huang et al. (2011) found only 61% of programs utilized a certified staff member, while 88% used paraprofessionals.

Nearly half of all schools offered enrichment programs. The Afterschool Alliance (2012c) indicated that 85% of extended learning programs offer some form of non-academic enrichment activity. Only one medium sized school indicated they used parents for their program. Small (93%), medium (96%), and large (91%) schools offered remediation services during their extended learning program. Of the 33% of programs that focused on homework, 41% (11) were small, 13% (13) were medium, and 31% (10) were large. Huang et al. (2011) found that a high percentage (92%) of extended learning programs offered remediation services. The Afterschool Alliance (2012c) reported that 92% of extended learning programs offer remediation type activities.

Over half of schools in this study (51%) served between 51 and 100 students. Examination of results indicated that a school administrator directs about 50% of programs, while the other programs used another school staff member. Large schools (66%) were most likely to use a non-administrator while small schools (59%) were most likely to use an administrator to direct their program. Huang et al. (2011), found that

program directors (81%) are much more likely to employ a collaborative approach rather than a top-down (13%) management style.

### *Research Question 3*

How do small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools utilizing extended learning programs compare in structure of funding?

The third research question was used to determine how the structure of funding compares among small, medium, and large schools utilizing an extended learning program. Total percentages gathered from survey item 10 indicated that 65% of all schools utilized federal funding to support their program, followed by local funds (33%), other funding sources (18%), and private funds (4%). Further analysis indicated that 56% (18) of large schools utilized local funds, while only 22% of small (6) and medium (10) schools used local monies.

The volatility of today's economic situation has created funding issues within extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2012c). Parsad and Lewis (2009) found that 46% of public elementary schools reported that their students attended fee-based extended learning programs. Grossman, Lind, Hayes, McMaken, and Gersick (2009) found that extended learning programs often relied on three to five sources of funding with a balance of public and private sources. According to the Afterschool Alliance (2014, May), the current funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC's in Georgia is just over 38 million dollars, however if fully funded Georgia would receive over 83 million dollars. Lind, Relave, Deich, Grossman, and Gersick (2006) indicated that it costs between \$449 and \$7,000 per student to run an extended learning program. The study indicated that cost is heavily dependent upon program characteristics and program scale.

#### *Research Question 4*

What are principal perceptions of the benefits of Georgia public elementary extended learning programs?

The purpose of Research Question 4 was to ascertain principal perceptions of the benefits of extended learning programs. Results of survey items 11 and 12 were grouped according to theme to determine trends in the data. Meeting the academic needs of students was cited as a benefit by 83% of the 112 respondents that utilized an extended learning program. Remediation, tutoring, closing the achievement gap, and improving test scores were considered as student academic needs. Program focus of mathematics or reading was considered a benefit by 19% of respondents. Huang et al. (2011) found that 81% of survey respondents indicated mathematics activities were incorporated in their extended learning program. Enrichment activities were considered a benefit by 15% of principals that utilized an extended learning program. Respondents also indicated that small group (13%) and extended time with students (11%) were benefits of their programs. Miller (2005) indicated that a low student to teacher ratio as an attribute of high quality extended learning programs.

Of the 41 schools responding that did not utilize an extended learning program, 37% did not indicate a reason for not having a program. However, 49% of respondents not utilizing a program cited funding as the greatest barrier preventing them from conducting an extended learning program. An additional 7% of respondents cited transportation as a factor that prevented them from utilizing an extended learning program. Parsad and Lewis (2009) support principal claims of transportation being an

issue for extended learning programs and their study indicated that transportation was found to be a major barrier to conducting an extended learning program.

*Research Question 5*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, between schools that implement an extended learning program and those that do not?

*Research Question 6*

Is there a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rates, as measured by the Georgia CRCT, among small, medium, and large Georgia public elementary schools that implement an extended learning program?

The purpose of Research Question 5 was to determine if a statistically significant difference in mean third-grade mathematics pass rate existed between schools that implemented an extended learning program and those that did not. Research Question 6 attempted to compare the same mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rate in determining if a statistically significant difference existed based upon school size (small, medium, or large). A 2 (extended learning program implementation) X 3 (school size) ANOVA was used to address Research Questions 5 and 6. Effect size estimates were calculated using partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ). Homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test which Levene's suggested samples met the criteria for assumption of equal variances,  $F(5,147) = 1.52, p = .18$ . Results indicated a non-significant interaction effect between extended learning program status and school size on third-grade mathematics CRCT scores,  $F(2,147) = 0.61, p = .54, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . No statistical significance was found between extended learning program status and mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass

percent,  $F(1,147) = 0.01, p = .92, \eta_p^2 < .001$ . Results also indicated there was a non-significant main effect of school size on mean third-grade mathematics CRCT scores,  $F(2,147) = 1.08, p = 0.34, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . Descriptive statistics indicated that the mean pass rate between schools that implemented a program ( $M = 78.83, SD = 14.55$ ) and those that did not ( $M = 79.10, SD = 15.94$ ) were relatively close.

Extended learning program studies have produced mixed results. Dynarski et al. (2004) found that extended learning programs did not improve test score or class grades in mathematics or language arts. Huang et al. (2011) conducted a control group study that indicated extended learning program participation had no effect on students' academic achievement. However, studies conducted by Vandell et al. (2007) and Arbretton et al. (2008) indicated that extended learning programs have a positive effect on student academic achievement and can improve standardized mathematics test scores.

### Conclusions

This research study was designed to determine and describe the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs in small, medium, and large, public elementary schools in Georgia. The researcher utilized mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percent to determine if program utilization or school size had an effect on student achievement. The study also sought to determine principals' perception of the benefits of extended learning programs.

Findings indicated, extended learning programs had no effect on mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass percent. Schools that conducted an extended learning program, mean pass rate was not statistically significant from schools that did not utilize an extended learning program. Huang et al. (2011) indicated that extended learning program

participation has no effect on improving standardized test scores. Dynarski et al. (2004) concluded that students participating in extended learning programs did not improve classroom grades in mathematics or language arts.

Responses from open-ended questions indicated that principals, conducting extended learning programs, perceive these programs as beneficial to their students in many ways. One principal stated that extended learning programs “provide students with additional assistance in math and reading,” another principal noted their program is “individualized to the needs of the students.” Many principals indicated that extended learning programs provide students with small group learning opportunities, extra instructional time, and enrichment opportunities. Principals not currently utilizing an extended learning program overwhelmingly cited funding as their biggest constraint to beginning a program. The findings of this study support previous studies in that funding is a major issue for extended learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2012c, 2014, May; Duffett & Johnson, 2004). According to the Afterschool Alliance (2014, May), almost 450,000 more students in Georgia could be utilizing extended learning programs if a program was available to them.

Extended learning programs exist throughout the country to meet the needs of students and the communities in which they serve (Malone, 2007). These programs can greatly vary in focus, philosophy, and structure of programming (Shumow, 2001). Results of the study indicate that funding plays a major role in the ability of a school to support an extended learning program. School systems often turn to federally funded programs and grants to cover expenses. The need for funding can often come at the cost of control. As with many government-funded projects, strict oversight and regulations

are attached. The federal government places strict stipulations on extended learning programs, which can hinder a program from meeting the true needs of students.

Although many extended learning programs studies have indicated these programs can increase academic achievement and reduce negative discipline behaviors during the regular school day, others have indicated that extended learning programs had no effect on student achievement (Dynarski et al., 2004). Results showed that participation in extended learning does not raise academic achievement in mathematics. However, principals indicated that extended learning programs provide positive benefits to students by meeting individual academic needs. One principal stated that extended learning programs “provide small group, individualized attention to students that need the most help.” Responses of principals not currently utilizing a program suggest they would like to use a program if certain barriers did not exist. One principal indicated that “lack of funds” was the determining factor in not utilizing an extended learning program, and another principal stated “we can’t afford to provide transportation for the children.”

Extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools did not appear fundamentally different than extended learning programs in other states, with regard to the prevalence, characteristics, and structure of funding. Extended learning programs in Georgia elementary schools were operated before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer. Studies comparing school size and extended learning utilization were not found. Georgia programs were similar to other programs across the country, as report by Parsad and Lewis (2009) and Dynarski et al. (2004), in that they provided extended learning programs that provided enrichment activities, certified teachers, transportation for students, and a safe environment during out of school time.



Like other research on the effects of extended learning time programs on student achievement, the researcher found that extended learning programs in elementary schools across Georgia have no significant effect on student mathematics achievement. In a larger study involving eleven extended learning programs, Gao, Hallar, and Hartmann (2014) found that students attending extended learning programs did not have increased test scores when compared to students not attending a program. However, many other studies have shown extended learning programs provide a means to improve student achievement and behavior. Results from this study indicate that participation in an extended learning program does not improve student achievement on standardized tests. Many factors could account for extended learning programs across Georgia not positively affecting student achievement. Huang and Dietel (2011) indicate that goal setting, leadership experience, staff experience, program alignment, and continual evaluation are key components of a high quality afterschool program. The researcher found that 50% of principals are not directly in charge of their schools extended learning program. The lack of direct oversight and leadership skills of the principal may have a direct effect on the quality of the extended learning program and could account for a lack of improvement in student achievement. Huang and Dietel (2011) found that leaders of high functioning programs had many years of experience with extended learning programs. Another factor influencing extended learning program success is a focus on improving lower performing students. Results of this study indicated that many schools offer programs to all students, however, a majority of programs cater to subgroups that do not perform as well as their peers. Less than 37% of programs served all students, while about 64% focused their program on a specific subgroup (migrant, low SES, ESOL, at risk, etc.). A

lack of improvement in standardized test scores by extended learning programs could be directly related to the students they serve. These *at risk* students, which accounted for about 64% of students served by programs responding to the survey, are generally perceived as needing more academic support (Hynes & Sanders, 2010). Dynarski et al. (2004) conducted a 2-year study that found extended learning programs had no significant impact on subgroup test scores or classroom grades.

A primary implication of the study's findings is that principals have a positive perception of extended learning programs and feel that they provide positive academic intervention for students. One principal indicated that his students received assistance with homework and were provided enrichment opportunities through an extended learning program. Other principals discussed how extended learning programs provide safe and supervised time during after school hours. As noted by The American Association of School Administrators (2005), school leaders are essential to ensuring extended learning program success. Huang and Dietel (2011) indicated that leadership was a key component of high quality extended learning programs and leaders of these programs articulate a clear mission, vision, and goals for the program. The positive perceptions toward extended learning programs found in this study are an important trait for ensuring program success. Diedrich, McElvain, and Kaufman (2005) indicated that principal support helps determine extended learning program success. The findings of this study are supported by Reisner, White, Russell, and Birmingham (2004), which indicated that principals (66%) felt that extended learning programs provide students with opportunities to improve basic skills and 95% of principals indicated programs provide opportunities for students not available during the regular school day. Many principals

perceived that extended learning programs provided a benefit in the areas of math and reading. Principals stated that student performance had increased in these subjects through remediation, homework help, and small group instruction provided by an extended learning program. Reisner et al. (2004) reported principals perceived students' math (24%) and reading (23%) skills improved when participating in an extended learning program. Although studies have shown mixed results pertaining to the improvement of student standardized test scores, principals perceive that extended learning programs provide benefits to students in many ways that are not measured through by standardized tests. Principals are able to see the interworking of their extended learning program on a daily basis. Although standardized test scores may not show improvements, principals are able to recognize the daily improvements and benefits that these types of programs can provide to meet the individual needs of students.

Another implication of the findings is that school size does not have an effect on extended learning program status or student achievement. Although no studies were found comparing school size, the results of this study did not find any differences in prevalence of programs, program characteristics, and structure of funding based upon school size. Principals planning to implement an extended learning program should focus on the needs of their school and community rather than a particular program characteristic.

Extended learning programs can be viewed as a powerful resource for principals looking for ways to improve student achievement. The benefits of extended learning programs may not be demonstrated through improvements in test scores. In this study, the researcher found that extended learning programs had no significant effect on student

test scores; however, one should not conclude from that results alone that extended learning programs do not affect mathematics achievement. Principals are on the front lines of their school each day and those surveyed in this study indicated that these types of programs are beneficial to their school. One must consider if program success is solely determined by standardized test score improvement and if a few additional hours of instructional time per week can affect student achievement.

#### Implications for Future Practice

Results from this study lead to the conclusion that principals perceive that extended learning programs can provide benefits for elementary school students. Principals felt that extended learning programs are providing positive benefits for students through remediation services, homework help, enrichment activities, and many other ways. Many other principals indicated they would like to offer a program if funding and transportation barriers did not exist. Extended learning programs do provide a safe time during non-school hours for students according to the principals surveyed in this study. Considering no statistical significance was found between extended learning program use and mean third-grade mathematics CRCT pass rates, schools utilizing a program may need to consider the rigor of the program's curriculum and ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the regular school day. Extended learning programs should be an expansion of the regular school day and activities should be adapted to meet the individual needs of students by reinforcing concepts learned during the regular school day. Planning and strong leadership accompanied with continual evaluation of the program are essential keys to ensuring a program is successful. A continued focus on

elementary aged students and how we can best meet their needs can create a positive affect on academic success for future generations of students.

Finally, principals, regardless of school size, planning to implement an extended learning program should recognize funding as the greatest barrier to program implementation. Miller (2005) indicated that utilizing certified teachers was an attribute of high quality extended learning programs. Ensuring properly qualified personnel can come at great financial cost. Although this study was unable to directly relate transportation issues to funding, principals in areas that lack public transportation must be aware of the need for transportation. This study provides a descriptive overview of funding sources, program prevalence, students served, teacher quality, program size, and program focus of extended learning programs in Georgia public elementary schools. Principals, when preparing to implement an extended learning program, could use the results of this study to inform decisions. The study gives principals an understanding of the benefits associated with extended learning programs. Although no literature currently exists, comparing extended learning programs and school size, this study provides insight into how small, medium, and large schools utilize these programs. This unique perspective gives principals an understanding of how comparative sized schools utilize extended learning programs. Principals and other school administrators could use the results of this study as a practical guide to understand the prevalence, program characteristics, and structure of funding for extended learning programs throughout the state of Georgia.

## Limitations of the Study

The present study is not without several limitations worth noting. In this study, the researcher was able to assess the effects of extended learning programs utilization on student mathematics achievement, but the study does not account for possible reasons for the outcomes. Quantitative designed studies require a large sample to provide statistical validity and generalization to the population. The small response group may not represent the opinion of the majority of principals throughout the state. The design of the survey instrument that was used in the study is limited to the extent that results could be applied to all public elementary extended learning programs in general. The types of questions and topics addressed by the survey limited the extent to which results may be applied to areas not covered by the study. Survey data collected through self-reporting may be inaccurate due to participant error or lack of knowledge. The study was limited to public elementary school principals in Georgia. In-depth data collection on the levels of student achievement in the programs was not attempted. Therefore, participants' level of effort to progress academically could not be assessed. Schools often target lower achieving students for placement in extended learning programs, this could account for the lack of significant effect programs have on mathematics achievement. The researcher did not examine the day-to-day operations of each individual extended learning program. How a program operates and the leadership within the program could significantly influence student achievement. Although principals perceive that extended learning programs provide benefits to students, the researcher could not be certain that extended learning programs increase student achievement.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Additional research is recommended to better understand the impact of extended learning programs on student achievement and provide a better understanding of the variables that impact extended learning program success. Particularly, research into specific program practices, criteria for student selection, student attendance in a program, student expectations, and program alignment with the regular school day may provide insight into how extended learning programs can best increase student achievement. Expanded research in this area would help to determine what factors are most influential for ensuring student success.

Future research could compare programs based on funding source. Many programs are funded through 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC provided through federal funding. Due to federal funding, these programs could have political influences affecting program success, as compared to locally funded programs. Future research could also explore extended learning programs in relation to community size and poverty to determine if a relationship exists. A study of this nature could help provide principals with insight as to what type of program would best fit their community.

Expanded research through a more comprehensive survey designed to collect detailed data may help determine why most programs serve 51-100 students regardless of school size, how students are selected for programs, or why schools do not utilize weekend programs more often. A qualitative component could be added to determine the attitudes and perspectives of students participating in an extended learning program. Teacher and parent perceptions may also be factors in determining the success of an extended learning program. Finally, a program evaluation of individual extended

learning programs could be conducted to compare students involved in a program with a control group. Students could be compared to see if students utilizing the extended program perform better on achievement tests.



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5D=3&field\_purpose\_tid%5B%5D=8&field\_purpose\_tid%5B%5D=33&field\_purpose\_tid%5B%5D=34&field\_purpose\_tid%5B%5D=35&field\_application\_deadline\_value%5Bvalue%5D%5Bdate%5D=&&keys=#sthash.dgXu3BlK.dpbs

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APPENDIX A:

Survey

## Extended Learning Programs Survey

Question 1. Did your school operate an extended learning program during the 2013-2014 school year?

- Yes
- No

Question 2. My school's extended learning program is open to third-grade students.

- Yes
- No

Question 3. My school's extended learning program is open to:

- All students
- Select students (i.e. migrant, ESOL, low SES, etc.) Please list.

\_\_\_\_\_

Question 4. My school operates an extended learning program: (Check all that apply)

- Before school
- After school
- On weekends
- During the summer

Question 5. My school operates an extended learning program utilizing: (Check all that apply)

- School facilities
- Community facilities
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 6. My school's extended learning program focuses on: (Check all that apply)

- Student remediation type activities
- Homework
- Enrichment activities
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 7. The following serve as staff members in my school's extended learning program: (Check all that apply)

- Certified teachers
- Para-pros or support staff
- Parents
- Community volunteers

Question 8. My school's extended learning program serves approximately:

- 0-50 students
- 51-100 students
- 101-150 students
- 151-200 students
- more than 200 students

Question 9. My school's extended learning program is directed by:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Other person \_\_\_\_\_

Question 10. My school's extended learning program is funded through: (Check all that apply)

- Local funds
- Federal funds
- Private funds
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 11. As the principal, please describe the main benefits of the extended learning program in your school. (i.e. utilized in an efficient manner, serves the needs of students in your school, etc.)

Question 12. Please describe why your school does not utilize an extended learning program.

APPENDIX B:  
Survey Use Approval



**From:** <Byars>, Kim <[kbyars@fjyped.org](mailto:kbyars@fjyped.org)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 30, 2014 at 1:55 PM  
**To:** Vincent Hamm <[vince.hamm@echols.k12.ga.us](mailto:vince.hamm@echols.k12.ga.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Ph.D. Dissertation

Hi Vince,  
Yes, you have the correct person. Please send me any questions you may have. You are also welcome to use my survey.  
Best wishes!  
Kim

On Mon, Jul 28, 2014 at 3:07 PM, Hamm, Vince  
<[vince.hamm@echols.k12.ga.us](mailto:vince.hamm@echols.k12.ga.us)> wrote:

Dr. Byars,

My name is Vince Hamm and I am currently working toward my doctrate degree at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. I came across a dissertation about after-school programs in Illinois elementary schools which I believe that you had written. I plan to conduct research about after-school programs and would like to have permission to use your dissertation survey. However, I would like to make sure that I am contacting the correct person. If this is your dissertation and would allow me to send a couple of simple questions I would greatly appreciate it.

Thanks in advance,

Vince Hamm

--

*Dr. Kimberly Byars  
Director of Special Education  
FJSPED #801*

APPENDIX C:  
International Review Board  
Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

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PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-03208-2015

INVESTIGATOR: Vincent Hamm

PROJECT TITLE: Assessing the Benefits of Extended Learning

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) 2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator ([irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu)) before continuing your research.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal:

NONE

If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) to ensure an updated record of your exemption.

---

Elizabeth W. Olphie      4/16/15  
Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator      Date

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.  
Please direct questions to [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) or 229-259-5045.

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Revised: 12.13.12

APPENDIX D:  
Participant Email

Dear Principal,

My name is Vincent Hamm and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology at Valdosta State University, in Valdosta, Georgia. I am in the process of completing my dissertation and request your help by completing a short (12-question) survey pertaining to extended learning programs (after, before, weekend, or summer school programs). The survey is designed to gain an understanding of the prevalence, characteristics, structure of funding, and principal perceptions of extended learning programs serving Georgia public elementary school students.

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey and helping me to complete my research. If you have any questions regarding the survey or study, please feel free to contact me at [vmhamm@valdosta.edu](mailto:vmhamm@valdosta.edu).

Sincerely,

Vincent M. Hamm

APPENDIX E:  
Participant Confidentiality Statement

## Participant Confidentiality Statement

You are being asked to participate in a research project, identifying principal perceptions of extended learning programs, being conducted by Vincent Hamm, a graduate student at Valdosta State University. This survey is NOT anonymous. Your email address will be used as an identifier for linkage to survey results for analysis. Your results will not be published and are only collected by the researcher for school identification. All survey results will be stored on a password-protected computer. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and certifies you are 18 or older.

This short survey is designed to gain an understanding of the prevalence, characteristics, structure of funding, and principal perceptions of extended learning programs serving Georgia public elementary school students. Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Vincent Hamm at 229-740-1932 or [vmhamm@valdosta.edu](mailto:vmhamm@valdosta.edu). This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu).