The Impact of High-Stakes Testing on Morale Levels of Middle School Teachers in Southeast Georgia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine teacher morale among middle school teachers with and without a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment based on content area and grade level. Teacher morale is significant because it has a major impact on student achievement. A descriptive research design using an abbreviated version of "*The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*" was employed to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyze the data.

The findings of this study included the following: First, teacher morale scores varied between the GMAS and No GMAS groups, with limited statistically significant findings; however, notable patterns emerged from the descriptive data. Second, significant differences were found in teacher morale among grade-level groups. Seventh-grade teachers scored significantly higher than teachers in grades six and eight. Third, while teacher morale scores differed across content areas, only limited significant results were found. Significant interaction effects between content areas and GMAS emerged in specific subjects, and descriptive data revealed meaningful patterns. Fourth, participating teachers demonstrated moderate to moderately high morale levels regardless of content area, grade level, or GMAS presence.

Because only limited evidence of significant differences was found regarding the direct impact of GMAS presence and content area on teacher morale, further research with a larger sample size is recommended. The implications of the study are discussed, and suggestions for future research are provided.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Problem

States and schools evaluate teacher and student performance using high-stakes testing data, which increases teacher stress levels (Collie et al., 2012). Many researchers found that stress negatively impacted teacher morale (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007). When teacher morale decreased, teacher job satisfaction declined, negatively impacting student achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016). Prior research also concluded that high-stakes testing altered instructional lessons and activities teachers planned (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Mcloughlin, 2023; Musoleno & White, 2010). High-stakes testing impacts teachers' mindsets, instructional practices, and schools significantly. Determining how stress, in relation to high-stakes testing, impacts the morale of American teachers deserves more attention.

When reviewing past research, prior researchers concluded that high-stakes testing impacted the job types, subject areas, and schools where teachers sought employment (Luleci & Coruk, 2018; Ng, 2006; Van Houtte, 2006). However, there is some discrepancy in how teacher morale differed based on job type, academic or vocational, or subject area taught. First, researchers lacked a consensus on what types of jobs and subject areas produced the highest levels of teacher morale. Researchers also disagreed on whether vocational or academic teachers had higher teacher morale. Research studies showed a significant difference between teacher morale levels of

vocational teachers and academic teachers, but there was no consensus on whether teaching academic classes or vocational classes had the most positive impact on teacher morale (Luleci & Coruk, 2018; Van Houtte, 2006). Luleci and Coruk (2018) determined that vocational teachers had higher morale than academic teachers. However, Van Houtte (2006) found that general school teachers' satisfaction levels were higher than those of technical or vocational school teachers. This lack of consensus demonstrated a need for further research on teacher morale levels among different types of teachers.

In my study, teacher morale levels in middle school teachers are investigated, a topic difficult to find in prior research. In most studies concerning teacher morale, researchers compared the morale levels of middle school teachers with those of elementary and high school teachers (Luleci & Coruk, 2018). Luleci and Coruk (2018) did not break down morale levels within the same schools to determine if there was a difference between teachers who taught in different grade levels or content areas. When looking for prior research, I had difficulty finding studies investigating teacher morale differences among teachers with an end-of-grade assessment and teachers who do not have an end-of-grade assessment. The stress teachers feel to make students pass the test could significantly impact their job satisfaction, their desire to stay in their current position, and their attitude concerning high-stakes testing. Expanding upon prior research and investigating how morale differs among teachers in different grade levels and subject areas could explain teacher stress and help administrators make informed decisions concerning teacher placement.

The stress high-stakes testing puts on teachers could significantly negatively impact teacher morale levels, creating a problem for all stakeholders (Carr, 2012). Low

teacher morale levels affect teachers, students, administrators, and schools. Abazaoglu and Atekin (2016) defined teacher morale as the satisfaction, support, and motivation teachers felt when doing their jobs. When teachers possess low morale levels, the learning environment suffers. Iqbal et al. (2016) found that teacher morale impacted student success because satisfied teachers worked harder and performed better than unsatisfied teachers. Teachers with low levels of teacher morale were also more likely to seek a transfer from their current position or leave the teaching profession. In a study conducted with 710 middle and high school teachers, only 75 percent of teachers felt satisfied with their jobs (Mertler, 2002). This high percentage of teachers unsatisfied with their current position supports the current teacher retention issue plaguing the profession. If teacher morale is low, retaining quality teachers becomes more difficult. When teacher retention suffers, student achievement can also be impacted. Schools with a higher teacher retention rate stimulated student achievement (Jones & Shindler, 2016). Better decisions can be made that positively impact teachers, students, and schools by better understanding how the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment impacts teacher morale, job satisfaction, and teachers' attitudes toward testing. This study can provide school leaders, policymakers, and educational researchers with data detailing how high-stakes testing impacts the morale levels of middle school teachers in different academic content areas and grade levels.

This study's focus encompasses how the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment impacts the morale levels of middle school teachers in Southeast Georgia. Prior research concerning the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is largely unavailable due to the specificity of the state standardized test and the short

implementation period. No Child Left Behind legislation has been thoroughly analyzed in prior research, but little research further investigates state accountability measures in the state of Georgia.

Problem Statement

This study focuses on the problems of teacher retention, morale, and the stress related to high-stakes testing. The issue of teacher retention related to teacher morale is worth studying because it impacts schools, directly impacting student achievement and instruction (Jones & Shindler, 2016). Teacher stress related to high-stakes testing is also relevant because most states use some accountability measures for students, teachers, and school performance. While school performance must be measured, using a state-mandated test can be problematic, especially for teachers (Collie et al., 2012). The stress placed on schools can be extended to teachers responsible for ensuring students pass their respective end-of-course assessments. This stress can be daunting for some teachers compared to teachers who do not have an end-of-grade high-stakes test for their content. The differences in the experiences of teachers with an end-of-grade assessment compared to those who do not have an end-of-grade assessment could help inform administrators of the importance of fostering high levels of teacher morale, especially for teachers with an end-of-grade assessment. While searching for prior research, I had difficulty finding any available data comparing teacher morale for teachers with an end-of-grade assessment with teachers who did not. Specifically, studying the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is worthwhile because the test is fairly new, and very little research has been conducted concerning the stress it places on teachers. Collecting teacher morale data

related to the Georgia Milestones could inform leaders of potential problems related to high-stakes testing and drive policy decisions in the future.

Purpose and Scope of Study

This study aims to examine teacher morale levels among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have one. Teacher morale is significant because it has a major impact on student achievement. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs work harder than teachers who are unsatisfied (Iqbal et al., 2016). If morale differences exist between teachers with an end-of-grade assessment and those who do not have an end-of-grade assessment, administrators could be more informed and make better decisions designed to alleviate teacher stress.

The study's scope includes factors that impact teacher morale, teacher accountability measures related to high-stakes testing, how high-stakes testing impacts instructional practices, and teachers' opinions on high-stakes testing. These factors were chosen because they contribute to the purpose of the study, which is to examine teacher morale differences among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. All these factors are discussed in greater detail in the literature review portion of the study. The scope of the study does not include an extensive history of high-stakes testing, how leadership styles impact teacher morale, or teacher pay for performance. Those topics have been examined in great detail in prior research and do not contribute to my current study.

Research Questions

The three research questions are designed to determine if significant differences exist between the independent variables in the study and the dependent variable of teacher morale. The independent variables for the study include the groups of teachers representing: (1) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels six, seven, and eight, and (3) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each independent variable group includes multiple levels (see Table 1). To determine differences in teacher morale levels, I examined each independent variable and its levels separately for each research question using a portion of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* (Bentley & Rempel, 1968).

For the study, the following questions are answered in relation to the described variables.

1. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?
2. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?

3. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies?

Research question one helps fulfill the purpose of the study by comparing teacher morale levels among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teacher morale data are collected from middle school teachers using a survey. The findings from this question help inform administrators of the differences in morale levels, if any exist, between middle school teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment include sixth-grade ELA and math teachers, seventh-grade ELA and math teachers, and eighth-grade teachers who teach ELA, math, science, or social studies. Teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment include sixth-grade science and social studies teachers, seventh-grade science and social studies teachers, and vocational teachers who teach subjects such as art, physical education, health, agriculture, or any other class that does not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from research question one, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Additionally, teachers who teach Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels

are excluded from the analysis, as it is difficult to determine whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

Research question two helps fulfill the study's purpose by comparing teacher morale levels among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels. In grades six and seven, students do not take a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in every academic content area. The eighth grade is the only middle school grade level where all four academic subjects currently have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, which may impact teacher stress and teacher morale as it relates to testing. In the sixth and seventh grades, ELA and math teachers are the only ones with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Again, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from research question two, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Because research question two also examines the impact of grade level, teachers who instruct multiple grade levels are excluded from the analysis, regardless of their content areas, to prevent overlapping effects related to grade level. Schools often emphasize students' Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment scores for promotion or retention decisions in the eighth grade, which may lead to morale differences among middle school grade levels.

Research question three helps fulfill the study's purpose by comparing teacher morale levels among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas. In middle school, English and math are tested in all three grade

levels, but science and social studies are only tested in the eighth grade. In 2020, the state of Georgia also eliminated the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment for social studies in grade five, making eighth grade the only point in a student's entire schooling experience where they take this assessment for social studies. However, in grade five, science is still tested using a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. The lack of testing for social studies and science could impact the emphasis and stress placed on these subjects, which may impact teacher morale levels. Because research question three focuses on the effect of academic content areas, non-academic content teachers are excluded. Non-academic content teachers include special education teachers, teachers in support positions, and any other teacher who does not teach academic content areas. Also, to avoid overlapping effects related to academic content areas, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from the analysis, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. In addition, teachers who teach Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels are excluded from the analysis, as it is challenging to determine whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Research question three can inform administrators of how the content area affects teacher stress levels.

Table 1

GMAS Assessment Matrix

Subject	Grade	Grade six	Grade seven	Grade eight
Academic Content	English	X	X	X
	Mathematics	X	X	X
	Science			X
	Social Studies			X
Non-Academic Content	Other Subjects			

Note. X means Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

Herzberg et al. (1959) Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory is used to explain statistically significant differences among subgroups for each research question. Teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment may experience different motivators and hygiene factors that impact overall teacher morale. Motivators make employees work harder, while hygiene factors can cause dissatisfaction when they are not present. For example, security is a hygiene factor that may cause dissatisfaction if it is not present in one's job. Teachers in subjects with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment may not possess the same job security as teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, due to high-stakes testing accountability measures, which could work to decrease teacher morale. Alternatively, achievement and responsibility are motivators that could impact teachers' morale levels. Teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment may experience more or less achievement than teachers without a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment may also have more responsibility placed on them. These motivators could significantly impact teacher morale if they are present in teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

Theoretical Framework

Concerning teacher morale, there are many theories that one could use. For this study, a theoretical construct has been chosen as the foundation for job satisfaction. The theory used to explain interactions between the variables in the proposed study is Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory. Herzberg's theory challenged the prevailing theory that salary was the most important motivator for

workers. The basic premise of Herzberg's theory is that positive influences and motivational interventions are beneficial for creating and maintaining an effective and satisfying work environment. The two factors Herzberg used in his theory included motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators work to make employees work harder and are found in the actual job. Examples of motivators include achievement, responsibility, and advancement. Adversely, hygiene factors are not found in the job itself but surround one's job. Hygiene factors do not positively contribute to job satisfaction but cause dissatisfaction if absent. Examples of hygiene factors include status, security, and company policies. While Herzberg's theory may be old, it is still considered paramount in job satisfaction, and it is used in most studies relating to teacher morale (Islam & Ali, 2013; Lester, 1990).

Figure 1

Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivator-Hygiene Theory

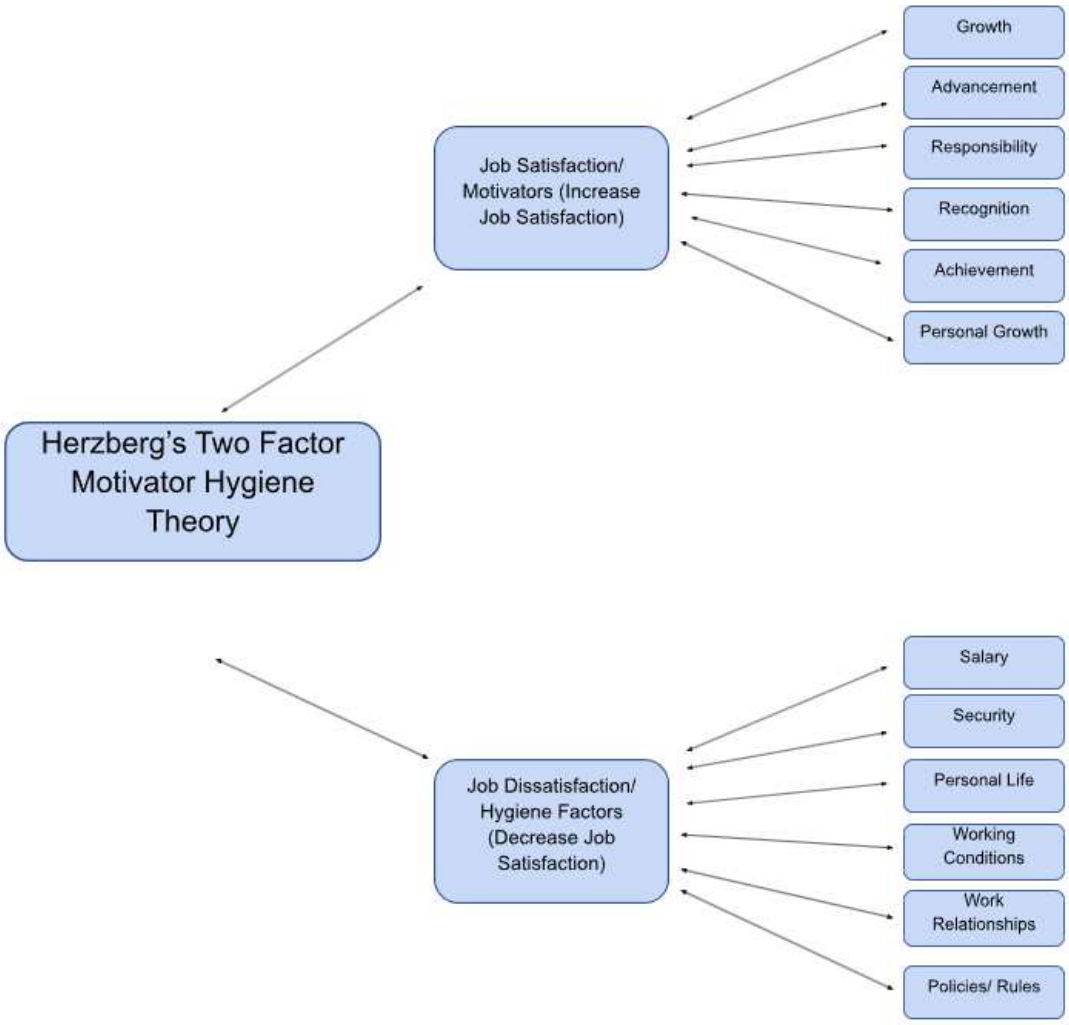


Figure 1 outlines motivators and hygiene factors that increase job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, directly impacting teacher morale. Motivator factors that increase job satisfaction when present include growth, advancement, responsibility, recognition, achievement, and personal growth. Hygiene factors that work to increase job dissatisfaction when not present include salary, security, personal life, working conditions, work relationships, and company policies/rules. Figure 1 is a visual

representation of conditions that cause job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, based on each factor's presence or absence.

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory is chosen because it simplifies the motivational process, an essential factor in job performance and satisfaction. The theory is also selected because the motivators and hygiene factors help explain differences that could exist between teachers within the study. The difference in teacher morale levels among teachers from different subgroups is measured for each research question. While many teachers experience some of the same motivators and hygiene factors, teachers in high-stakes tested subjects could have less security, which is a hygiene factor that increases job dissatisfaction. The stress placed on teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment could decrease job satisfaction due to the lack of job security if test scores are deemed unacceptable. Company policies or school rules that do not improve teacher stress could also impact hygiene factors and motivators. Teachers in high-stakes tested subjects may also experience motivators differently than teachers in non-high-stakes tested subjects. Teachers in high-stakes tested subjects could experience greater responsibility or achievement, which are both motivators that increase job satisfaction when present. The opportunity for advancement based on the subject matter one teaches could also serve as a motivator to increase job satisfaction. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory has been chosen because motivators and hygiene factors impact all independent variables in the study in different ways, which makes Herzberg's theory appropriate for the study. The independent variables for the study include the groups teachers represent: (1) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) Georgia

Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight), and (3) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each of the independent variable groups in the study experiences hygiene factors and motivators differently, which could impact teacher morale levels.

Significance of Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, high-stakes testing has become a staple in Georgia's schools. When looking at studies that involved the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, I found that most researchers attempted to measure how certain variables impacted student achievement on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (Blume et al., 2021; Lewis, 2022; Poole, 2020). Researchers attempted to use predictive measures such as the ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) test (Poole, 2020), evidence-based literacy instruction across middle school content areas (Blume et al., 2021), and Whiteness (Lewis, 2022) to determine success on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Researchers also attempted to determine if different instructional strategies, such as hip-hop-based instruction, impacted Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment achievement (Lutes et al., 2021). However, I could not locate research concerning the impact of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, specifically, on teachers' perceptions of their morale. This study does not focus on student achievement on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment but on how the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment impacts teacher morale levels among middle school teachers.

Results from this study can be used to help affect policies and legislation related to high-stakes testing in Georgia. By informing administrators and policymakers of the stress many teachers feel related to high-stakes testing, the hope is to influence decisions designed to alleviate teacher stress and improve teacher morale. Improving teacher morale and limiting teacher stress could positively impact teachers, schools, and students. Based on past research, high teacher morale is vital to school success (Akhtar et al., 2016). Secondly, this study extends the knowledge base of how high-stakes testing impacts the morale of Georgia teachers with and without an end-of-grade assessment, how teacher morale differs among teachers with and without an end-of-grade assessment in different middle school grade levels, and how teacher morale differs among teachers with and without an end-of-grade assessment in different academic content areas. The body of literature concerning teacher morale levels, specifically comparing those with and without an end-of-grade assessment in rural Georgia, is virtually non-existent.

This study is the first of its kind for southeast Georgia. The findings of this study shed light on a topic that has largely been ignored in favor of studies in other countries and other parts of the United States. When looking for peer-reviewed research pertaining to teacher morale, many studies have taken place in foreign countries such as Pakistan (Akhtar et al., 2016; Iqbal et al., 2016), Australia (Mackenzie, 2007), and Canada (Collie et al., 2012). Fortunately, some American studies are also available that explored the correlation among teacher morale, student engagement, and student achievement growth (Sabin, 2015), elementary school teachers' perceptions of the state's accountability measure, and the job engagement impact (Berryhill et al., 2009), teachers' perceptions of how high-stakes testing impacted middle school instructional strategies (Faulkner &

Cook, 2006), and how the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) impacted teacher job satisfaction (Downing, 2016). Unfortunately, none of those studies occur in Georgia or focus specifically on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. My study helps add to the research base concerning the impact of high-stakes testing on teacher morale. My study also examines the impact of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment on teacher morale in Georgia.

When reviewing past research, there are many suggestions for potential research in teacher morale and high-stakes testing. Abazaoglu and Atekin (2016) recommended that researchers seek ways to increase teacher morale and motivation. Examining factors contributing to teacher morale levels, such as having a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, or not, expands on that concept. Furthermore, Bagolie (2012) recommended that researchers investigate high-stakes testing and its impact on teachers' morale and job satisfaction to expand upon her study, where she explored factors that impacted teacher morale and job satisfaction in New Jersey schools. In today's school climate, which is full of stress and uncertainty, teacher morale is an important topic that deserves more attention (Bosso, 2017).

Methodology

A descriptive research design is used to answer the research questions for this study. A descriptive design is employed using a survey to collect data. Surveys are a way to gain large quantities of data that can be used to describe a phenomenon, which, for this study, is the current state of teacher morale among different subgroups of Georgia middle school teachers.

The data collection instrument for the study is *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire,* originally created by Bentley and Rempel (1968). In its original form*, The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* is a survey comprising 100 questions that score teacher morale using 10 categories. The ten categories include: (1) teacher rapport with principal, (2) satisfaction with teaching, (3) rapport among teachers, (4) teacher salary, (5) teacher load, (6) curriculum issues, (7) teacher status, (8) community support of education, (9) school facilities and services, and (10) community pressures. Each of the questions uses a four-point Likert-type scale that measures how much a participant agrees with each statement: (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, and (4) agree. An abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* is used for the study. Instead of using all 100 questions that score teacher morale using the 10 categories, the study includes 39 questions that focus on three categories: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." The goal is to achieve a higher response rate by utilizing a shortened version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*. Researchers studying teacher morale have used an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* to shorten the survey instrument and focus only on specific categories (Evers, 2011; Saka, 2018). The current study focuses only on three categories that may be significantly different for teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers without a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status."

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

This study examines teacher morale levels among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia

Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. This study has potential limitations. One potential limitation of the study is the timing of the study. Respondents' teacher morale levels may vary depending on the timing of data collection in the school year. Another potential limitation is the sample size. Depending on the participants' response rate, the study's sample size may be smaller than necessary for generalizing the findings.

The study is delimited to participants from southeast Georgia who teach grades six, seven, and eight. Also, the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is a Georgia-specific test, which may impact Georgia teachers differently than accountability measures from other states. Therefore, the study's results may not be generalized to all teachers across the United States. I also only administered the data collection instrument once to measure teachers' morale levels. This delimitation only provides data from one point in time. The timing of data collection may affect the study's findings. The study also delimits the data collection to one instrument, *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*. I only included the three categories of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." The categories investigating how leadership styles impact teacher morale or teacher pay for performance are not the focus of this study.

For the study, I assume that participating in school districts grants permission to administer the survey in their schools. I also assume participants are willing to participate in the study, answer questions truthfully, and be representative of the total population of teachers from the Okefenokee RESA.

Definition of Terms

The following are terms used throughout the study. The terms are defined according to my understanding from reading research from other theorists, researchers, and organizations.

Academic content area. For this study, academic content includes English, mathematics, science, and social studies in grades six, seven, or eight.

High-stakes testing. High-stakes testing is an accountability measure that uses testing to make important decisions regarding students, school districts, and teachers. State, federal, and local governments commonly use high-stakes testing to determine if schools are effective (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). For this study, the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is a high-stakes test that affects teachers.

Middle school teachers. For this study, middle school teachers consist of teachers currently teaching in grades six, seven, and eight.

Teacher morale. The satisfaction, support, and motivation teachers feel when doing their jobs (Abazaoglu & Atekin, 2016). To measure teacher morale, this study uses an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire.* Instead of using all 100 questions that score teacher morale using the 10 categories, the study only includes 39 questions focusing on three categories: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status."

Summary

This quantitative study seeks to measure teacher morale among teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade

Assessment, and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight), and teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different content areas (English, mathematics, science, and social studies).

This study focuses on the problems of teacher morale and stress related to high-stakes testing. Teacher morale and stress related to high-stakes testing can directly impact students, schools, and communities. Many researchers have identified the vital role that teacher morale has on students and student performance (Akhtar et al., 2016; Iqbal et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007).

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher morale levels among (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different middle school grade levels, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different academic content areas.

Results from this study can inform legislative decisions concerning high-stakes testing in Georgia. The study can expand the research field by examining how high-stakes testing impacts the morale of Georgia teachers with and without an end-of-grade assessment, how teacher morale differs among grade levels, and how teacher morale differs among content areas. This study is the first of its kind in southeast Georgia, which

helps researchers better understand teacher morale differences among middle school teachers in southeast Georgia.

For this quantitative research study, I organized the dissertation into five chapters. The first chapter includes an introduction to the study, the purpose, and the research questions. In chapter two, I provided an in-depth literature review of existing literature on the topic of teacher morale. In chapter three, I discussed the methodology used throughout the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study based on the survey data collected and analyzed. Interpretation of the findings, connection to the research questions, existing literature, and theoretical framework are discussed in Chapter 5, along with the implications and recommendations for practice, policy, or future research.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

State accountability measures emphasizing high-stakes testing have caused increased teacher stress (Collie et al., 2012). Prior research concluded that stress negatively impacted teacher morale (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007). When teacher morale decreased, teacher job satisfaction declined, negatively impacting student achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016). Prior research also concluded that high-stakes testing altered instructional practices (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Musoleno & White, 2010). This literature review examines how high-stakes testing affects teacher stress, how accountability measures impact teachers and classroom instruction, and how high-stakes testing impacts where teachers seek employment.

Theoretical Foundations

In 1959, Herzberg published *The Motivation to Work*, which examined 30 years of motivational research in job-related areas and expanded upon the work of Abraham Maslow. With the help of Bernard Mausner and Barbara Snyderman, Herzberg examined employees' attitudes toward their jobs, what caused their attitudes, and what impact they had on the person and their motivation to work. Herzberg and his colleagues surveyed 200 engineers and accountants from Pittsburgh to determine what exactly workers wanted from their jobs. Herzberg concluded that job satisfiers are related to job content and that job dissatisfiers are related to job context (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Based on the responses, Herzberg et al. (1959) determined that workers were dissatisfied with a poor work environment, but a good environment did not necessarily lead to worker satisfaction. Herzberg went on to describe extrinsic factors, also known as hygiene factors, as factors essential for workplace motivation that did not necessarily lead to positive satisfaction. Hygiene factors are simply the maintenance factors necessary to avoid dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors include status, security, pay, working relationships, and company policies. If these hygiene factors are absent, it leads to workplace dissatisfaction. These hygiene factors, also known as job dissatisfiers, can help prevent job dissatisfaction.

The intrinsic factors, also known as motivators or satisfiers, make employees work harder and are found in the job itself. Examples of motivators include achievement, responsibility, recognition, meaningfulness of work, and advancement. These factors motivate employees to superior performance. Together, the motivators and hygiene factors have become known as Herzberg's Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory (see Table 2).

Table 2

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Hygiene Factors	Motivators
Status	Achievement
Security	Recognition
Salary	Work Itself
Working Conditions	Responsibility
Company Policies	Advancement

Table 2 refers to the factors that Herzberg found to be hygiene factors and motivators in the workplace. The Hygiene factors can be roughly related to Maslow's lower-level needs, while motivators can be roughly associated with Maslow's higher-

level needs (Dinibutun, 2012). If one focuses on hygiene factors, dissatisfaction can be prevented. However, the presence of the hygiene factors, or emphasis on improving the hygiene factors, does not create a positive attitude or motivation to work (Herzberg et al., 1959). To get the most out of workers and motivate them to do their best, managers must focus on the motivators or job satisfiers.

In the educational setting, the intrinsic factors, or motivators, directly link teachers, their daily routine, and their job performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). Currently, in the state of Georgia, teachers face challenges that impact their teacher morale, motivation, and job satisfaction. In Georgia, the state requires students to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in grades three through eight in several academic content areas. Students must perform well on those assessments to be promoted to the next grade, but teachers are also assessed based on their students' achievement. Federal mandates and state initiatives substantially impact hygiene factors and motivators for teachers. With teachers' competence being measured based on students' test scores, motivators may not be present to improve teacher job satisfaction. Herzberg's motivational factors that the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment could impact include a teacher's recognition, personal achievements, and status. I contend that teachers who are not receiving these motivators due to the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment may have less satisfaction with their jobs, leading to lower teacher morale.

Teacher Morale

Teacher morale is a topic that has moved to the forefront of education since the global pandemic, but it is not easy to define. There are many definitions of morale, but most of the accepted definitions are dated. Moreover, researchers have never agreed on a

consensus definition (Hart et al., 2000). For example, Bentley and Rempel (1980) defined teacher morale as the professional interest and enthusiasm one has toward achieving goals in a given job situation. Alternatively, Evans (1997) defined teacher morale as the state of mind determined by one's anticipation of satisfying needs affecting one's work situation. For this study, I adopted the definition used by Abazaoglu and Atekin (2016). Abazaoglu and Atekin (2016) defined teacher morale as the satisfaction, support, and motivation teachers felt when doing their jobs. This definition provides a broad explanation of teacher morale that is easily understood and encompasses the most acceptable definitions.

Teacher morale is an important topic that deserves more attention in the current education climate. Teacher morale impacts many aspects of schools, but most importantly, teacher morale impacts student success. Teacher morale impacts student success because satisfied teachers work harder and perform better than unsatisfied teachers (Iqbal et al., 2016). High teacher morale is often characterized by having interest and eagerness to do one's job, while low morale is often characterized as dissatisfaction (Govindarajan, 2012). If teachers have low teacher morale and report dissatisfaction with their jobs, this can lead to many issues in American schools and negatively impact student achievement (Iqbal et al., 2016).

Importance of High Teacher Morale

High teacher morale is pivotal for schools, teachers, students, and the community. While some may feel that teacher morale is a teacher-centered issue, teacher morale affects every stakeholder in education (Heick, 2020). Teachers with low morale are stressed, unsatisfied with their jobs, develop burnout, and are exhausted (Will, 2021).

Teachers with low levels of morale do not do their job as well as those with high morale, which negatively impacts student achievement. Quality education is dependent upon teacher morale as it impacts teaching directly and indirectly (Bantwini, 2018).

When teacher morale is high in a school, teachers feel good about coming to work and their job. Research indicates that an effective teacher is the strongest predictor of student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000). High teacher morale can impact every aspect of the educational process, indicating that leaders must monitor teacher morale (Houchard, 2005). For educational goals to be realized, more attention must be given to enhancing teacher morale (Taole, 2022). Teacher morale has a considerable impact on teachers' job satisfaction and retention, as well as their student achievement.

Job Satisfaction

Teacher morale has a substantial impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which people are satisfied with their work (Warr, 2002). Job satisfaction occurs when an employee feels he or she is experiencing job stability, career growth, and a comfortable work-life balance (Fader, 2020). The satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, that teachers feel related to their jobs is important because it considerably influences the quality of classroom instruction. Good education is impossible without good teaching, and good teaching largely depends on the level of teachers' job satisfaction (Sonmezer & Eryaman, 2008).

Job satisfaction is a significant part of teacher morale because the factors that influence job satisfaction have a major impact on the morale level of teachers (Luleci & Coruk, 2018). Job satisfaction is also closely related to the level of teacher morale (Rowland, 2008). Teachers with higher levels of satisfaction are happier in their work

life, which significantly impacts students, staff, and stakeholders the teachers communicate with. Pendino (2012) emphasized the close relationship between job satisfaction and teacher morale in her study. She explained that job satisfaction and morale were continually interacting, which could present the illusion that they were the same. She concluded that morale was important in determining employee motivation and influenced a teacher's performance. While the two concepts are closely related and intertwined, teacher morale and job satisfaction are different.

Job satisfaction should be an essential goal for any workplace. Job satisfaction is critical to an organization because it can bring many positive effects, such as organizational commitment and lower rates of turnover intention (Yucel, 2012). Teacher turnover is a persistent issue across the country, but the highest turnover rates are concentrated in the American South (Williams et al., 2021). In a study conducted with 710 elementary, middle, and high school teachers, Mertler (2002) found that only 75 percent of teachers felt satisfied with their jobs, while 23 percent reported dissatisfaction. This high percentage of teachers who are unsatisfied with their current position supports the current teacher retention issue plaguing the profession (Mertler, 2002).

The current study focuses on the problem of teacher morale related to the stress of high-stakes testing. Job satisfaction is essential to the research problem because job satisfaction is a significant part of teacher morale (Rowland, 2008). If teachers are not satisfied with their jobs, teacher morale suffers, as well as the quality of classroom instruction. By examining job satisfaction, the current study can better understand the importance of high teacher morale and the factors contributing to overall teacher morale.

Teacher Retention

Teacher retention is a major issue impacting schools, students, and administrators nationwide. Prior to COVID-19, teachers were leaving the profession at a rate of 8 percent each year (Fitchett et al., 2017). This statistic was based on all teachers regardless of years of experience. When studying teachers during their first five years of employment, 40-50 percent leave the field of education (Ryan et al., 2017). The statistics from these studies were based on national studies. In a report released in the state of Georgia, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission found that the attrition of new hires from 2008 to 2015 was 44 percent (GaDOE, 2022b). Since COVID-19, teacher retention rates have not improved. In Georgia's public schools, teacher retention rates continue to decrease yearly (GOSA, 2021). Based on these findings, teacher retention is a national issue that deserves more attention.

In a separate report released by the GaDOE (2015), *Georgia's Teacher Dropout Crisis*, the GaDOE found an even deeper concern that compounds the teacher retention issue. Based on the survey results of over 53,000 Georgia teachers, 66.9 percent of teachers responded that they were unlikely or very unlikely to encourage high school graduates to pursue a career in the teaching field. Of all participants surveyed, only 2.7 percent of Georgia teachers were very likely to encourage their students to go into the teaching field. When surveyed, teachers identified three top factors that caused teachers to leave the profession: the teacher evaluation method, the level of teacher participation in decision-making, and the emphasis on mandated testing (GaDOE, 2015). Despite these findings, some teachers and administrators value the importance of teacher evaluation systems (Mintz & Kelly, 2021). Based on current teacher retention statistics,

compounded with the lack of teachers promoting the teaching profession, Georgia could be in for sizable teacher shortages if things do not improve.

As leaders, everyone must ask at this point what can be done to improve teacher retention and what leads a teacher to stay in the profession. Researchers found that a teacher's morale level and commitment played a vital role in determining whether he would remain in the education profession (Corbell, 2008; Rots et al., 2007). Finding ways to improve teacher retention is a major concern for all schools, especially with the issues the lack of teacher retention can cause.

In lower-achieving schools, a lack of success harms teacher morale, decreasing teacher retention. Having low levels of teacher morale could also lead to difficulty in retaining quality teachers. In a Pakistani study, Iqbal et al. (2016) found that low-achieving schools had more new teachers and teachers with less advanced degrees than high-performing schools. Iqbal et al. (2016) also found that having less qualified teachers lowered student achievement levels. Similarly, Jones and Shindler (2016) found that schools that had a higher teacher retention rate stimulated more student achievement. The impact of teacher retention on student achievement is undeniable.

The current study focuses on the problem of teacher retention. Teacher retention is worth studying because it impacts all schools and directly impacts student achievement and instruction (Jones & Shindler, 2016). With such a high percentage of teachers leaving the field of education within the first five years (GaDOE, 2022b), the teacher retention issue is plaguing schools across Georgia and the United States. By examining the problem of teacher retention, the current study can better prepare leaders to make decisions that positively impact teacher morale and retention.

Student Achievement

The impact of teacher morale on student achievement is an issue central to teacher morale, school climate, and school culture. Furthermore, many researchers have explored how improved teacher morale impacted student achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007). Akhtar et al. (2016) conducted a quantitative study using 280 Southern Pakistani teachers. They chose participants using random sampling and investigated teacher morale levels and the relationship between teacher morale and student achievement. Teacher morale data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, while student achievement data were collected using 2014 Board's testing results. Akhtar et al. (2007) found a high positive correlation between teachers' morale and student achievement ($r = 0.72$).

Similarly, Mackenzie (2007) conducted a study of teacher morale. Mackenzie (2007) collected data using a mixed-method approach. She chose 101 Australian teachers and administrators and observed them over one year. She collected data using a questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations. She sought to investigate Australian teacher morale and provided suggestions for improving morale. Mackenzie (2007) found that participants perceived a direct benefit to student achievement when teacher morale increased, which supported other researchers' findings (Akhtar et al., 2016; Brown, 2022).

In contrast, some studies found no correlation between teacher morale and student achievement (Sabin, 2015). Sabin (2015) cited Mackenzie (2007) several times in her correlational study, but did not have similar findings upon data analysis. Sabin explored North Carolina's fourth and fifth-grade teachers' morale levels. Sabin also examined the

correlation between teacher morale, student engagement, and student achievement growth. She chose 26 North Carolina fourth and fifth grade reading teachers representing the same school district. Sabin collected teacher data using the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, collected student engagement data using the Active Learning Inventory Tool while observing classrooms, and collected student growth measures using North Carolina End-of-Grade test data. Sabin found no correlation between teacher morale, student engagement, and student achievement. Instead, Sabin discovered that teacher morale and student engagement had the strongest negative correlation (r = -0.192); however, this relationship was not statistically significant. Sabin's study contested most studies covering teacher morale. Sabin's study used a limited sample size, which may account for the discrepancy between Mackenzie (2007) and Akhtar et al. (2016). Using only 26 participants does not make generalization possible and makes quantitative interpretation difficult. Despite Sabin's controversial findings, enough literature proves that high teacher morale positively impacts student achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007).

Student achievement is vital to the current study because of the positive correlation between teacher morale and student achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007). Many researchers have found that the stress of high-stakes testing contributes to teacher stress (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007), which has a direct impact on teacher morale. One of the current study's focuses is the problem of teacher stress related to high-stakes testing and how that impacts overall teacher morale levels.

Factors Influencing Teacher Morale

In addition to understanding the importance of teacher morale, many researchers examined factors that influenced teacher morale (Collie et al., 2012; Iwu et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2007; Perrachione et al., 2008). Researchers have difficulty generalizing factors impacting teacher morale because individuals experience morale uniquely, but researchers found many commonalities that have substantial teacher morale impacts (Collie et al., 2012; Iwu et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2007; Perrachione et al., 2008). Factors influencing teacher morale include salary, workload, work environment, stress, and teacher self-efficacy. Each is explored further in this section.

Salary

Pay is one of the most studied topics related to job satisfaction. Pay is defined as the way one is compensated for completing tasks within a job (Spector, 1997). Several studies have focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and pay for teachers. Teachers often make less than other professionals with similar degrees and years of experience (Allegretto et al., 2004). It also takes considerable time for teachers to reach the upper salary ranges. In Georgia, the base salary of a teacher with basic certification and a four-year degree is $39,092 (GaDOE, 2022a). To make over $50,000 a year, a teacher must teach for a minimum of 13 years, or a teacher must complete degree programs at their own expense to increase their salary more quickly. Teachers in Georgia have experienced raises over the last four years to combat low teacher pay and improve teacher retention efforts. The Governor and the Georgia General Assembly have worked together to increase teacher pay in an effort to attract more people into the profession and retain high-quality teachers.

Several international studies have examined factors impacting teacher morale, including those by Akhtar et al. (2016), Iwu et al. (2018), and Mackenzie (2007). Iwu et al. (2018) examined factors that impacted teachers' job satisfaction for Nigerian teachers. They collected data using a questionnaire mainly containing close-ended questions. Participants included 547 teachers representing 23 elementary and high schools. They concluded that growth opportunities, responsibilities, and teacher salary encompassed the top three variables that impacted teacher job satisfaction. Iwu et al. (2018) and Mackenzie (2007) studies included a common variable, teacher salary. Both studies occurred internationally, and differences in the cost of living in these countries may explain the low salary variable. In their quantitative study using Pakistani teachers, Akhtar et al. (2016) also concluded that low salaries impacted teacher unhappiness.

Research suggested that pay is not the primary motivator for choosing to be a teacher and remaining in the profession (Korsak, 2007). Korsak (2017) found that though people may think that money is a powerful reward, it is not as powerful a reward as we would imagine. Furthermore, several studies suggested that low salary did not influence a teacher's decision to stay in the teaching profession (McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Perrachione et al., 2008). Perrachione et al. (2008) found that both intrinsic variables, such as working with students and job satisfaction, and extrinsic variables, such as class size, can influence a teacher's morale. However, Perrachione et al. (2008) did note that dissatisfaction in the teaching profession can be linked to extrinsic factors such as low pay. The emphasis on extrinsic motivating factors and their link to dissatisfaction further validates the use of Herzberg et al.'s Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory for the current study.

Workload/Responsibilities

Another common theme that emerged as a vital factor that impacted teacher morale included teacher responsibilities and workload (Iwu et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2007). Workload is the amount of work that someone should do at a specific time with a certain quality (Goksoy & Akdag, 2014). Teaching is a rewarding yet demanding career. The duty of a teacher is much more than teaching. Teachers must plan lessons, support students, and foster a classroom that engages learners. With extra hours and responsibilities, it is easy for teachers to feel overwhelmed and overworked, and complaints about workload are common among educators (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). Werang (2018) stated that teachers' workload is associated with emotional exhaustion. This may greatly harm teachers' health and result in negative emotions, which can cause a decrease in teacher morale levels.

In teacher morale studies, research has concluded that workload plays a crucial role in teacher morale and workplace happiness (Akhtar et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007). In an Australian study that included 2,444 primary and secondary teachers, Heffernan et al. (2022) found that only 41 percent of their respondents intended to remain in the teaching profession. They concluded that reducing workload and raising the status of the teaching profession could decrease teacher attrition. Mackenzie (2007) also found that leadership, workload, and the decline in teacher status influenced teacher morale. In their quantitative study using Pakistani teachers, Akhtar et al. (2016) also concluded that heavy workload impacted teacher unhappiness.

Work Environment/School Climate

Another common theme impacting teacher morale included the school climate and work environment. School climate is a concept that is often fluid and defined differently by individuals who experience it. Orsi et al. (2016) defined school climate as a multi-dimensional construct that deals with teachers' working conditions. To some researchers, it is considered the main ingredient in determining a healthy and productive school (May & Sanders, 2013). Unfortunately, this means that school climate can be healthy or unhealthy. Consequently, school climate can influence teacher morale either positively or negatively. For example, in schools where the threat of violence is high, teacher morale is low due to fear and insecurity (Taole, 2022). Lack of security can be a notable factor impacting teacher morale. School climate relies heavily on teachers' relationships with other teachers, students, and administration, and it determines the general atmosphere of the school (Kyrou et al., 2020; Syahril & Hadiyanto, 2018). Research suggested that teacher morale plays a key factor in influencing school climate, while school climate, in turn, greatly impacts teacher morale (Taylor, 2019).

When working to increase morale, few things have the impact of a good leader on the teacher morale in a school (Ansley et al., 2019). A leader who wishes to maximize productivity, bring order to chaos, and increase morale should clearly define the mission and vision of an organization (Korsak, 2017). By defining tasks and who will accomplish them, a leader can help ensure work is completed on time, increasing teacher morale (Korsak, 2017). Leaders must also address morale issues and negativity early because the longer these issues exist, the more difficult they are to change (Vail, 2005).

Treating employees as people first is an integral part of the work environment and a way to improve teacher morale. Teachers need to feel respected as professionals and feel that they have a role in the decision-making process in an organization (Vail, 2005). Encouraging staff participation in decisions impacting their daily work is key to increasing job satisfaction and employee productivity (O'Toole & Lawler, 2006). Part of involving employees in decision-making consists of allowing and encouraging staff to voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns. When a participatory environment is created in a workplace, employees' feelings of achievement increase, significantly impacting employee morale (Sirota et al., 2005).

Acknowledging and rewarding staff by encouraging them, showing appreciation, and providing recognition is also a great way to improve teacher morale (Schmidt, 2005). Kroth (2007) emphasized that leaders should treat their employees like gold while striving for honesty and fairness. Showing care toward others is key to helping others feel good about themselves and encouraging positive energy in the workplace (Paul & Reck, 2006).

Stress

Regardless of one's occupation, stress is an issue that all workers must deal with in some fashion. According to the American Federation of Teachers' 2017 Educator Quality of Work Life Survey (2017), 61 percent of teachers indicated their jobs were always or often stressful, which is twice the level felt by workers in the general population. These findings were collected from a survey that included nearly 5,000 educators. Research on stress, as it correlates to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by Nidich and Nidich (1986), indicated that stress was created by an imbalance with the

external hygiene factors in one's environment. Hygiene factors that can cause stress include status, security, pay, working relationships, and company policies (Herzberg et al., 1959).

According to the MetLife survey (2013), 51 percent of teachers indicated they were under high stress several days a week. Based on the responses of the teachers, elementary teachers (59%) stated that they experienced great stress several days a week, which was more frequent than middle school teachers (44%) and high school teachers (42%). In another survey, Wong et al. (2017) found that stress was a primary factor in teacher burnout, negatively impacting students and the quality of engagement between teachers and students. The stress that causes teacher burnout also leads to significant teacher morale concerns.

Research studies showed that a frequent recommendation to improve teacher morale is alleviating stress (Mackenzie, 2007). In a teacher morale study in Australia conducted by Mackenzie (2007), her participants recommended improving teacher morale by reducing work-related stress, increasing salaries, and ensuring supportive school leadership. Another study that confirmed the factors identified by Mackenzie (2007) as influencing teacher morale was conducted by Collie et al. (2012). Collie et al. (2012) examined how teachers perceived their school impacted teachers' stress, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Using an online questionnaire, they surveyed 664 Canadian teachers representing 17 school districts. They found that teacher stress related to workload directly impacted teacher job satisfaction.

Self-Efficacy

Another factor that affects teacher morale is a teacher's self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in one's ability to complete a task successfully (Bandura, 1997). Teacher self-efficacy is job-specific and is based on one's judgment of his ability to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even for students who may be difficult (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Teachers who believe in their ability to impact student learning positively are likelier to exhibit behaviors that positively impact student achievement. Thus, high self-efficacy positively affects student achievement (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017).

A teacher's self-efficacy can also help teachers deal with the reported high levels of stress and attrition currently plaguing the educational world. When teachers possess higher levels of self-efficacy, they manage job stressors better than teachers exhibiting low self-efficacy (Collie et al., 2012). In their Canadian study of 664 teachers, Collie et al. (2012) also concluded that stress negatively influenced teacher self-efficacy. Available evidence and research concerning teacher stress and self-efficacy suggested a reciprocal effect over time (Brouwers & Tomic, 1999). Alternatively, teachers with low self-efficacy exhibit less effective teaching practices, leading to lower student achievement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Consequently, self-efficacy can also impact teacher morale levels. Low self-efficacy is linked to low professional self-esteem and reduces teacher morale (Davis & Wilson, 2000). In their quantitative study involving 201 Missouri elementary school teachers, Perrachione et al. (2008) used surveys to examine variables that impacted teacher job satisfaction and retention. They concluded that teacher self-efficacy positively

influenced teacher satisfaction. With these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that self-efficacy is an important factor impacting teacher morale and teacher job satisfaction.

High-Stakes Testing

High-stakes testing and test scores are significant factors in evaluating students, teachers, and schools. High-stakes testing has a widespread impact on students and teachers from the third grade through high school (Gologlu Demir & Kaplan Keles, 2021). High-stakes testing is an accountability measure that uses testing to make important decisions regarding students, school districts, and teachers. State, federal, and local governments commonly use high-stakes testing to determine if schools are effective (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Using high-stakes tests to measure student achievement and school performance is not a new concept, and the use of high-stakes testing has increased since the 1970s (Linn, 2005). In 1965, the federal government passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which tied school funding to the effectiveness of a school. Since then, politicians have become more engaged in public education, which has led many to advocate for the increased use of high-stakes testing to measure the effectiveness of schools (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Currently, students will take approximately 112 standardized tests between pre-K and grade 12 (Strauss, 2015).

Another pivotal piece of legislation that reinforced the use of high-stakes testing and reauthorized the ESEA was the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 (USDOE, 2005). NCLB focused on school accountability and mandated the use of statewide testing. The goal of NCLB was to move all students to a proficient level on state mathematics and reading tests by 2014. Under NCLB, schools and districts had to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward having all students reach a proficient level

on state mathematics and reading tests (Clarke & Gregory, 2003). According to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) (2005), NCLB legislation provided educational opportunities for all students by closing the achievement gap with flexibility, accountability, and choice. Schools and districts that reached AYP goals on standardized testing received positive recognition (Simpson et al., 2004). At schools that did not achieve AYP goals for two consecutive years, students received vouchers to transfer to a school with a better performance record (Simpson et al., 2004). NCLB is no longer a law, but its effects can still be felt across the educational world.

The history of high-stakes testing is a series of laws intended to improve public education for all students. Since the ESEA, every educational policy has increased the federal government's involvement in public education and increased accountability measures for teachers and students using high-stakes testing (Asburry, 2019). Currently, assessment and accountability policies regarding high-stakes testing continue to impact schools, teachers, parents, politicians, and many educational stakeholders across the United States. Despite pushback against high-stakes testing, it remains a fixture in America's schools.

Recent History of High-Stakes Testing in Georgia

In the spring of 2000, Georgia implemented the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) to measure how well students learned the state-mandated content standards in reading, ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies (GaDOE, 2023c). Under Georgia law, students in grades one through eight took the CRCT in the content areas of ELA, reading, and mathematics (GaDOE, 2023c). Students in grades three through eight were also required to take the CRCT in the content areas of science

and social studies (GaDOE, 2023c). The CRCT primarily consisted of select-response items. Unlike the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the CRCT assessed specific Georgia content standards. Based on students' performances, students were classified into one of three categories for student achievement, including: *does not meet expectations*, *meets expectations*, and *exceeds expectations* (GOSA, n.d.a). The CRCT program was retired after the 2013-14 administration and replaced by the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) implemented the Georgia Milestones to measure how well students learned the Georgia content standards adopted in 2010 by the Georgia State Board of Education (GOSA, n.d.b). The Georgia Milestones is an end-of-grade assessment for grades three through eight for the content areas of ELA and mathematics. Students in grades five and eight must take the science end-of-grade assessment, and students in grade eight must also take the social studies end-of-grade assessment (GaDOE, 2023b). The Georgia Milestones also consists of specific end-of-course assessments for high school courses, including American Literature and Composition, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. The Georgia Milestones is administered primarily on a computer and consists of select-response questions, technology-enhanced items, constructed-response items in ELA, and a writing component in ELA (GaDOE, 2023b). The Georgia Milestones Assessment provides important information about how students are mastering state standards. With the implementation of the Georgia Milestones, students' scores are reported, and a student's level of mastery is described by one of four achievement levels, including *beginning learners*, *developing learners*, *proficient learners*, and *distinguished learners* (GOSA, n.d.b).

Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment Accountability

In the state of Georgia, the Georgia Milestones Assessment provides information about how well students are mastering state-adopted content standards. However, it is also a key component of the state's accountability system (GaDOE, 2023b). In Georgia, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is Georgia's tool for annually measuring the success of schools and districts (GaDOE, 2023a). Georgia's schools aim to prepare students for the next educational level (GaDOE, 2023b). Besides measuring the success of schools, Georgia's CCRPI index also meets the accountability requirements of the federal government. The CCRPI includes five main components: Content Mastery, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness, and Graduation Rate (GaDOE, 2023a). Content mastery includes students' achievement scores on the Georgia Milestones in the four major content areas of math, ELA, science, and social studies. Progress measures the amount of growth students make in ELA and math each year compared to other students who are academically similar. Closing gaps measures the extent to which students and subgroups meet the three percent annual expected growth on achievement from the previous year. Readiness measures readiness indicators such as student attendance, literacy, and opportunities beyond the academic core. The graduation rate pertains only to high schools.

Each year, schools and districts receive a CCRPI score on a scale from zero to 100 based on the school and district's performance in each of the five components. The component weights contribute to an overall score, but the weights vary based on the type of school (see Table 3). Middle and elementary schools do not have a graduation rate, meaning the other four components hold more value.

Table 3

CCRPI Component Weights

Component	Elementary	Middle	High
Content Mastery	30%	30%	30%
Progress	35%	35%	30%
Closing Gaps	15%	15%	10%
Readiness	20%	20%	15%
Graduation Rate	-----	-----	15%

Table 3 represents data from the Georgia Department of Education (2023a) in the *Family's Guide to CCRPI handout*. Each component is scored on a scale from zero to 100. The total score of these components is then combined to develop an overall CCRPI score for schools and districts based on the data from Table 3. Table 3 demonstrates the importance of high-stakes testing in elementary and middle schools based on the value placed on content mastery, progress, and closing gaps, which are all solely based on students' scores on the Georgia Milestones.

High-Stakes Testing and Teacher Morale

High-stakes testing, and the accountability pressures associated with it, impact schools and teachers. An issue that impacted teacher morale and teacher instruction included teacher accountability and testing-related stress (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Rubin et al., 2022). Most states have transitioned to teacher accountability measures that involve students' high-stakes testing performances (Downing, 2016). This has proven to be problematic. In an American study, Rubin et al. (2022) used data from the 2015-2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey to determine how accountability measures impacted teacher morale. They concluded that teachers reported lower job satisfaction and higher turnover when schools included student growth as part of teachers' evaluations. Consequently, some principals have chosen to be lenient

when completing classroom observations to combat the decrease in teacher morale (Jones et al., 2022). Many researchers studied how high-stakes testing impacted teachers, instructional practices, and students (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Collie et al., 2012; Mcloughlin, 2023). Von der Embse et al. (2016) conducted a study evaluating the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teacher test-related stress. They surveyed 1,242 teachers representing 100 school districts from the southeastern United States using an online survey administered during the Fall and Spring. They concluded that self-efficacy significantly influenced teacher stress factors (Von der Embse et al., 2016). Teachers who perceived themselves as having high self-efficacy exhibited more negative side effects of test-related stress. Contrasting this finding, Collie et al. (2012) documented the positive impact of high self-efficacy on teacher morale. Still, they did not discuss how test-related stress could impact self-efficacy, only how teaching-related stress negatively impacted self-efficacy. High-stakes testing and accountability measures increased teacher stress, supporting the findings of Collie et al. (2012) and Von der Embse et al. (2016).

High-Stakes Testing Impact on Instructional Practices

High-stakes testing also impacts classroom instructional practices (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Mcloughlin, 2023). In a mixed-methods study, Berryhill et al. (2009) explored elementary school teachers' perceptions of the state's accountability measures and the impact of job engagement. They surveyed 100 South Carolina teachers and interviewed 20 randomly chosen teachers. They found that teachers reported negative perceptions of accountability measures (Berryhill et al., 2009). With the rise of accountability policies through standardized testing, teachers' professional autonomy is

being challenged (Parcerisa et al., 2022). The primary issue related to high-stakes testing was a lack of time, leading teachers to adjust their instructional practices, a finding supported by numerous other studies (Abrams et al., 2003; Faulkner & Cook, 2006).

Similarly, Abrams et al. (2003) also examined teachers' opinions of high-stakes testing. Using a national survey, they questioned 4,195 United States teachers representing 29 states. They found that high-stakes testing led to teaching practices contradicting sound educational practices. They also found that pressure to increase test scores made teachers spend valuable class time completing test preparation activities (Abrams et al., 2003). Another U.S. study that supported the findings of Abrams et al. included Faulkner and Cook's (2006) investigation, which explored teachers' perceptions of how high-stakes testing impacted middle school instructional strategies. Faulkner and Cook (2006) surveyed 216 Kentucky middle school teachers representing 17 different school districts. Faulkner and Cook (2006) created their own online survey titled *The Middle School Implementation Survey*. Despite teachers citing the importance of student-centered activities, Faulkner and Cook (2006) found that state testing made teachers use more teacher-centered activities, such as worksheets and lectures. Similarly, Hargreaves (2020) also found that high-stakes testing led teachers to focus more on test preparation in her Canadian study. Abrams et al. (2003), Faulkner and Cook (2006), and Hargreaves (2020) findings supported the fact that state testing drove curriculum decisions and impacted teachers.

Likewise, Musoleno and White (2010) also studied how high-stakes testing and accountability influenced middle schools' instructional practices such as grouping, interdisciplinary curriculum, interdisciplinary planning, and developmentally appropriate

practices. They surveyed 148 Pennsylvania teachers attending a middle school teaching conference. Musoleno and White (2010) found that high-stakes testing has driven middle schools to allocate more instructional time for test preparation. They also found that subjects assessed by high-stakes tests were given more instructional time throughout the school day, whereas subjects without high-stakes tests experienced reduced instructional time (Musoleno & White, 2010). They concluded that teachers spent more time teaching the test and less time meeting learners' needs. In her qualitative study, Mcloughlin (2023) confirmed these findings, and she went on to declare that high-stakes testing is a barrier that hinders creative teaching practices. Reducing instructional time and altering instructional practices affected teacher morale (Abrams et al., 2003; Faulkner & Cook, 2006). Furthermore, teachers could feel inhibited by high-stakes testing, which causes them to narrow the curriculum, focus on important content standards, and limit teacher autonomy (Avalos et al., 2020). Future researchers should explore how high-stakes testing impacted teacher morale when tested subjects received priority over non-tested subjects.

In contrast, some researchers have found that teacher accountability measures do not impact teacher morale and job satisfaction (Downing, 2016). Downing (2016) explored how the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) impacted teacher job satisfaction. The OTES encouraged teacher accountability using student test scores to evaluate teacher performance. Downing surveyed 290 Ohio public school teachers using convenience sampling. Downing concluded that no statistically significant difference existed between OTES performance and teacher job satisfaction. Downing's study was worthy of consideration because its findings contested Abrams et al. (2003), which found

that high-stakes testing promoted lower teacher job satisfaction. Downing did have limitations due to using convenience sampling, which could impact the results of her study. Although Downing found no correlation between teacher accountability measures and job satisfaction, enough prior research existed to argue that accountability measures and high-stakes testing negatively impacted teacher morale and instructional practices (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Musoleno & White, 2010).

High-Stakes Testing Impact on Job Preference

Consequently, high-stakes testing and accountability measures also impact the jobs teachers want and the places teachers wish to work (Luleci & Coruk, 2018; Ng, 2006; Van Houtte, 2006). Abrams et al. (2003) found that twice as many teachers who taught a high-stakes tested subject would prefer teaching a subject that did not have a state accountability test. Teachers desiring transfer from high-stakes tested positions reinforced the notion that high-stakes testing impacted teacher morale and job satisfaction (Berryhill et al., 2009). Ng (2006) supported the impact of high-stakes testing on job choice by surveying 293 preservice teachers representing a Midwestern United States university and interviewing 20 participants. She examined how the teacher accountability movement impacted preservice teachers, their desire to teach, and where they would seek employment. She found that participants expressed high interest levels concerning teaching, which should not be a surprise because participants included preservice teachers. She also discovered that teachers understood accountability measures but felt pressured to alter classroom instructional practices and prepare for standardized assessments. Preservice teachers sought employment with minimal accountability pressures (Ng, 2006). She suggested that teachers seek employment where suitable

school climates existed, which would lower accountability concerns. However, she did not address topics concerning desired grade levels or content areas. In a Georgia study, Fuchsman and Sass (2020) used statewide longitudinal data to determine if policy changes regarding testing impacted whether teachers wanted to leave the profession, change districts, change schools, or change grade levels. When examining the policy change of removing the science and social studies Georgia Milestones test in grades six and seven, they found no effects on the probability of leaving the teaching profession, changing districts, changing schools, or changing grade levels.

Alternatively, Luleci and Coruk (2018) examined teacher morale and job satisfaction differences among elementary and secondary school teachers while examining demographic information such as age, gender, or seniority, including vocational and academic teachers. Luleci and Coruk (2018) used the term branch while describing the subject participants taught, vocational or academic. They surveyed 288 Turkish teachers using the Purdue Teacher Morale Scale. They used a one-way ANOVA to determine teacher morale differences concerning teaching level, years of service, and teacher content area. No statistically significant difference was found between teacher morale levels concerning teacher age, gender, or seniority. However, there was a statistically significant difference between academic content area teachers and vocational teachers (Luleci & Coruk, 2018). Luleci and Coruk (2018) determined that vocational teachers had higher morale than academic teachers. They also found that elementary school teachers had higher morale than secondary school teachers. Luleci and Coruk's (2018) findings supported the argument that vocational and non-academic content area teachers had higher teacher morale levels, possibly related to not having a high-stakes

test. Luleci and Coruk (2018) did not discuss high-stakes testing. However, they did find teacher morale differences surrounding content area and grade level, which was difficult to identify in prior research.

On the other hand, Van Houtte (2006) found that vocational teachers have lower teacher morale levels than academic school teachers. She also questioned whether teachers in lower academic tracks had lower job satisfaction levels than teachers in higher academic tracks. She surveyed 711 Belgium teachers using random sampling. Participants represented 15 general schools and 19 vocational schools. Van Houtte (2006) found that general school teachers' satisfaction levels were higher than those of technical or vocational school teachers. This finding contradicted Luleci and Coruk (2018), who found that vocational teachers had higher morale than academic content area teachers. The conflicting findings stemmed from varying definitions of the term *vocational*. Luleci and Coruk (2018) used the term *vocational*, or *branch*, to describe teachers who did not teach core academic content. Van Houtte (2006) used the term *vocational* to describe the tracking system for lower-achieving students. Despite contradicting findings, both studies confirmed that academic content area teachers and vocational teachers exhibited different teacher morale levels. In a study of music teachers, Shaw (2022) argued that even music teachers were impacted by teacher evaluation systems that used high-stakes testing growth scores, which could impact their teacher morale levels. Furthermore, Baker (2020) determined that the connectedness of a teacher to the school, rather than the subject taught, determined overall stress related to high-stakes testing, ultimately affecting teacher morale levels. Future researchers should examine if high-stakes testing

contributed to the difference in teacher morale levels, addressing the existing literature gaps.

Summary

In short, researchers suggested that increasing teacher morale improves student engagement and achievement (Akhtar et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007). Many researchers have previously noted this fact and studied factors that positively impact teacher morale. Factors positively impacting teacher morale included improving working conditions related to stress (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007), increasing pay (Iwu et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2007), ensuring supportive school leadership (Mackenzie, 2007), and enhancing teacher self-efficacy (Perrachione et al., 2008). Researchers also suggested that high-stakes testing, and accountability measures related to high-stakes testing, negatively impacted teacher morale and classroom instructional practices (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009). Furthermore, high-stakes testing also impacted the job types, subject areas, and schools where teachers sought employment (Luleci & Coruk, 2018; Ng, 2006; Van Houtte, 2006). Research lacked a consensus on whether vocational or academic teachers had higher teacher morale levels, but research showed a significant difference between the two branches (Luleci & Coruk, 2018; Van Houtte, 2006). Future researchers must determine how high-stakes testing impacts teacher morale and how morale differs among teachers who have a high-stakes end-of-grade assessment and those who do not.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a description of how the research for the study is conducted. It describes the procedures and methods used in the present study to examine teacher morale levels among (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels: six, seven, and eight, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics science, and social studies. Chapter three focuses on the procedures for collecting data and the methods used in analyzing the data. The topics are presented in the following order: (1) research questions, (2) research design, (3) population, participants, and sampling, (4) instrumentations, validity, and reliability, (5) independent and dependent variables, and (6) data collection and analysis.

Research Questions

For the study, each research question is listed with the corresponding independent and dependent variables and how data are sorted to answer each question:

1.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?

Research question one focuses on the differences in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teacher morale is the dependent variable of the research question. In contrast, the groups the teachers represent, Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, are the independent variables. To acquire data needed to answer research question one, data must be collected from teachers representing each group from each school within the sample population. Data include responses from each participant on a portion of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*, which focuses on teacher morale. Responses are based on a four-point Likert scale. Teacher responses are sorted into two groups, teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, comparing group means and demonstrating variability among the groups using a one-way ANOVA. Teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment include sixth-grade ELA and math teachers, seventh-grade ELA and math teachers, and eighth-grade teachers who teach ELA, math, science, or social studies. Teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment include sixth-grade science and social studies teachers, seventh-grade science and social studies teachers, and vocational teachers who teach subjects such as art, physical education, health, agriculture, or any other class that does not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Additionally, teachers who teach Science

and Social Studies across multiple grade levels are excluded, as determining whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is difficult.

2.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?

Research question two focuses on the differences in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in grades six, seven, and eight. The independent variables for research question two include Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and grade level (grades six, seven, and eight). The dependent variable for research question two is teacher morale. Responses from each teacher are grouped by Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and grade level (grades six, seven, and eight) and compared using a two-way ANOVA to analyze the difference between the means of both groups. Again, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Because research question two also examines the impact of grade level, teachers who instruct multiple grade levels are excluded from the analysis, regardless of their content areas, to prevent overlapping effects related to grade level.

3.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and

teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, science, social studies, and mathematics?

Research question three focuses on the differences in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different academic content areas: English, science, social studies, and mathematics. The independent variables for research question three include Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, and the four different academic content areas of English, science, social studies, and mathematics. The dependent variable for question three is teacher morale. Responses from each teacher are grouped by Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and academic content area (English, mathematics, science, and social studies) and compared using a two-way ANOVA to analyze the difference between the means of both groups. Because research question three focuses on the effect of academic content areas, non-academic content teachers are excluded. Also, to avoid overlapping effects related to academic content areas, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from the analysis, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. In addition, teachers who teach Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels are excluded, as it is difficult to determine whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

Research Design

For this study, a descriptive research design is used to answer research questions. Descriptive research is used to describe a phenomenon without influencing or manipulating the variables in any way (Mertler, 2018). A descriptive research design can be used to statistically analyze a target audience, which, in this study, consists of subgroups of middle school teachers. Descriptive research only attempts to describe the current state of a subject and does not focus on why something is occurring (Lans & Van der Voordt, 2002). For this study, a descriptive design is employed using a survey to collect data. Surveys are a method to gain large quantities of data that can be used to describe a phenomenon, which, for this study, is the current state of teacher morale among different subgroups of Southeast Georgia middle school teachers. Surveys are also standardized, which offers more consistency and reliability. During the survey, demographic data are collected to ensure participants are representative of the target population and to make sure findings are valid. When completing the survey, participants fill out background information that allows them to be placed in the correct groups for each research question. The demographic data that are collected includes participants' years of teaching experience, gender, degree level, grade level taught, and content area/subject taught.

Population and Sample

Population

This study's general population consists of all middle school teachers located in the southeastern part of Georgia. The general population comprises teachers from grades six, seven, and eight. The population also encompasses middle-school teachers who teach

vocational or non-academic classes. Vocational or non-academic teachers do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. This group includes teachers who teach physical education, art, business, computer lab, agriculture, or any other class that is not English, mathematics, science, or social studies. Teachers from the general population exhibit a variety of religious, geographic, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic traits and represent a diverse teacher population. According to the Georgia Department of Education, the state of Georgia had over 119,000 teachers during the 2021-2022 school year. I estimated that approximately 30,000 of those teachers are middle school teachers. The general population for the study varies greatly in terms of years of service, salary, and location. Education levels among the general population also vary from a bachelor's degree to a doctorate, with most teachers possessing a master's degree (GaDOE, 2021b). Ethnicity also varies, but a majority of teachers are White. The study helps inform administrators of teacher stress related to the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and how it impacts teachers' morale levels in southeast Georgia, which may potentially impact future policy changes.

For this study, the population consists of Georgia middle school teachers located in the southeastern part of Georgia. Based on the map provided by the Georgia Department of Education, there are 45 counties in the southeast region of Georgia (GaDOE, 2021a). To determine the number of middle school teachers in the southeast part of Georgia, I added the number of faculty for each middle school in all 45 counties provided on the map from the Georgia Department of Education. Based on internet data, I found that there were approximately 3,116 middle school teachers in southeastern Georgia (SchoolDigger, 2022).

Sample

For this study, the sample includes participants who teach in middle schools that belong to the Okefenokee RESA. Teachers from this area were chosen because the target population can be accessed through professional contacts. The middle schools that partner with the Okefenokee RESA differ greatly in size, demographics, socioeconomic status, and leadership styles, making the teachers representative of the general population impacted by the study. In the Okefenokee RESA, approximately 575 teachers are accessible for the study (SchoolDigger, 2022). The participants vary greatly in terms of years of service, salary, ethnicity, and educational level. The factor that does not vary greatly is "location" because all schools are in the southeastern part of Georgia. Currently, specific data concerning teachers from the target population are unavailable. The accessible population includes teachers from nine counties, which are all part of Okefenokee RESA, and 11 middle schools. Participants should only include middle school teachers representing sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, and vocational teachers who teach any subject within the school. Data are sorted based on grade level, content area, and whether teachers have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

To gain access to the sample, superintendents are contacted from school systems within the Okefenokee RESA to gain permission and access to the target population. If schools do not allow their teachers to participate in the study, teachers outside the Okefenokee RESA can be included. If additional schools need to be added, schools in adjoining RESA districts can be included in the study. Adjoining RESA districts include First District RESA, Coastal Plains RESA, and Heart of Georgia RESA. Once permission

has been granted, as many survey responses as possible are collected from teachers inside each school.

District technology directors for each school district are contacted via email to gain access to teachers. The survey instrument is administered through an online survey, Qualtrics, and each school can determine if the survey should be emailed directly to the teachers, or if the school's administration prefers to forward the email to all staff. The general population size for all middle school teachers in southeast Georgia is approximately 3,116 teachers (SchoolDigger, 2022). Based on a five percent margin of error and a confidence interval of 95 percent, a minimum sample size of 210 participants is needed to answer research question one. To produce credible findings using a two-way ANOVA, I would need at least 251 participants to measure an effect size of 0.25 with an error level of 0.05 for research question two. For research question three, I would need at least 279 participants to measure an effect size of 0.25 with an error level of 0.05. These numbers were provided using G*Power software. In G*Power, I input the statistical test, the number of groups, effect size, margin of error, and power. The software calculated the total sample size needed based on the statistical methods I chose to use.

Once data are collected, I would use demographic data provided by the participants to divide the entire sample population into subgroups. Groups for research question one include teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. The groups for research question two include teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, in grades six, seven, and eight. The groups for research question three

include teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from the different academic content areas of English, math, science, and social studies. The primary challenge to address is the overlap between subjects. If a participant overlaps into multiple subgroups for a single research question, the participant must be excluded from the analysis.

The schools that were chosen are located in the same region of the state. However, schools inside the area vary based on various factors, including size, student and teacher demographics, socioeconomic status, academic performance, and leadership styles. The independent variables include (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in the grade levels six, seven and eight, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in the academic content areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies, which should not be greatly impacted by geographic location in the state. If anything, having schools that are geographically close could work to eliminate factors that impact teacher morale that are outside the control of school administrators. By only studying the differences in teacher morale based on each subgroup and not including large school districts with more testing pressures, the independent variables of the chosen study are isolated.

Instrumentation

For the study, the data collection instrument is *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire,* which was created by Bentley and Rempel (1968). *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* is a survey comprised of 100 questions that score teacher morale using 10 categories. The ten categories include: (1) teacher rapport with principal, (2) satisfaction with teaching, (3) rapport among teachers, (4) teacher salary, (5) teacher load, (6) curriculum issues, (7) teacher status, (8) community support of education, (9) school facilities and services, and (10) community pressures. Table 4 details the 10 categories and the number of questions associated with each category.

Table 4

Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire - 10 Teacher Morale Factors

Factor #	Description	Items
1	Teacher Rapport with Principal	2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 33, 38, 41, 43, 44, 61, 62, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 92, 93, 95
2	Satisfaction with Teaching	19, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 46, 47, 50, 51, 56, 58, 60, 76, 78, 82, 83, 86, 89, 100
3	Rapport Among Teachers	18, 22, 23, 28, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 77, 80, 84, 87, 90
4	Teacher Salary	4, 9, 32, 36, 39, 65, 75
5	Teacher Load	1, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 31, 34, 40, 42, 45
6	Curriculum Issues	17, 20, 25, 79, 88
7	Teacher Status	13, 15, 35, 37, 63, 64, 68, 71
8	Community Support of Education	66, 67, 94, 96, 97
9	School and Facilities Services	16, 21, 49, 57, 59
10	Community Pressures	81, 85, 91, 98, 99

Each of the 100 items on *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* (see Appendix A) uses a four-point Likert-type scale that measures how much a participant agrees with each statement: (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, and (4) agree. Examples of the 100 items on *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* include: I am well satisfied with my present teaching profession; the stress and strain resulting from

teaching makes teaching undesirable for me; the teachers in our school work together, and I love to teach.

For the study, an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* (see Appendix B) is used. Instead of using all 100 questions that score teacher morale using the 10 categories, the study includes only 39 questions that focus on three categories: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status" (see Table 5). The hope is that a greater response rate should be achieved using an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire.* Researchers studying teacher morale have used an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* to shorten the survey instrument and focus only on specific categories (Evers, 2011; Saka, 2018). The current study does the same and focuses only on three categories that may be significantly different for teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers without a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." Table 5 details the three categories and the number of questions associated with each category.

Table 5

Abbreviated Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire - 3 Teacher Morale Factors

Factor #	Description	Items
2	Satisfaction with Teaching	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39
5	Teacher Load	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21
7	Teacher Status	6, 8, 17, 18, 29, 30, 31, 32

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire is chosen because each research question seeks to measure if there is a statistically significant difference in teacher morale among different subgroups of teachers. This survey is chosen because it has been extensively

used in teacher morale studies since its creation, which is a testament to its validity and reliability. *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* also allows me to study individual categories that may be significantly different for teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers without a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, which is important to the study. *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* provides each participant with a teacher morale score while allowing for further dissection by category. *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* is administered online using Qualtrics to make it more accessible to the target population. Bentley and Rempel (1980) reported that the test-retest reliability was obtained from 3,023 teachers. They found that the test-retest correlation for the total score was 0.87. Correlations from the 10 subscales ranged from 0.62 to 0.88. All subscales, except one, had test-retest correlations greater than 0.75 (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). The three categories chosen for the abbreviated survey for the study each have a correlation of 0.79 or higher. The "satisfaction with teaching" had a correlation of 0.88, "teacher load" had a correlation of 0.79, and "teacher status" had a correlation of 0.82. The validity of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* was established by comparing principals' perceptions of teacher morale in schools in Indiana and Oregon. Principals reported how they thought their respective staff would respond to the various factors. Bentley and Rempel (1980) used median scores to compare the teachers' and principals' responses. The comparison of the median scores from each factor was similar, which led to the conclusion that the instrument was valid (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). Currently, *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* is no longer protected by copyright, but I contacted Purdue University to obtain permission to use the instrument (see Appendix C).

Independent and Dependent Variables

For the study, teacher morale is the constant dependent variable for all research questions. The independent variables for the study include the groups of teachers represented for each research question: (1) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels six, seven, and eight, and (3) Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each of the independent variable groups includes multiple levels.

Data Collection Procedures

The same data collection method was used for all research questions. To collect data, permission was first obtained from the Internation Review Board (see Appendix D). Then permission was obtained from superintendents from each school district in the Okefenokee RESA. Once permission was obtained, names and email addresses were acquired from all middle school teachers working in the Okefenokee RESA. An email containing a link to the survey was sent to all participants. After 14 days, a follow-up email was sent to individuals who had not completed the survey. After 14 more days, a second follow-up email was sent to those who had not responded. I also worked closely with each school and allowed teachers to complete the survey during a scheduled time if allowed by the school administration. After the 30-day survey window, data were compiled. Once enough data were collected to generalize findings and produce statistically credible results, data analysis began. If there were not enough participants, an

additional email would be sent to individuals who have not completed the survey. If this was ineffective, the data collection process would expand outside the Okefenokee RESA to other middle schools. Data were collected using *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*. The survey method is ideal for the descriptive research design because it attempts to measure the current state of teacher morale in different subgroups of Georgia middle school teachers. Using a survey also limits threats to internal validity by having standardized responses and questions. A survey also makes data collection logistically viable because it can be administered online without requiring the researcher to physically visit each school. If necessary, it would be possible to visit all schools in the Okefenokee RESA, but travel would be difficult if the study extended outside of the Okefenokee RESA.

Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection, the data have been analyzed to address each of the following research questions:

1.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?

A one-way ANOVA is used to compare the means of two or three groups based on an independent variable for research question one. The independent variable contains two groups: teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from the analysis for research question one, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-

Grade Assessment. Furthermore, teachers who teach Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels are excluded from the analysis, as deciding whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment is difficult.

To answer research question one, a one-way ANOVA is used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the two independent group means. To test for assumptions, I used (1) box plots to check for no significant outliers, (2) Shapiro-Wilk test for normality, and (3) Levene's test for homogeneity of variances. After testing for assumptions, the initial round of data analysis involves looking at the descriptive statistics table to determine group means, standard deviation, and standard error. Then, the ANOVA table is used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the group means by evaluating the *p*-value. A *p*-value below 0.05 indicates a significant difference. If a significant difference exists, the null hypothesis, which assumes no difference between groups, is rejected.

2.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?

A two-way ANOVA is used to compare the two independent variables for research question two. The first independent variable contains two groups: teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. The second independent variable, middle school grade level, contains three groups: grades six, seven, and eight. Again, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from research question two, as it is challenging to

determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Because research question two also examines the impact of grade level, teachers who instruct multiple grade levels are excluded from the study, regardless of their content areas, to prevent overlapping effects related to grade level.

To test for assumptions, Levene's test is used to test for homoscedasticity of error variance, a Chi-Square or Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test for normality, and box plots to test for no significant outliers. After testing for assumptions, the initial round of data analysis involves looking at the descriptive statistics table to determine group means, standard deviation, and standard error. The ANOVA table was then used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the group means by using the *p*-value. A *p*-value below 0.05 indicates a significant difference. If a significant difference exists, the null hypothesis is rejected. The initial analysis only gives the group means and information about whether a significant difference exists. No explanation of how the groups differ can be inferred from the tables. After the initial round of analysis, I then used the Tukey post hoc test. The post hoc test generates the multiple comparisons table, which determines which groups differed from each other. The table gives the statistical significance between each variable, mean difference, and standard error. By interpreting this table, the difference can be stated between the independent groups and answering research question two.

3.To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, science, social studies, and mathematics?

A two-way ANOVA is used to compare the two independent variables for research question three. The first independent variable contains two groups: teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. The second independent variable, academic content areas, contain four groups: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Because research question three focuses on the effect of academic content areas, non-academic content teachers are excluded. Non-academic content teachers include special education teachers, teachers in support positions, and any other teacher who does not teach academic content areas. Also, to avoid overlapping effects related to academic content areas, teachers who teach multiple subjects are excluded from research question three, as it is challenging to determine whether their subjects include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. In addition, teachers who teach Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels are excluded from the study, as it is challenging to determine whether their grade levels include the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

To test for assumptions, Levene's test is used to test for homoscedasticity of error variance, a Chi-Square or Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test for normality, and box plots to test for no significant outliers. After testing for assumptions, the initial round of data analysis involves looking at the descriptive statistics table to determine group means, standard deviation, and standard error. The ANOVA table is then used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the group means by using the *p*-value. A *p*-value below 0.05 indicates a significant difference. If a significant difference exists, the null hypothesis is rejected. The initial analysis only gives the group

means and information about whether a significant difference exists. No explanation of how the groups differ can be inferred from the tables. After the initial round of analysis, I then used the Tukey post hoc test. The post hoc test generates the multiple comparisons table, which determines which groups differ from each other. The table gives the statistical significance between each variable, mean difference, and standard error. By interpreting this table, the difference can be stated between the independent groups and answering research question three.

Summary

This study was developed to examine teacher morale levels among (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels: six, seven, and eight, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics science, and social studies. A descriptive research design was used to answer the research questions. Data were collected using a survey, a portion of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*, from southeast Georgia middle school teachers who work in the Okefenokee RESA. The survey link was sent to potential participants through a series of LISTSERVs, which were acquired through district technology directors. Data were collected and analyzed using one-way ANOVAs and two-way ANOVAs.

The following chapter presents the findings from the data collection process. A detailed look at the data and findings regarding the impact of teacher morale levels

among (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels: six, seven, and eight, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment or no Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics science, and social studies was discussed.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides an overview of the study, which includes the purpose of the study, design, methodology, and data collection. The research questions are stated, and results based on the data are discussed for each research question. Additionally, key findings are highlighted to illustrate trends or patterns discovered from the analysis.

This study aimed to examine teacher morale levels among middle school teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Educator responses from *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* were used to determine teacher morale levels for each participant. The teachers' responses, which were placed into categories based on demographic responses, were compared to determine differences in teacher morale levels for each independent variable group in the study. SPSS was used to analyze data for this study.

Data Management

Survey data were collected using Qualtrics. Once collected, the data were cleaned and prepared for analysis by the researcher. Missing values were filled using the mean of the available data points for each survey question specific to each participant. The response options for each statement were: (1) Disagree = 1, (2) Probably Disagree = 2, (3) Probably Agree = 3, and (4) Agree = 4. A response of "Disagree" was coded as 1, indicating lower teacher morale and a more negative perception of working conditions or teaching job satisfaction. Conversely, selecting "Agree" was coded as 4, reflecting higher

teacher morale and a positive perception of working conditions or teaching job satisfaction. For reverse-coded items, responses were adjusted so that the lower score accurately reflected lower teacher morale. SPSS was used to manage and analyze data. Guidelines for interpreting the mean score of teacher morale, as shown in Table 6, were used to explain the results. For example, if a mean score fell between 1 and 1.25, it reflected a very low teacher morale.

Table 6

Guidelines for Interpreting the Mean Score of Teacher Morale

Mean Score of Teacher Morale	Definition
1.00 – 1.25	Very Low Teacher Morale
1.26 – 1.99	Moderately Low Teacher Morale
2.00 – 2.75	Moderate Teacher Morale
2.76 – 3.49	Moderately High Teacher Morale
3.50 – 4.00	High Teacher Morale

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study. Teachers were grouped based on whether they taught a subject that included a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, as outlined in Table 1 in Chapter 1.

1. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?
2. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?

3. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies?

Participant Background Information

The sample was taken from teachers who work in the Okefenokee RESA in southeast Georgia. Data were collected from 282 participants using Qualtrics. Table 7 summarizes participant demographic data.

Table 7

Participant Demographic Data

Demographic Category	Groups	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	62	22%
	Female	220	78%
Ethnicity	African American	22	7.8%
	Caucasian/White	251	89%
	Hispanic	2	0.7%
	Other	7	2.5%
Age	Under 25	13	4.6%
	26-30	28	9.9%
	31-35	44	15.6%
	36-40	40	14.2%
	41-45	41	14.5%
	46-50	37	13.1%
	51-55	39	13.8%
	56 and over	40	14.2%
Year of Experience	0-5	60	21.3%
	6-10	54	19.1%
	11-17	61	21.6%
	18-24	53	18.8%
	25-30	54	19.1%
Highest Degree Earned	Bachelor's	75	26.6%
	Master's	111	39.4%
	Specialist	70	24.8%
	Doctorate	24	8.5%
	Other	2	0.7%
Grade Level Taught	Sixth	68	24.1%
	Seventh	52	18.4%
	Eighth	75	26.6%
	Multiple	87	30.9%
Subject Taught	ELA	72	25.5%
	Math	54	19.1%
	Science	32	11.3%
	Social Studies	33	11.7%
	Special Education	32	11.3%
	Vocational	6	2.1%
	Other	31	11.0%
	Multiple Subjects	22	7.8%

According to Table 7, 220 of the 282 teachers who responded to the survey were female, and 62 were male. Seventy-eight percent of the participants in the group were

female. Of the respondents, 22 identified as African American, 251 identified as Caucasian, two identified as Hispanic, and seven identified as Other. Approximately 89% of the group identified as Caucasian, making up the majority. Additionally, among those who responded to the survey, most participants held a master's degree (n = 111), followed by those with a bachelor's degree (n = 75), a specialist degree (n = 70), a doctorate (n = 24), and a small number (n = 2) who did not classify their degree.

The age range of the respondents included: (a) 13 respondents in the under 25 age range, (b) 28 respondents in the 26-30 age range, (c) 44 respondents in the 31-35 age range, (d) 40 respondents in the 36-40 age range, (e) 41 respondents in the 41-45 age range, (f) 37 respondents in the 46-50 age range, (g) 39 respondents in the 51-55 age range, and (f) 40 respondents were 56 and older. The distribution of age groups was relatively balanced, although there were slightly fewer participants under 25 (n = 13) and 26-30 (n = 28).

The levels of teaching experience for the survey participants included: (a) 60 participants with 0-5 years of experience, (b) 54 participants with 6-10 years of experience, (c) 61 participants with 11-17 years of experience, (d) 53 participants with 18-24 years of experience, and (e) 54 participants with 25-30 years of experience. The distribution of teachers across various experience levels was fairly even, with a slightly higher number of participants with 0-5 years (n = 60) and 11-17 years (n = 61) of experience. All participants surveyed were middle school teachers. Of the 282 respondents, 68 were sixth-grade teachers, 52 were seventh-grade teachers, 75 were eighth-grade teachers, and 87 taught more than one grade level. The data indicated that the surveyed middle school teachers were fairly distributed across grade levels, with a

slightly higher representation of eighth-grade teachers (n = 75) and those who taught multiple grades (n = 87). The numbers suggested that 30.9% of teachers handled teaching responsibilities across different grade levels rather than being limited to a single grade. The content areas the survey participants taught included: (a) 72 ELA teachers, (b) 54 math teachers, (c) 32 science teachers, (d) 33 social studies teachers, (e) 32 special education teachers, (f) 6 vocational teachers, (g) 31 teachers teaching other subjects and (h) 22 teachers teaching multiple subjects. Teachers were relatively evenly distributed across content areas, though ELA (n = 72) and Math (n = 54) had a higher representation, whereas multiple subjects (n = 22) and vocational areas (n = 6) had fewer teachers.

Descriptive Data Analysis for All Responses

Descriptive data analysis helps summarize the data, show response distribution, and break down results by demographics. The process began with an overview of survey responses and individual subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status," followed by a breakdown of scores across different demographic groups.

As shown in Table 8, the overall mean score of the abbreviated *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*, based on the responses from 282 participants, was 2.94 with a standard deviation of .485, which fell within a range of 2.76 - 3.49, indicating moderately high teacher morale. Among the subscales, the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching" had the highest mean score of 3.17 with a standard deviation of .505, compared to the other subscales, including "teacher load" (M = 2.71, SD = .651) and "teacher status" (M = 2.66, SD = .655). Based on the *Guidelines for Interpreting the Mean Score of Teacher Morale* shown in Table 6, the mean scores for subscales "satisfaction with teaching" and

"teacher load" referred to moderately high teacher morale, while the mean score for "teacher Status" suggested a moderate level of teacher morale.

Table 8

Mean Scores of Survey and Subscales for All Responses

Survey/Subscales	*M*	*SD*
Overall Teacher Morale	2.94	.485
Satisfaction with Teaching	3.17	.505
Teacher Load	2.71	.651
Teacher Status	2.66	.655

Table 9 details the mean scores of the survey and its three subscales for all responses by demographic groups, including gender, ethnicity, age, year of teaching experience, highest degree earned, grade level, and content area/subject taught. First, according to the data shown in Table 9, the male group reported slightly higher mean scores than the female group in overall teacher morale (M = 2.96, SD = .540), as well as in the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.18, SD = .583), "teacher load" (M = 2.74, SD = .689), and "teacher status" (M = 2.74, SD = .629).

Second, the African American group exhibited the highest mean scores compared to other ethnic groups in overall teacher morale (M = 3.14, SD = .486), as well as in the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.33, SD = .504), "teacher load" (M = 3.03, SD = .516), and "teacher status" (M = 2.85, SD = .640). Conversely, the Hispanic group had the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (M = 2.83, SD = .490), "teacher load" (M = 2.27, SD = .257), and "teacher status" (M = 2.63, SD = .354) compared to other ethnic groups, except for "satisfaction with teaching." The Caucasian/White group reported the lowest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.16, SD = .506).

Third, the 36-40 age group achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (M = 3.09, SD = .466), "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.31, SD = .419), and "teacher status" (M = 2.90, SD = .568) compared to other age groups, except for "teacher load." Conversely, the lowest mean scores for overall teacher morale (M = 2.80, SD = .426) and "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 2.93, SD = .498) were observed in the under-25 age group. The lowest mean score for "teacher load" (M = 2.51, SD = .667) was found in the 56-and-over age group, while the lowest mean score for "teacher status" (M = 2.53, SD = .673) was observed in the 31-35 age group. The 46-50 age group reported the highest mean score for "teacher load" (M = 2.90, SD = .566).

Fourth, teachers with 25-30 years of teaching experience reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (M = 2.76, SD = .519) and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.01, SD = .578), "teacher load" (M = 2.49, SD = .569), and "teacher status" (M = 2.50, SD = .755) compared to other experience groups. On the other hand, teachers with 18-24 years of teaching experience achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (M = 3.08, SD = .457), "satisfaction with teaching" (M = 3.31, SD = .434), and "teacher status" (M = 2.82, SD = .693) compared to other experience groups, except for "teacher load." The teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience reported the highest mean score for "teacher load" (M = 2.93, SD = .567).

Fifth, regarding the highest degree earned, two participants in the "other" group did not provide their degree information; thus, their responses were excluded when identifying patterns in the descriptive data. According to the data shown in Table 9, teachers with a specialist degree reported the highest mean score in the overall teacher

morale (*M* = 3.02, *SD* = .501) and the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = .496) compared to other degree groups, except for "teacher load" and "teacher status." In contrast, teachers with a bachelor's degree had the lowest mean score in the overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = .568) and the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = .633) and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.59, *SD* = .682) compared to other degree groups, except for reporting the highest mean score for "teacher load." Instead, the teachers with a doctorate degree reported the lowest mean score for "teacher load" (*M* = 2.41, *SD* = .577) and the highest scores for "teacher status" (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .622).

Sixth, teachers who taught at 7th grade level reported the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .428) and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.36, *SD* = .420), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .664), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.86, *SD* = .640) compared to other grades. Conversely, teachers who taught at 8th grade level had the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .454) and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.08, *SD* = .484), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = .599), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.54, *SD* = .582) compared to other grades.

Seventh, teachers who taught special education had the highest mean score in the overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.04, *SD* = .472) and the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = .392) and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.84, *SD* = .701) compared to other subjects, except for "teacher load." On the contrary, teachers who taught Science reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.77, *SD* = .450) and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .485), "teacher

load" (M = 2.55, SD = .646), and "teacher status" (M = 2.44, SD = .602) compared to other subjects. The teachers who taught Math reported the highest mean score for "teacher load" (M = 2.82, SD = .563).

To summarize, participants reported the highest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale and the other two subscales, "teacher load" and "teacher status," regardless of their demographics. Conversely, participants reported the lowest mean score for "teacher status" regardless of their demographics, except for the Hispanic group; the 36-40 and 56-and-over age groups; the 11-17 and 25-30 years of teaching experience groups; the specialist and doctorate degree groups; and the ELA, other-subject, and multiple-subject groups, who exhibited the lowest mean score on "teacher load."

Table 9

Mean Scores of Survey and Subscales for All Responses by Demographics

Demographic Category	M_OTM (*M*/*SD*)	M_SWT (*M*/*SD*)	M_TL (*M*/*SD*)	M_TS (*M*/*SD*)
Gender:				
Male (*n* = 62)	2.96/.540	3.18/.583	2.74/.689	2.72/.629
Female (*n* = 220)	2.93/.470	3.17/.482	2.71/.642	2.65/.663
Ethnicity:				
African American (*n* = 22)	3.14/.486	3.33/.504	3.03/.516	2.85/.640
Caucasian/White (*n* = 251)	2.92/.482	3.16/.506	2.68/.653	2.65/.657
Hispanic (*n* = 2)	2.83/.490	3.23/.672	2.27/.257	2.63/.354
Other (*n* = 7)	3.02/.538	3.21/.454	2.92/.804	2.68/.703
Age:				
Under 25 (*n* = 13)	2.80/.426	2.93/.498	2.71/.436	2.63/.603
26-30 (*n* = 28)	2.88/.481	3.08/.525	2.75/.648	2.59/.624
31-35 (*n* = 44)	2.86/.517	3.11/.510	2.64/.710	2.53/.673
36-40 (*n* = 40)	3.09/.466	3.31/.419	2.82/.753	2.90/.568
41-45 (*n* = 41)	2.98/.410	3.27/.409	2.69/.587	2.66/.573
46-50 (*n* = 37)	3.02/.410	3.26/.459	2.90/.566	2.60/.530
51-55 (*n* = 39)	2.87/.481	3.05/.571	2.71/.636	2.63/.654
56 and over (*n* = 40)	2.91/.603	3.20/.580	2.51/.667	2.75/.882
Year of Experience:				
0-5 (*n* = 60)	3.03/.461	3.20/.506	2.93/.567	2.75/.589
6-10 (*n* = 54)	2.91/.469	3.15/.440	2.68/.666	2.65/.651
11-17 (*n* = 61)	2.91/.474	3.19/.519	2.61/.711	2.61/.563
18-24 (*n* = 53)	3.08/.457	3.31/.434	2.85/.650	2.82/.693
25-30 (*n* = 54)	2.76/.519	3.01/.578	2.49/.569	2.50/.755
Highest Degree Earned:				
Bachelor's (*n* = 75)	2.88/.568	3.06/.633	2.75/.647	2.59/.682
Master's (*n* = 111)	2.93/.427	3.16/.411	2.74/.641	2.63/.624
Specialist (*n* = 70)	3.02/.501	3.30/.496	2.70/.659	2.73/.683
Doctorate (*n* = 24)	2.88/.372	3.16/.400	2.41/.577	2.82/.622
~~Other (*n* = 2)~~	~~3.56/.363~~	~~3.50/.495~~	~~3.95/.064~~	~~3.19/.442~~
Grade Level Taught:				
Sixth (*n* = 68)	2.94/.468	3.11/.501	2.79/.601	2.73/.677
Seventh (*n* = 52)	3.16/.428	3.36/.420	2.99/.664	2.86/.640
Eighth (*n* = 75)	2.82/.454	3.08/.484	2.56/.599	2.54/.582
Multiple (*n* = 87)	2.90/.521	3.18/.547	2.62/.673	2.60/.681
Subject Taught:				
ELA (*n* = 72)	2.96/.470	3.18/.495	2.72/.662	2.76/.629
Math (*n* = 54)	2.99/.410	3.27/.446	2.82/.563	2.53/.620
Science (*n* = 32)	2.77/.450	3.03/.485	2.55/.646	2.44/.602
Social Studies (*n* = 33)	2.90/.566	3.07/.596	2.74/.617	2.71/.729
Special Education (*n* = 32)	3.04/.472	3.28/.392	2.75/.669	2.84/.701
Vocational (*n* = 6)	2.97/.168	3.25/.259	2.68/.600	2.65/.490
Other (*n* = 31)	2.93/.519	3.14/.529	2.69/.756	2.73/.661
Multiple Subjects (*n* = 22)	2.90/.632	3.17/.671	2.60/.740	2.63/.686

Analysis of the Research Questions

Data for this study were compiled from the results of the survey instrument, *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*. Various statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and ANOVAs, were used to analyze the data in SPSS. The report on advanced statistical analysis follows the order of the research questions.

Research Question One

Research Question 1: *To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?*

To better understand and compare teacher morale levels measured using *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire*, the mean score of each subscale was measured by adding all responses for the subscale together and dividing that number by the total number of items for each subscale, which gave an average score for each subscale of teacher morale. To achieve an overall teacher morale mean score, all responses were added together and divided by the total number of survey items.

Descriptive Statistics for RQ1

For research question one, teachers who taught multiple subjects were excluded, as it was challenging to determine whether their subjects included the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Additionally, teachers who taught Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels were excluded from the analysis for research question one, as deciding whether their grade levels included the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment was difficult. Thus, responses from 27 teachers were excluded from the analysis. This resulted in a total of 255 teachers, categorized into two groups: the GMAS

group, including 153 teachers who taught a subject with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, and the No GMAS group, including 102 teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment.

Table 10 details the No GMAS and GMAS groups and their mean scores for overall teacher morale and subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." The No GMAS group had a slightly higher overall teacher morale mean score (M = 2.98, SD = .485) than the GMAS group (M = 2.93, SD = .450). The mean scores for both groups fell between 2.76 and 3.49, suggesting a moderately high teacher morale. For the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching," the No GMAS group exhibited a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.19, SD = .474) compared to the GMAS group (M = 3.17, SD = .486), with both scores ranging from 2.76 to 3.49, reflecting moderately high teacher morale. When looking at the subscale of "teacher load," the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.77, SD = .674) than the GMAS group (M = 2.69, SD = .620). No GMAS group's mean score fell between 2.76 and 3.49, indicating moderately high teacher morale. However, for this particular subscale, the GMAS group's mean score fell from 2.00 to 2.75, meaning moderate teacher morale. For the subscale of "teacher status," the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.74, SD = .686) than the GMAS group (M = 2.64, SD = .616), with both scores ranging from 2.00 to 2.75, reflecting a moderate level of teacher morale.

In summary, several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data for research question one. Consistently, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score than the GMAS group in overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load and "teacher status." In addition, participants reported the

highest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale and the other two subscales, "teacher load" and "teacher status," regardless of whether they had GMAS or not. Advanced statistical analysis, such as ANOVA, was conducted to determine significant differences and further examine the results.

Table 10

Mean Scores of Survey and Subscales by GMAS Groups

	No GMAS		GMAS	
Survey/Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Overall Teacher Morale	2.98	.485	2.93	.450
Satisfaction with Teaching	3.19	.474	3.17	.486
Teacher Load	2.77	.674	2.69	.620
Teacher Status	2.74	.686	2.64	.616

ANOVA Results for RQ1

Table 11 details the results of Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, which helped assess whether the variances of the groups being compared were equal for research question one. The test was conducted on the overall teacher morale score and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." For the overall teacher morale mean score, Levene's test results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated, $F(1, 253) = .214$, $p = .644 > .05$, indicating that the variances of the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal. This satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances for ANOVA, which also applied to the three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 253) = 1.187$, $p = .277 > .05$, "teacher load," $F(1, 253) = .379$, $p = .538 > .05$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 253) = 1.674$, $p = .197 > 0.5$.

Table 11

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances for RQ1

Survey/Subscales		Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig.*
Overall Teacher Morale	Based on Mean	.214	1	253	.644
Satisfaction With Teaching	Based on Mean	1.187	1	253	.277
Teacher Load	Based on Mean	.379	1	253	.538
Teacher Status	Based on Mean	1.674	1	253	.197

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 12 represents the results from the one-way ANOVA used to compare the mean morale scores of teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (GMAS) and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (No GMAS). For the overall teacher morale, a one-way ANOVA analysis indicated no significant difference between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 253) = .852$, $p = .357 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$. Similar results were observed for the three subscales. For the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching," the results of a one-way ANOVA analysis showed no significant variation in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 253) = .090$, $p = .764 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. Furthermore, the results of a one-way ANOVA analysis showed no significant variation in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups responding to "teacher load," $F(1, 253) = .997$, $p = .319 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$ and "teacher status," $F(1, 253) = 1.725$, $p = .190 > .05$. $\eta^2 = .007$. Even though the ANOVA results did not show statistically significant differences in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, failing to reject the null hypothesis, the descriptive statistics indicated a notable pattern, with the No GMAS group consistently scoring slightly higher than the GMAS group in relation to overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." The ANOVA results may be affected by the specific teachers included in the

analysis. The pattern in the descriptive data indicated a possible difference that may become more evident with a larger sample size or further research.

Table 12

ANOVA Comparing GMAS Groups for RQ1

Survey/Subscales		*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	η^2
Overall Teacher Morale	Between Groups	.184	1	.184	.852	.357	.003
	Within Groups	54.584	253	.216			
	Total	54.768	254				
Satisfaction With Teaching	Between Groups	.021	1	.021	.090	.764	.000
	Within Groups	58.650	253	.232			
	Total	58.671	254				
Teacher Load	Between Groups	.411	1	.411	.997	.319	.004
	Within Groups	104.368	253	.413			
	Total	104.780	254				
Teacher Status	Between Groups	.717	1	.717	1.725	.190	.007
	Within Groups	105.198	253	.416			
	Total	105.915	254				

Note. * $p < .05$

To summarize, there was no significant difference in overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including “satisfaction with teaching,” “teacher load,” and “teacher status,” between the No GMAS and GMAS groups in relation to research question one. Even though the ANOVA results did not show any statistically significant difference in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the descriptive statistics suggested a notable pattern, with the No GMAS group consistently scoring slightly higher than the GMAS group in relation to overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including “satisfaction with teaching,” “teacher load,” and “teacher status.” The ANOVA results may be influenced by the specific teachers included in the analysis, indicating a need for a larger sample size or additional research.

Research Question Two

Research Question 2: *To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?*

Descriptive Statistics for RQ2

For research question two, again, teachers who taught multiple subjects were excluded from the analysis, as it was challenging to determine whether their subjects included the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. In addition, because research question two also examined the impact of grade level, teachers who instructed multiple grade levels were excluded from the analysis, regardless of their content areas, to prevent overlapping effects related to grade level. Thus, responses from 94 teachers were excluded from the analysis. This resulted in a total of 188 teachers, categorized into two groups: (1) the GMAS group, including 136 teachers who taught a subject with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, and (2) the No GMAS group, including 52 teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Of the 188 teachers, 64 taught sixth grade, 49 taught seventh grade, and 75 taught eighth grade (see Table 13).

Table 13

Distribution of Participants Among Groups for RQ2

w/o GMAS / Grade Level	No GMAS	GMAS	Subtotal
Sixth Grade	25	39	64
Seventh Grade	18	31	49
Eighth Grade	9	66	75
Subtotal	52	136	188

Table 14 represents the descriptive statistics for the mean score of overall teacher morale and all three subscales, broken down by grade level, between the No GMAS and the GMAS groups. For overall teacher morale, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.96, SD = .442) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.92, SD = .516) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.16, SD = .399) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.13, SD = .485). Conversely, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.89, SD = .493) than the GMAS group (M = 2.82, SD = .452) in grade 8.

For "satisfaction with teaching," the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.14, SD = .519) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.07, SD = .502) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.41, SD = .401) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.28, SD = .447). Alternatively, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.16, SD = .448) than the GMAS group (M = 3.07, SD = .491) in grade 8.

For "teacher load," the mean score of the No GMAS group (M = 2.78, SD = .647) was similar to that of the GMAS group (M = 2.78, SD = .535) in grade 6. In grade 7, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.10, SD = .584) than the GMAS group (M = 2.90, SD = .709). On the contrary, the GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.56, SD = .611) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.55, SD = .528) in grade 8.

For "teacher status," the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.73, SD = .630) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.71, SD = .788) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.87, SD = .281) than the

No GMAS group (M = 2.81, SD = .686). In contrast, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.68, SD = .758) than the GMAS group (M = 2.52, SD = .558) in grade 8.

In the comparison, several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and the other subscales. Second, the mean scores for overall teacher morale and all three subscales in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups for 7th grade were slightly higher than the other two grades. Third, 8th grade groups with or without GMAS had slightly lower mean scores than the other two grades, except for the No GMAS group responding to "satisfaction with teaching." Fourth, the comparison pattern between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, with the No GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, remained consistent across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." The only exception to this pattern appears in "teacher load." Further advanced statistical testing was needed to determine if these differences were statistically significant.

Table 14

Mean Scores of Survey and Subscales by w/o GMAS and Grade Level

	No GMAS		GMAS	
Survey/Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Overall Teacher Morale:				
6th Grade	2.92	.516	2.96	.442
7th Grade	3.13	.485	3.16	.399
8th Grade	2.89	.493	2.82	.452
Satisfaction with Teaching:				
6th Grade	3.07	.502	3.14	.519
7th Grade	3.28	.447	3.41	.401
8th Grade	3.16	.448	3.07	.491
Teacher Load:				
6th Grade	2.78	.647	2.78	.535
7th Grade	3.10	.584	2.90	.709
8th Grade	2.55	.528	2.56	.611
Teacher Status:				
6th Grade	2.71	.788	2.73	.630
7th Grade	2.81	.698	2.87	.617
8th Grade	2.68	.758	2.52	.558

ANOVA Results for RQ2

Table 15 details the results of Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, which helps assess whether the variances of the groups being compared are equal for research question two. The test was conducted on the overall teacher morale score and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." For the overall teacher morale mean score, Levene's test results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated, $F(5, 182) = .558$, $p = .732 > .05$, indicating that the variances of the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal. This satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances for ANOVA, which also applied to the three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(5, 182) = .730$, $p = .602 > .05$, "teacher load," $F(5, 182) = 1.180$, $p = .321 > .05$, and "teacher status," $F(5, 182) = 1.432$, $p = .215 > 0.5$.

Table 15

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances for RQ2

Survey/Subscales		Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig.*
Overall Teacher Morale	Based on Mean	.558	5	182	.732
Satisfaction with Teaching	Based on Mean	.730	5	182	.602
Teacher Load	Based on Mean	1.180	5	182	.321
Teacher Status	Based on Mean	1.432	5	182	.215

Note. * $p < .05$

Given that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was held, a two-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. Table 16 represents the results from the two-way ANOVA analysis comparing the mean morale scores of teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (GMAS) and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (No GMAS) based on grade levels. Regarding the main effect of GMAS on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale and all three subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." For the overall teacher morale, a two-way ANOVA analysis indicated no significant difference between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 182) = .000$, $p = .989 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. Similar results were observed for the three subscales. For the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching," the results of a two-way ANOVA analysis showed no significant variation in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 182) = .238$, $p = .627 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .001$. Furthermore, the results of a two-way ANOVA analysis showed no significant variation in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups responding to "teacher load," $F(1, 182) = .343$, $p = .559 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 182) = .036$, $p = .849 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. Overall, the ANOVA results related to GMAS presence were consistent with the descriptive data results for research question two. While the

descriptive data indicated that the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, this pattern remained stable across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status," except for "teacher status." However, no clear pattern of significant differences emerged based on the presence or absence of GMAS.

Table 16

ANOVA for Comparing GMAS Groups by Grade Level for RQ2

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	η^2
Overall Teacher Morale:						
Corrected Model	3.155[a]	5	.631	3.034	.012	.077
Intercept	1140.325	1	1140.325	5484.462	<.001	.968
Grade Level	1.853	2	.926	4.456*	.013	.047
w/o GMAS	4.227E-5	1	4.227E-5	.000	.989	.000
Grade Level * w/o GMAS	.068	2	.034	.163	.850	.002
Error	37.841	182	.208			
Total	1674.586	188				
Corrected Total	40.996	187				
a. R^2 = .077 (Adjusted R^2 = .052)						
Satisfaction With Teaching:						
Corrected Model	2.874[a]	5	.575	2.505	.032	.064
Intercept	1308.117	1	1308.117	5699.779	<.001	.969
Grade Level	1.675	2	.837	3.648*	.028	.039
w/o GMAS	.055	1	.055	.238	.627	.001
Grade Level * w/o GMAS	.223	2	.112	.486	.616	.005
Error	41.770	182	.230			
Total	1929.655	188				
Corrected Total	44.644	187				
a. R^2 = .064 (Adjusted R^2 = .039)						
Teacher Load:						
Corrected Model	5.760[a]	5	1.152	3.069	.011	.078
Intercept	993.072	1	993.072	2645.623	<.001	.936
Grade Level	3.780	2	1.890	5.035*	.007	.052
w/o GMAS	.129	1	.129	.343	.559	.002
Grade Level * w/o GMAS	.333	2	.167	.444	.642	.005
Error	68.316	182	.375			
Total	1487.339	188				
Corrected Total	74.076	187				
a. R^2 = .078 (Adjusted R^2 = .052)						
Teacher Status:						
Corrected Model	3.228[a]	5	.646	1.577	.169	.042
Intercept	953.096	1	953.096	2328.231	<.001	.927
Grade Level	1.078	2	.539	1.317	.270	.014
w/o GMAS	.015	1	.015	.036	.849	.000
Grade Level * w/o GMAS	.261	2	.130	.318	.728	.003
Error	74.504	182	.409			
Total	1432.234	188				
Corrected Total	77.732	187				
a. R^2 = .042 (Adjusted R^2 = .015)						

Note. * $p < .05$

Regarding the main effect of grade level on teacher morale, significant differences were found among grade-level groups in responding to overall teacher morale and two subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." First, a two-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of grade level on overall teacher morale, $F(2, 182) = 4.456$, $p = .013 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .047$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .428$) reported a significantly higher mean score for overall teacher morale than those teaching at the 6th grade level ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .469$, $p = .048 < .05$, $d = .21$, 95% CI [.00, .41]) and the 8th grade level ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .454$, $p < .001$, $d = .32$, 95% CI [.12, .52]) (see Table 17). Second, a two-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of grade level on "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182) = 3.648$, $p = .028 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .039$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .419$) reported a significantly higher mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" than those teaching at the 6th grade level ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .510$, $p = .019 < .05$, $d = .25$, 95% CI [.03, .46]) and the 8th grade level ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .484$, $p = .006 < .05$, $d = .28$, 95% CI [.07, .48]) (see Table 17). Third, a two-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of grade level on "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = 5.035$, $p = .007 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .052$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .667$) reported a significantly higher mean score for "teacher load" than those teaching at the 8th grade level ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .599$, $p < .001$, $d = .42$, 95% CI [.15, .68]) (see Table 17). In contrast, the ANOVA results showed no significant difference in teacher morale related to "teacher status" across the three grades, $F(2, 182) = 1.317$, $p = .270 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .014$. Overall, the ANOVA results suggested that grade level

had a significant impact on overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Although there were no significant differences found in the effect of grade level on "teacher status," the descriptive data did show that 7th grade teachers reported slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and its three subscales compared to the other grade levels, regardless of whether GMAS was present or not.

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and grade level on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among groups in responding to overall teacher morale and all three subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." A two-way ANOVA assessed the interaction between grade level (6th, 7th, and 8th) and GMAS presence (No GMAS vs. GMAS) on overall teacher morale. The results indicated no significant interaction effect, $F(2, 182) = .163$, $p = .850 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, suggesting that the relationship between GMAS presence and overall teacher morale did not differ across different grade levels. Similar results applied to its three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182) = .486$, $p = .616 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = .444$, $p = .642 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, and "teacher status," $F(2, 182) = .318$, $p = .728 > 0.5$, $\eta^2 = .003$. This suggested that no significant differences were found in the relationship between the presence of GMAS and teacher morale across different grade levels. However, some variation was observed in the descriptive data, such as the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade responding to overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status."

However, the observed variation did not support a definitive claim, suggesting the need for a larger sample size or further research.

Table 17

Tukey's HSD Post Hoc Analysis for Grade Level in Relation to RQ2

					95% CI	
(I) Grade Level	(J) Grade Level	*MD (I-J)*	*SE*	*Sig.*	Lower	Upper
Overall Teacher Morale:						
6th	7th	-.21*	.087	.048	-.41	.00
	8th	.12	.078	.296	-.07	.30
7th	6th	.21*	.087	.048	.00	.41
	8th	.32*	.084	<.001	.12	.52
8th	6th	-.12	.078	.296	-.30	.07
	7th	-.32*	.084	<.001	-.52	-.12
Satisfaction With Teaching:						
6th	7th	-.25*	.091	.019	-.46	-.03
	8th	.03	.082	.934	-.16	.22
7th	6th	.25*	.091	.019	.03	.46
	8th	.28*	.088	.006	.07	.48
8th	6th	-.03	.082	.934	-.22	.16
	7th	-.28*	.088	.006	-.48	-.07
Teacher Load:						
6th	7th	-.19	.116	.236	-.46	.09
	8th	.23	.104	.079	-.02	.47
7th	6th	.19	.116	.236	-.09	.46
	8th	.42*	.113	<.001	.15	.68
8th	6th	-.23	.104	.079	-.47	.02
	7th	-.42*	.113	<.001	-.68	-.15

Note. * $p < .05$

To summarize, first, no significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale and all three subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." The ANOVA results related to GMAS presence were consistent with the descriptive data results for research question two. The descriptive data indicated that the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with

teaching," and "teacher status," except for "teacher load." However, no clear pattern of significant differences emerged based on the presence or absence of GMAS. Second, significant differences were found among grade-level groups in responding to overall teacher morale and two subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers at the 7th grade level reported significantly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" than those teaching at the 6th and 8th grade levels. In addition, teachers at the 7th grade level reported a significantly higher mean score for "teacher load" than those teaching at the 8th grade level. The ANOVA results suggested that grade level had a significant impact on overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Although there were no significant differences found in the effect of grade level on "teacher status," the descriptive data did show that 7th grade teachers reported slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and its three subscales compared to the other grade levels, regardless of whether GMAS was present or not. Lastly, no significant differences were found related to the interaction effect of GMAS and grade level on overall teacher morale and all three subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status" among groups. This suggested no significant differences were found in the relationship between the presence of GMAS and teacher morale across different grade levels, although some variation was observed in the descriptive data, such as the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, while the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade regarding overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching,"

and “teacher status.” However, the observed variation did not support a definitive claim, suggesting the need for a larger sample size or further research.

Research Question Three

Research Question 3: *To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies?*

Descriptive Statistics for RQ3

For research question three, because it focused on the effect of academic content areas, non-academic content teachers were excluded from the analysis. Also, to avoid overlapping effects related to academic content areas, teachers who taught multiple subjects were excluded from the analysis, as it was challenging to determine whether their subjects included the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. In addition, teachers who taught Science and Social Studies across multiple grade levels were excluded from the analysis, as determining whether their grade levels included the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment was difficult. Thus, responses from 96 teachers were excluded from the analysis. This resulted in a total of 186 teachers, categorized into two groups: (1) the GMAS group, including 153 teachers who taught a subject with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, and (2) the No GMAS group, including 33 teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Of the 186 teachers, 72 taught ELA, 54 taught Math, 28 taught Science, and 32 taught Social Studies (see Table 18).

Table 18

Distribution of Participants Among Groups for RQ3

w/o GMAS / Content Area	NO GMAS	GMAS	Subtotal
ELA	0	72	72
Math	0	54	54
Science	17	11	28
Social Studies	16	16	32
Subtotal	33	153	186

Table 19 represents the descriptive statistics for the mean score of overall teacher morale and all three subscales, broken down by content area/subject, between the No GMAS and the GMAS groups. Teachers in ELA and Math taught with the presence of GMAS across various grade levels; thus, only GMAS groups existed for these two subjects. For overall teacher morale, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.84, SD = .428) than the GMAS group (M = 2.67, SD = .264) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.12, SD = .570) than the GMAS group (M = 2.72, SD = .501).

Regarding the three subscales, for "satisfaction with teaching," the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.08, SD = .442) than the GMAS group (M = 2.97, SD = .348) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.21, SD = .603) than the GMAS group (M = 2.96, SD = .583). For "teacher load," the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.75, SD = .627) than the GMAS group (M = 2.17, SD = .400) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.03, SD = .606) than the GMAS group (M = 2.47, SD = .527). For "teacher status," the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.59, SD = .461) than the No GMAS group

(M = 2.38, SD = .629) in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.02, SD = .724) than the GMAS group (M = 2.49, SD = .584).

Several notable patterns emerged from the descriptive data during the comparison. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and the three subscales in both Science and Social Studies. The same pattern emerged even among the GMAS groups in ELA and Math. Second, the GMAS group reported slightly higher mean scores in Math for overall teacher morale and two subscales, "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load," compared to other content areas, except for "teacher status." Third, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups reported slightly lower mean scores for overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load," except for the GMAS group in "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher status." Lastly, the No GMAS group exhibited slightly higher mean scores in overall teacher morale and three subscales - "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status" - compared to the GMAS group in both Science and Social studies, except for Science teachers' responses to "teacher status." Further advanced statistical testing was needed to determine if these differences were statistically significant.

Table 19

Mean Scores of Survey and Subscales by w/o GMAS and Content Area

	No GMAS		GMAS	
Survey/Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Overall Teacher Morale:				
ELA	-	-	2.96	.470
Math	-	-	2.99	.410
Science	2.84	.428	2.67	.264
Social Studies	3.12	.570	2.72	.501
Satisfaction with Teaching:				
ELA	-	-	3.18	.495
Math	-	-	3.27	.446
Science	3.08	.442	2.97	.348
Social Studies	3.21	.603	2.96	.583
Teacher Load:				
ELA	-	-	2.72	.662
Math	-	-	2.82	.563
Science	2.75	.627	2.17	.400
Social Studies	3.03	.606	2.47	.527
Teacher Status:				
ELA	-	-	2.76	.629
Math	-	-	2.53	.620
Science	2.38	.629	2.59	.461
Social Studies	3.02	.724	2.49	.584

ANOVA Results for RQ3

Table 20 details the results of Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, which helps assess whether the variances of the groups being compared are equal for research question three. The test was conducted on the overall teacher morale score and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load and "teacher status." For the overall teacher morale mean score, Levene's test results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated, $F(5, 180) = 1.557$, $p = .175 > .05$, indicating that the variances of the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal. This satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variances for ANOVA, which also applied to the three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(5, 180) = .771$, $p = .572 >$

.05, “teacher load,” $F(5, 180) = 1.148$, $p = .337 > .05$, and “teacher status,” $F(5, 180) = .433$, $p = .826 > 0.5$.

Table 20

Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances for RQ3

Survey/Subscales		Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig.*
Overall Teacher Morale	Based on Mean	1.557	5	180	.175
Satisfaction with Teaching	Based on Mean	.771	5	180	.572
Teacher Load	Based on Mean	1.148	5	180	.337
Teacher Status	Based on Mean	.433	5	180	.826

Note. * $p < .05$

Given that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was held, a two-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. Table 21 represents the results from the two-way ANOVA analysis comparing the mean morale scores of teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (GMAS) and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment (No GMAS) based on content areas for RQ3. Teachers in ELA and Math taught with the presence of GMAS across various grade levels; thus, only GMAS groups existed for these two subjects.

Table 21

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances for RQ3

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	η^2
Overall Teacher Morale:						
Corrected Model	2.404[a]	5	.481	2.346	.043	.061
Intercept	1055.072	1	1055.072	5146.648	<.001	.966
Content Area	1.923	3	.641	3.127*	.027	.050
w/o GMAS	1.192	1	1.192	5.815*	.017	.031
Content Area * w/o GMAS	.175	1	.175	.854	.357	.005
Error	36.900	180	.205			
Total	1641.326	186				
Corrected Total	39.305	185				
a. R^2 = .061 (Adjusted R^2 = .035)						
Satisfaction With Teaching:						
Corrected Model	1.852[a]	5	.370	1.555	.175	.041
Intercept	1214.938	1	1214.938	5101.833	<.001	.966
Content Area	1.625	3	.542	2.274	.082	.037
w/o GMAS	.472	1	.472	1.981	.161	.011
Content Area * w/o GMAS	.085	1	.085	.356	.552	.002
Error	42.865	180	.238			
Total	1909.250	186				
Corrected Total	44.717	185				
a. R^2 = .041 (Adjusted R^2 = .015)						
Teacher Load:						
Corrected Model	6.413[a]	5	1.283	3.525	.005	.089
Intercept	925.779	1	925.779	2544.318	<.001	.934
Content Area	5.273	3	1.758	4.831*	.003	.075
w/o GMAS	4.777	1	4.777	13.127*	<.001	.068
Content Area * w/o GMAS	.004	1	.004	.010	.920	.000
Error	65.495	180	.364			
Total	1452.901	186				
Corrected Total	71.908	185				
a. R^2 = .089 (Adjusted R^2 = .064)						
Teacher Status:						
Corrected Model	5.393[a]	5	1.079	2.777	.019	.072
Intercept	862.754	1	862.754	2221.475	<.001	.925
Content Area	2.808	3	.936	2.410	.069	.039
w/o GMAS	.361	1	.361	.929	.336	.005
Content Area * w/o GMAS	1.950	1	1.950	5.022*	.026	.027
Error	69.907	180	.388			
Total	1376.719	186				
Corrected Total	75.299	185				
a. R^2 = .072 (Adjusted R^2 = .046)						

Note. * $p < .05$

Regarding the main effect of GMAS on teacher morale, significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale and the subscale of "teacher load." First, for the overall teacher morale, a two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant difference between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 180) = 5.815$, $p = .017 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .031$. This was consistent with the pattern observed in the descriptive data, where the No GMAS group had higher overall teacher morale scores than the GMAS group in both Science and Social Studies. To assess the robustness of this difference, an independent *t*-test was conducted for post-hoc comparison, as traditional post-hoc tests were not performed for w/o GMAS groups in relation to research question three due to the presence of fewer than three groups. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of w/o GMAS on overall teacher morale, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $t(184) = .585$, $p = .559 > .05$, Cohen's $d = .112$, 95% CI [-.12, .23]). The results of these comparisons may suggest that while there was some variation in overall teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the differences were not statistically robust areas (see Table 22). This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences.

Table 22

Post Hoc t-Test Results for w/o GMAS (RQ3)

	No GMAS		GMAS					
Survey/Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Overall Teacher Morale	2.98	.514	2.93	.450	184	.585	.559	.112
Teacher Load	2.89	.623	2.69	.620	184	1.656	.099	.318

Note. * $p < .05$

Second, similar ANOVA results were observed for the subscale of "teacher load." A two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant difference between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $F(1, 180) = 13.127$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .068$. This was consistent with the pattern observed in the descriptive data, where the No GMAS group had higher mean scores in "teacher load" than the GMAS group in both Science and Social Studies. To assess the robustness of this difference, an independent t-test was conducted for post-hoc comparison, as traditional post-hoc tests were not performed for w/o GMAS groups in relation to research question three due to the presence of fewer than three groups. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of w/o GMAS on "teacher load," post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in "teacher load" between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, $t(184) = 1.656$, $p = .099 > .05$, Cohen's $d = .318$, 95% CI [-.04, .43]). Again, the results of these comparisons may suggest that while there was some variation in "teacher load" between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the differences were not statistically robust. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Lastly, no significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 180) = 1.981$, $p = .161 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .011$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 180) = .929$, $p = .336 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$.

Regarding the main effect of content areas on teacher morale, significant differences were found across content areas in responding to overall teacher morale and the subscale of "teacher load." First, a significant main effect of content areas on overall teacher morale was found, $F(3, 180) = 3.127$, $p = .027 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .050$. The ANOVA results were consistent with the patterns observed in the descriptive data, where the

GMAS group in Math scored higher for overall teacher morale than other content areas. In addition, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups scored slightly lower for overall teacher morale than in other content areas. To evaluate the strength of this difference, traditional post-hoc tests were conducted for pairwise comparisons across content areas. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale across content areas (see Table 23). The results of these comparisons may suggest that although some variation in overall teacher morale across content areas was present, the differences were not statistically strong. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences.

Second, similar ANOVA results were observed for the subscale of "teacher load." A significant main effect of content areas on "teacher load" was found, $F(3, 180) = 4.831$, $p = .003 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .075$. The ANOVA results were consistent with the patterns observed in the descriptive data, where the GMAS group in Math scored higher for "teacher load" than other content areas. In addition, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups scored slightly lower for "teacher load" than other content areas. To evaluate the strength of this difference, traditional post-hoc tests were conducted for pairwise comparisons across content areas. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in "teacher load" across content areas (see Table 23). The results of these comparisons may suggest that although some variation in "teacher load" across content areas was present, the differences were not statistically strong. This could be

attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Lastly, no significant differences were found across content areas in responding to the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," $F(3, 180) = 2.274$, $p = .082 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .037$, and "teacher status," $F(3, 180) = 2.410$, $p = .069 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .039$.

Table 23

Tukey's HSD Post Hoc Analysis for Content Area in Relation to RQ3

					95% CI	
(I) Content	(J) Content	*MD (I-J)*	*SE*	*Sig.*	Lower	Upper
Overall Teacher Morale:						
ELA	Math	-.03	.082	.989	-.24	.19
	Science	.19	.101	.244	-.07	.45
	Social Studies	.04	.096	.975	-.21	.29
Math	ELA	.03	.082	.989	-.19	.24
	Science	.21	.105	.178	-.06	.49
	Social Studies	.07	.101	.913	-.20	.33
Science	ELA	-.19	.101	.244	-.45	.07
	Math	-.21	.105	.178	-.49	.06
	Social Studies	-.15	.117	.585	-.45	.16
Social Studies	ELA	-.04	.096	.975	-.29	.21
	Math	-.07	.101	.913	-.33	.20
	Science	.15	.117	.585	-.16	.45
Teacher Load:						
ELA	Math	-.09	.109	.827	-.37	.19
	Science	.20	.134	.443	-.15	.55
	Social Studies	-.03	.128	.997	-.36	.31
Math	ELA	.09	.109	.827	-.19	.37
	Science	.29	.140	.160	-.07	.66
	Social Studies	.07	.135	.960	-.28	.42
Science	ELA	-.20	.134	.443	-.55	.15
	Math	-.29	.140	.160	-.66	.07
	Social Studies	-.23	.156	.466	-.63	.18
Social Studies	ELA	.03	.128	.997	-.31	.36
	Math	-.07	.135	.960	-.42	.28
	Science	.23	.156	.466	-.18	.63

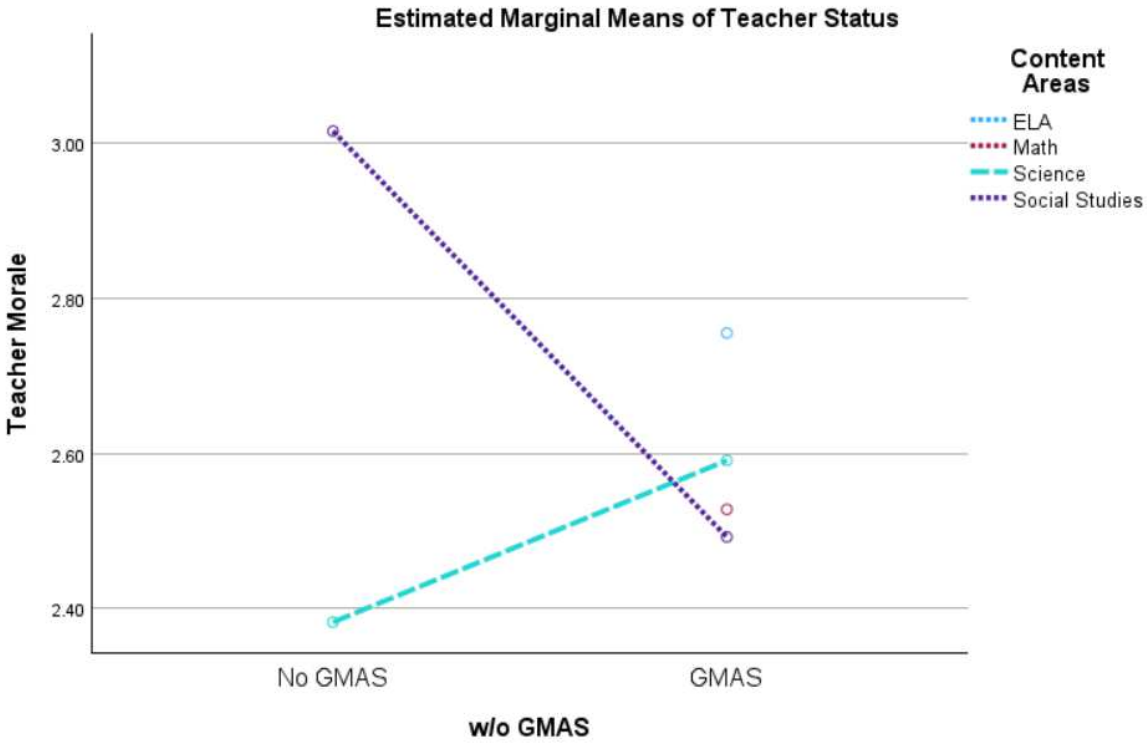
Note. * $p < .05$

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and content areas on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among groups in responding to overall teacher morale and two subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." A two-way

ANOVA analysis assessed the interaction across content areas (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) and the presence of GMAS (No GMAS vs. GMAS) on overall teacher morale. The ANOVA results indicated no significant interaction effect, $F(1, 180) = .854$, $p = .357 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, suggesting that the relationship between the presence of GMAS and overall teacher morale did not differ across different content areas. Similar results applied to its two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 180) = .356$, $p = .552 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$), and "teacher load," $F(1, 180) = .010$, $p = .920 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. On the other hand, a two-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to examine the effects of content areas (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) and presence of GMAS (No GMAS vs. GMAS) on teacher morale in relation to "teacher status." The interaction effect between content areas and the presence of GMAS was significant, $F(1, 180) = 5.022$, $p = .026 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .027$, suggesting that the effect of GMAS presence on "teacher status" varied by content area. As only GMAS groups existed for ELA and Math, the interaction effect occurred between Science and Social Studies, as shown in Figure 2. The ANOVA results were aligned with the pattern observed in the descriptive data. For "teacher status," the GMAS group had a higher mean score than the No GMAS group in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a higher mean score than the GMAS group.

Figure 2

Interaction Plot for w/o GMAS and Content Area in Relation to RQ3



To summarize, first, significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale and the subscale of "teacher load." Although the ANOVA results revealed significant main effects, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences between the No GMAS and the GMAS group regarding overall teacher morale and "teacher load." The results of these comparisons may suggest that while there was some variation in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the differences were not statistically robust. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Second, significant differences were found across content areas regarding overall teacher morale and the subscale of "teacher load." Although the ANOVA results revealed significant main effects, post hoc analyses did not show any significant

differences across content areas in relation to overall teacher morale and "teacher load." The results of these comparisons may suggest that although some variation in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" across content areas was present, the differences were not statistically robust. Again, this could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Lastly, the interaction effect between content areas and the presence of GMAS related to "teacher status" was significant, suggesting that the effect of GMAS presence on "teacher status" varied by content area. As only GMAS groups existed for ELA and Math, the interaction effect occurred between Science and Social Studies. The GMAS group scored higher in Science, while the No GMAS group scored higher in Social Studies.

Summary

A total of 282 responses were gathered from teachers. Among the 282 respondents, 78% were female. Roughly 89% of the participants identified as Caucasian, representing the majority of the group. Additionally, among those who responded to the survey, most participants (n = 111) held a master's degree. Furthermore, the distribution of age groups was relatively balanced, although there were slightly fewer participants under 25 (n = 13) and 26-30 (n = 28). Also, the distribution of teachers across various experience levels was even, with a slightly higher number of participants with 0-5 years (n = 60) and 11-17 years (n = 61) of experience. All participants surveyed were middle school teachers. Of the 282 respondents, 68 were sixth-grade teachers, 52 were seventh-grade teachers, 75 were eighth-grade teachers, and 87 taught more than one grade level. Of the 282 respondents, 30.9% of teachers handled teaching responsibilities across different grade levels rather than being limited to a single grade. In addition, teachers

were relatively evenly distributed across content areas, though ELA (n = 72) and Math (n = 54) had a higher representation. In contrast, multiple subjects (n = 22) and vocational areas (n = 6) had fewer teachers.

The data were analyzed according to the criteria set for each research question to differentiate between the No GMAS and GMAS groups. Not all responses were included for every question to prevent overlapping effects across multiple subjects, grade levels, and GMAS presence. The results were first presented by examining all responses, followed by a more detailed analysis for each individual question (see Appendix E).

Descriptive Analysis of All Responses

The descriptive analysis of all responses revealed a mean score of 2.94, with a standard deviation of 0.485, based on data from 282 participants. The mean score fell within a range of 2.76 - 3.49, which indicated moderately high teacher morale. Among the subscales, "satisfaction with teaching" had the highest mean score of 3.17 with a standard deviation of .505, compared to "teacher load" (M = 2.71, SD = .651) and "teacher status" (M = 2.66, SD = .655), which indicated that teacher morale levels were moderately high to moderate. Overall, participants reported the highest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale, "teacher load," and "teacher status," regardless of their demographics. Conversely, participants reported the lowest mean score for "teacher status" regardless of their demographics, except for the Hispanic group; the 36-40 and 56-and-over age groups; the 11-17 and 25-30 years of teaching experience groups; the specialist and doctorate degree groups; ELA, other-subject and multiple-subject groups, who exhibited the lowest mean score on "teacher load."

Analysis of the data across various demographic categories indicated observable patterns. First, males scored slightly higher than females in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.96, *SD* = .540), "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.18, *SD* = .583), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = .689), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = .629). Second, the African American group reported the highest mean scores among all ethnic groups in overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.14, *SD* = .486), as well as in the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.33, *SD* = .504), "teacher load" (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .516), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.85, *SD* = .640). Conversely, among all ethnic groups, Hispanic participants had the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.83, *SD* = .490), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.27, *SD* = .257), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.63, *SD* = .354), except for "satisfaction with teaching." Instead, the Caucasian/White group reported the lowest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .506).

Third, among all age groups, the 36-40 age group achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = .466), "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = .419), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.90, *SD* = .568), except for "teacher load." Conversely, the lowest mean scores for overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.80, *SD* = .426) and "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = .498) were observed in the under-25 age group. Moreover, the lowest mean score for "teacher load" (*M* = 2.51, *SD* = .667) was found in the 56-and-over age group, while the lowest mean score for "teacher status" (*M* = 2.53, *SD* = .673) was observed in the 31-35 age group. Instead, the 46-50 age group reported the highest mean score for "teacher load" (*M* = 2.90, *SD* = .566).

Fourth, among all teaching experience groups, teachers with 25-30 years of experience reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.76, *SD* =

.519), “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* = 3.01, *SD* = .578), “teacher load” (*M* = 2.49, *SD* = .569), and “teacher status” (*M* = 2.50, *SD* = .755). On the other hand, teachers with 18-24 years of teaching experience achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.08, *SD* = .457), “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = .434), and “teacher status” (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .693) compared to other experience groups, except for “teacher load.” Instead, the teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience reported the highest mean score for “teacher load” (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = .567).

Fifth, regarding the highest degree earned, teachers holding a specialist degree reported the highest mean score in the overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.02, *SD* = .501) and “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = .496) compared to other degree groups, except for “teacher load” and “teacher status.” In contrast, teachers with a bachelor’s degree had the lowest mean score in the overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = .568), “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = .633), and “teacher status” (*M* = 2.59, *SD* = .682) compared to other degree groups, except for reporting the highest mean score for “teacher load.” Instead, the teachers with a doctorate degree reported the lowest mean score for “teacher load” (*M* = 2.41, *SD* = .577) and the highest scores for “teacher status” (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .622).

Sixth, among all grade-level groups, teachers who taught at 7th grade level reported the highest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .428) and all three subscales, including “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* = 3.36, *SD* = .420), “teacher load” (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .664), and “teacher status” (*M* = 2.86, *SD* = .640). Conversely, teachers who taught at 8th grade level had the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .454) and all three subscales, including “satisfaction with teaching” (*M* =

3.08, *SD* = .484), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = .599), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.54, *SD* = .582) compared to other grades.

Seventh, teachers who taught special education had the highest mean score in the overall teacher morale (*M* = 3.04, *SD* = .472) and the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = .392) and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.84, *SD* = .701) compared to other subjects, except for "teacher load." On the contrary, teachers who taught Science reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale (*M* = 2.77, *SD* = .450) and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .485), "teacher load" (*M* = 2.55, *SD* = .646), and "teacher status" (*M* = 2.44, *SD* = .602) compared to other subjects. Instead, the teachers who taught Math reported the highest mean score for "teacher load" (*M* = 2.82, *SD* = .563).

Research Question One

Research question one sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those without. To address research question one, teachers instructing multiple subjects, as well as Science and Social Studies across various grade levels, were excluded. This resulted in a sample of 255 teachers for RQ1, divided into two groups: 153 in the GMAS group and 102 in the No GMAS group. Descriptive data were presented first, followed by the results of the one-way ANOVA.

The descriptive data showed that the No GMAS group had a slightly higher overall teacher morale mean score (*M* = 2.98, *SD* = .485) than the GMAS group (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = .450). For the subscale of "satisfaction with teaching," the No GMAS group exhibited a slightly higher mean score (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = .474) compared to the GMAS

group (M = 3.17, SD = .486). When looking at the subscale of "teacher load," the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.77, SD = .674) than the GMAS group (M = 2.69, SD = .620). For the subscale of "teacher status," the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.74, SD = .686) than the GMAS group (M = 2.64, SD = .616). Consistently, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score than the GMAS group in overall teacher morale and three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load and "teacher status." In addition, participants reported the highest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale and the other two subscales, "teacher load" and "teacher status," regardless of whether they had GMAS or not.

Before conducting the one-way ANOVA for RQ1, Levene's test was performed to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The results indicated that the variances between the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal in terms of overall teacher morale, $F(1, 253) = .214$, $p = .644 > .05$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 253) = 1.187$, $p = .277 > .05$, "teacher load," $F(1, 253) = .379$, $p = .538 > .05$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 253) = 1.674$, $p = .197 > 0.5$.

The results of one-way ANOVA analysis for RQ1 indicated no significant difference in overall teacher morale between the GMAS and No GMAS groups, $F(1, 253) = .852$, $p = .357 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$. Similar results were observed for the three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 253) = .090$, $p = .764 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$, "teacher load," $F(1, 253) = .997$, $p = .319 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$ and "teacher status," $F(1, 253) = 1.725$, $p = .190 > .05$. $\eta^2 = .007$. Even though the ANOVA results did not show statistically significant differences in teacher morale between the No GMAS and

GMAS groups, failing to reject the null hypothesis, the descriptive statistics indicated a notable pattern, with the No GMAS group consistently scoring slightly higher than the GMAS group in relation to overall teacher morale and all three subscales. The ANOVA results may be affected by the specific teachers included in the analysis. The descriptive data revealed a potential pattern that suggested a need for further research with a larger sample to better understand factors affecting teacher morale in relation to the GMAS.

Research Question Two

Research question two sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those who did not across grade levels (6^{th}, $7^{th,}$ and 8^{th}). To address research question two, the analysis excluded teachers who taught multiple subjects and grade levels. This resulted in a sample of 188 teachers for RQ2, divided into two groups: 136 in the GMAS group and 52 in the No GMAS group. Descriptive data were presented first, followed by the results of the two-way ANOVA. Of the 188 teachers, 64 taught sixth grade, 49 taught seventh grade, and 75 taught eighth grade.

The descriptive data revealed a consistent pattern across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status" when comparing the difference between No GMAS and GMAS groups based on grade levels. Delving deeper into data regarding overall teacher morale, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.96, SD = .442) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.92, SD = .516) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.16, SD = .399) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.13, SD = .485). Conversely, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher

mean score (M = 2.89, SD = .493) than the GMAS group (M = 2.82, SD = .452) in grade 8.

For "satisfaction with teaching," the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.14, SD = .519) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.07, SD = .502) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.41, SD = .401) than the No GMAS group (M = 3.28, SD = .447). Alternatively, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.16, SD = .448) than the GMAS group (M = 3.07, SD = .491) in grade 8.

For "teacher status," the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.73, SD = .630) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.71, SD = .788) in grade 6. In grade 7, again, the GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.87, SD = .281) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.81, SD = .686). In contrast, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.68, SD = .758) than the GMAS group (M = 2.52, SD = .558) in grade 8.

The data for the "teaching load" subscale deviated from other subscales. The mean score of the No GMAS group (M = 2.78, SD = .647) was similar to that of the GMAS group (M = 2.78, SD = .535) in grade 6 for "teacher load." In grade 7, the No GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.10, SD = .584) than the GMAS group (M = 2.90, SD = .709). On the contrary, the GMAS group recorded a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.56, SD = .611) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.55, SD = .528) in grade 8.

Several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data for RQ2. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were

slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and the other subscales. Second, the mean scores for overall teacher morale and all three subscales in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups for 7th grade were slightly higher than the other two grades. Third, 8th grade groups with or without GMAS had slightly lower mean scores than the other two grades, except for the No GMAS group's "satisfaction with teaching." Fourth, the comparison pattern between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, with the No GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, remained consistent across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." The only exception to this pattern appeared in "teacher load."

Before conducting the two-way ANOVA for RQ2, Levene's test was performed to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The Levene's test results indicated that the variances between the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal in terms of overall teacher morale, $F(5, 182) = .558$, $p = .732 > .05$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(5, 182) = .730$, $p = .602 > .05$, "teacher load," $F(5, 182) = 1.180$, $p = .321 > .05$, and "teacher status," $F(5, 182) = 1.432$, $p = .215 > 0.5$.

The results of two-way ANOVA analysis for RQ2 indicated no significant difference in the main effect among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(1, 182) = .000$, $p = .989 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 182) = .238$, $p = .627 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .001$, "teacher load," $F(1, 182) = .343$, $p = .559 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 182) = .036$, $p = .849 > .05$. $\eta^2 = .000$. Overall, the ANOVA results related to GMAS presence were aligned with the descriptive data results for research question two. While the descriptive data indicated that the No GMAS group

scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, this pattern remained stable across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status," except for "teacher load." However, no clear pattern of significant differences emerged based on the presence or absence of GMAS.

Regarding the main effect of grade level on teacher morale, significant differences were found among grade-level groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(2, 182) = 4.456$, $p = .013 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .047$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182) = 3.648$, $p = .028 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .039$, and "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = 5.035$, $p = .007 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .052$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .428$) reported a significantly higher mean score for overall teacher morale than those teaching at the 6th grade level ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .469$, $p = .048 < .05$, $d = .21$, 95% CI [.00, .41]) and the 8th grade level ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .454$, $p < .001$, $d = .32$, 95% CI [.12, .52]). In addition, post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test showed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .419$) reported a significantly higher mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" than those teaching at the 6th grade level ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .510$, $p = .019 < .05$, $d = .25$, 95% CI [.03, .46]) and the 8th grade level ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .484$, $p = .006 < .05$, $d = .28$, 95% CI [.07, .48]). Furthermore, post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers taught at the 7th grade level ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .667$) reported a significantly higher mean score for "teacher load" than those teaching at the 8th grade level ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .599$, $p < .001$, $d = .42$, 95% CI [.15, .68]). "Teacher status" was the only subscale that showed no significant main effect difference related to grade level, $F(2, 182) = 1.317$, $p = .270 > .05$,

η^2 = .014. Overall, the ANOVA results suggested that grade level had a significant impact on overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Although there were no significant differences found in the effect of grade level on "teacher status," the descriptive data did show that 7th grade teachers reported slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and its three subscales compared to the other grade levels, regardless of whether GMAS was present or not.

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and grade level on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(2, 182) = .163$, $p = .850 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182) = .486$, $p = .616 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = .444$, $p = .642 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, and "teacher status," $F(2, 182) = .318$, $p = .728 > 0.5$, $\eta^2 = .003$. The ANOVA results suggested no significant differences were found in the relationship between the presence of GMAS and teacher morale across different grade levels. However, some variation was observed in the descriptive data, such as the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade responding to overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." However, the observed variation did not support a definitive claim, suggesting the need for a larger sample size or further research.

Research Question Three

Research question three sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those who did not across different content areas (English,

mathematics, science, and social studies). To answer research question three, the analysis excluded teachers who taught multiple subjects, non-academic content, or Science and Social Studies across various grade levels. This resulted in a sample of 186 teachers for RQ3, divided into two groups: 153 in the GMAS group and 33 in the No GMAS group. Descriptive data were presented first, followed by the results of the two-way ANOVA. Of the 186 teachers, 72 taught ELA, 54 taught Math, 28 taught Science, and 32 taught Social Studies. Teachers in ELA and Math taught with the presence of GMAS across various grade levels; thus, only GMAS groups existed for these two subjects.

The descriptive data revealed a consistent pattern across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher load" when comparing the differences between No GMAS and GMAS groups based on content areas. For overall teacher morale, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.84, SD = .428) than the GMAS group (M = 2.67, SD = .264) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.12, SD = .570) than the GMAS group (M = 2.72, SD = .501). A consistent pattern also emerged in relation to "satisfaction with teaching"; the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.08, SD = .442) than the GMAS group (M = 2.97, SD = .348) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.21, SD = .603) than the GMAS group (M = 2.96, SD = .583). "Teacher load" showed similar results. The No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score for "teacher load" (M = 2.75, SD = .627) than the GMAS group (M = 2.17, SD = .400) in Science. In Social Studies, again, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.03, SD = .606) than the GMAS group (M = 2.47, SD = .527). Unlike the other subscales, "teacher status" revealed a different outcome. The

GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.59, SD = .461) than the No GMAS group (M = 2.38, SD = .629) in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.02, SD = .724) than the GMAS group (M = 2.49, SD = .584).

Several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data for RQ3. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and the three subscales in both Science and Social Studies. The same pattern emerged even among the GMAS groups in ELA and Math. Second, the GMAS group reported slightly higher mean scores in Math for overall teacher morale and two subscales, "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load," compared to other content areas, except for "teacher status." Third, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups reported slightly lower mean scores for overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load," except for the GMAS group in "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher status." Lastly, the No GMAS group exhibited slightly higher mean scores in overall teacher morale and three subscales - "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status" - compared to the GMAS group in both Science and Social studies, except for Science teachers' responses to "teacher status." Before conducting the two-way ANOVA for RQ3, Levene's test was performed to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The Levene's test results indicated that the variances between the No GMAS and GMAS groups were equal in terms of overall teacher morale, $F(5, 180) = 1.557$, $p = .175 > .05$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(5, 180) = .771$, $p = .572 >$

.05, “teacher load,” $F(5, 180) = 1.148$, $p = .337 > .05$, and “teacher status,” $F(5, 180) = .433$, $p = .826 > 0.5$.

Regarding the main effect of GMAS on teacher morale, significant differences were found between the No GMAS and GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(1, 180) = 5.815$, $p = .017 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .031$, and “teacher load,” $F(1, 180) = 13.127$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .068$. The ANOVA results were aligned with the pattern observed in the descriptive data, where the No GMAS group had slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and “teacher load” than the GMAS group in both Science and Social Studies. To assess the robustness of these differences, an independent *t*-test was conducted for post-hoc comparison. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed significant main effects of w/o GMAS on overall teacher morale and “teacher load,” post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale, $t(184) = .585$, $p = .559 > .05$, Cohen’s $d = .112$, 95% CI [-.12, .23]), and “teacher load,” $t(184) = 1.656$, $p = .099 > .05$, Cohen’s $d = .318$, 95% CI [-.04, .43]), between the No GMAS and GMAS groups. The results of these comparisons may suggest that while there was some variation in overall teacher morale and “teacher load” between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the differences were not statistically robust. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Conversely, no significant differences were found among w/o GMAS groups in responding to the subscales of “satisfaction with teaching,” $F(1, 180) = 1.981$, $p = .161 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .011$, and “teacher status,” $F(1, 180) = .929$, $p = .336 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$.

Regarding the main effect of content areas on teacher morale, significant differences were found across content areas in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(3,$

180) = 3.127, $p = .027 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .050$, and "teacher load," $F(3, 180) = 4.831$, $p = .003 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .075$. These ANOVA results were aligned with the patterns observed in the descriptive data, where the GMAS group in Math scored slightly higher for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than other content areas. In addition, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups scored slightly lower for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than other content areas. To evaluate the strength of these differences, traditional post-hoc tests were conducted for pairwise comparisons across content areas. Surprisingly, although the ANOVA results revealed significant main effects, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" across content areas. The results of these comparisons may suggest that although some variation in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" across content areas was present, the differences were not statistically strong. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Conversely, no significant differences were found across content areas in responding to the subscales of "satisfaction with teaching," $F(3, 180) = 2.274$, $p = .082 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .037$, and "teacher status," $F(3, 180) = 2.410$, $p = .069 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .039$.

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and content areas on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(1, 180) = .854$, $p = .357 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 180) = .356$, $p = .552 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, and "teacher load," $F(1, 180) = .010$, $p = .920 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$. On the other hand, the interaction effect between content areas and the presence of GMAS was found significant, $F(1, 180) = 5.022$, $p = .026 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .027$, suggesting that the effect of GMAS presence on "teacher status" varied by content area. Since only

GMAS groups existed for ELA and Math, the interaction effect occurred between Science and Social Studies. The ANOVA results were aligned with the pattern observed in the descriptive data. The GMAS group had a higher mean score than the No GMAS group in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a higher mean score than the GMAS group.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the current study was to examine teacher morale levels among (1) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, (2) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different middle school grade levels, and (3) teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment from different academic content areas. An abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* was used to calculate average scores for overall teacher morale and three subscales: "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status." This chapter provides an overview of the study, findings, discussion, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

This study focused on the problems of teacher retention, morale, and stress related to high-stakes testing. The issue of teacher retention related to teacher morale is worth studying because it impacts schools, directly impacting student achievement and instruction (Jones & Shindler, 2016). While school performance must be measured, using a state-mandated test can be problematic, especially for teachers (Collie et al., 2012). The stress placed on schools can be extended to teachers responsible for ensuring students pass their respective end-of-course assessments. The differences in teachers' experiences

with an end-of-grade assessment compared to those who do not have an end-of-grade assessment could help inform administrators of the importance of fostering high levels of teacher morale, especially for teachers with an end-of-grade assessment.

This study aimed to examine teacher morale levels among middle school teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. For this study, the sample included participants who taught in middle schools that belong to the Okefenokee RESA. Teacher responses from an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* were used to determine their teacher morale levels. The teachers' responses, which were placed into categories based on demographic responses and GMAS presence, were compared to determine differences in their teacher morale levels. SPSS was used to analyze data for this study.

The following research questions guided the study. Teachers were grouped based on demographic responses and GMAS presence, as outlined in Table 1 in Chapter one. Not all responses were included for every question to prevent overlapping effects across multiple subjects, grade levels, and GMAS presence.

1. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment?
2. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different middle school grade levels (grades six, seven, and eight)?

3. To what degree, if any, is there a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who do not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in different academic content areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies?

Discussions and Findings

A summary of the findings for each research question is presented in this section. A more detailed summary of the findings of this study is presented in Chapter 4. A brief overview of the descriptive data is presented in this section, followed by a discussion of the findings for each research question.

The data were gathered from 282 teachers. Seventy-eight percent of participants in the group were female. Approximately 89% of the group identified as Caucasian, making up the majority. Additionally, 39.4% of participants held a master's degree. The age groups were mostly even, but some had a bit fewer people in the categories under 25 (n = 13) and 26-30 (n = 28). The distribution of teachers across various experience levels was fairly even, with a slightly higher number of participants with 0-5 years (n = 60) and 11-17 years (n = 61) of experience. All participants surveyed were middle school teachers: 68 taught sixth grade, 52 taught seventh grade, 75 taught eighth grade, and 87 taught more than one grade level. Of the participants, 30.9% of teachers handled teaching responsibilities across different grade levels rather than being limited to a single grade. The content areas the survey participants taught included: (a) 72 ELA teachers, (b) 54 math teachers, (c) 32 science teachers, (d) 33 social studies teachers, (e) 32 special education teachers, (f) 6 vocational teachers, (g) 31 teachers teaching other subjects and (h) 22 teachers teaching multiple subjects. Teachers were relatively evenly distributed

across content areas, though ELA (n = 72) and Math (n = 54) had a higher representation, whereas multiple subjects (n = 22) and vocational areas (n = 6) had fewer teachers.

Regarding all participants' responses concerning teacher morale, the mean scores reflected moderate to moderately high levels of teacher morale, with participants reporting slightly higher scores for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale and the other subscales. Among all participants, males scored slightly higher than females in overall teacher morale and all three subscales. The African American group reported the highest mean scores among all ethnic groups in overall teacher morale and all three subscales. Conversely, Hispanic participants scored lowest in overall teacher morale, "teacher load," and "teacher status" compared to other ethnic groups. Instead, the Caucasian/White group reported the lowest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching."

Among all age groups, the 36-40 age group achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." Conversely, the lowest mean scores for overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" were observed in the under-25 age group. Moreover, the lowest mean score for "teacher load" was found in the 56-and-over age group, while the lowest mean score for "teacher status" was observed in the 31-35 age group. In contrast, the 46-50 age group reported the highest mean score for "teacher load."

Furthermore, teachers with 25-30 years of experience reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale and all three subscales. On the other hand, teachers with 18-24 years of teaching experience achieved the highest mean score in overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status" among all experience groups.

Rather, the teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience reported the highest mean score for "teacher load."

Regarding the highest degree earned, teachers holding a specialist degree reported the highest mean score in the overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" compared to other degree groups. In contrast, teachers with a bachelor's degree had the lowest mean score in the overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status" compared to other degree groups. Instead, the teachers with a doctorate degree reported the lowest mean score for "teacher load" and the highest scores for "teacher status."

The pattern observed across age groups warrants attention. Seventh-grade teachers reported the highest mean scores for overall teacher morale and all three subscales, while eighth-grade teachers scored the lowest across all measures. In addition, in terms of content areas, teachers who taught special education had the highest mean score in the overall teacher morale and two subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher status." On the contrary, teachers who taught Science reported the lowest mean score in overall teacher morale and all three subscales. Instead, the teachers who taught Math reported the highest mean score for "teacher load."

Research Question One

The first research question examined whether teacher morale differed significantly between teachers administering the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. The descriptive data revealed that the No GMAS group consistently scored slightly higher than the GMAS group in overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including

"satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load and "teacher status." In addition, participants reported the highest mean score for "satisfaction with teaching" compared to overall teacher morale and the other two subscales, "teacher load" and "teacher status," regardless of whether they had GMAS or not.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether these differences were statistically significant. The results for RQ1 indicated no significant difference between the GMAS and No GMAS groups in overall teacher morale, $F(1, 253) = .852$, $p = .357 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$, and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 253) = .090$, $p = .764 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$, "teacher load," $F(1, 253) = .997$, $p = .319 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$ and "teacher status," $F(1, 253) = 1.725$, $p = .190 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .007$. Although the differences were not statistically significant, the descriptive data suggested a notable pattern in which the No GMAS teachers reported slightly higher morale across all measures.

Although the RQ1 results in my study and Downing (2016) found no statistically significant connection between teacher accountability measures and job satisfaction, the findings from descriptive data supported researchers who noted that the stress of high-stakes testing contributes to teacher stress (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007), which had an impact on teacher morale. Prior research claimed that accountability measures and high-stakes testing negatively impacted teacher morale and instructional practices (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Musoleno & White, 2010). In addition, among the subscales, "satisfaction with teaching" had the highest ratings for both groups of teachers. The higher levels of job satisfaction in both groups were a good sign for schools in the RESA, as job satisfaction was a significant part of teacher morale (Luleci

& Coruk, 2018). Although the pattern observed in the descriptive data lacked statistical significance, it highlighted the need for additional research, particularly with a larger sample size, to explore the impact of standardized testing on teacher morale.

Key Findings for Research Question One

- There was no significant difference in overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status," between the No GMAS and GMAS groups in relation to research question one.
- Even though the ANOVA results did not show any statistically significant difference in teacher morale between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the descriptive statistics suggested a notable pattern, with the No GMAS group consistently scoring slightly higher than the GMAS group in relation to overall teacher morale and all three subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status."

Research Question Two

Research question two sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those who did not across grade levels (6^{th}, $7^{th,}$ and 8^{th}). Several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data for RQ2. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and all three subscales. Second, the mean scores for overall teacher morale and all three subscales in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups for 7^{th} grade were slightly higher than the other two grades. Third, 8^{th}

grade groups with or without GMAS had slightly lower mean scores than the other two grades, except for the No GMAS group's scores for "satisfaction with teaching." Fourth, the comparison pattern between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, with the No GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scoring slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade, remained consistent across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." The only exception to this pattern appeared in "teacher load."

The results of two-way ANOVA analysis for RQ2 indicated no significant difference in the main effect among w/o GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(1, 182) = .000$, $p = .989 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .000$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(1, 182) = .238$, $p = .627 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .001$, "teacher load," $F(1, 182) = .343$, $p = .559 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, and "teacher status," $F(1, 182) = .036$, $p = .849 > .05$. $\eta^2 = .000$. Although the differences were not statistically significant, the descriptive data suggested a notable pattern that the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade. This pattern remained stable across overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." As discussed in Chapter Two, prior research found that teacher accountability and testing-related stress influenced teacher morale and their instructional practices (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Rubin et al., 2022). While the pattern seen in the descriptive data was not statistically significant, it highlighted the importance of further research, especially with a larger sample size, to examine how standardized testing would affect teacher morale.

Regarding the main effect of grade level on teacher morale, significant differences were found among grade-level groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(2, 182) = 4.456$, $p = .013 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .047$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182) = 3.648$, $p = .028 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .039$, and "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = 5.035$, $p = .007 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .052$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test showed that seventh-grade teachers had significantly higher scores in overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" than sixth- and eighth-grade teachers. Seventh-grade teachers also scored significantly higher than eighth-grade teachers in responding to "teacher load." Overall, the ANOVA results suggested that grade level plays a key role in impacting overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Although there were no significant differences found in the main effect of grade level on "teacher status," the descriptive data did show that 7th grade teachers reported slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and its three subscales compared to the other grade levels, regardless of whether GMAS was present or not. It was interesting to find that seventh-grade teachers reported significantly higher levels of teacher morale than those in grades six and eight, a finding with limited comparable evidence in prior research. Theoretically, seventh-grade teachers should have the same testing pressures as sixth-grade teachers, with only English and Math teachers having a GMAS test. Further research is needed to determine if this is an isolated incident among the RESA, or if this is a trend across the state.

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and grade level on teacher morale, no significant differences were found among groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(2, 182) = .163$, $p = .850 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$, "satisfaction with teaching," $F(2, 182)$

= .486, $p = .616 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, "teacher load," $F(2, 182) = .444$, $p = .642 > .05$, $\eta^2 = .005$, and "teacher status," $F(2, 182) = .318$, $p = .728 > 0.5$, $\eta^2 = .003$. The ANOVA results suggested no significant differences were found in the relationship between the presence of GMAS and teacher morale across different grade levels. Although some variation was observed in the descriptive data, such as the No GMAS group scored slightly lower than the GMAS group in 6th and 7th grades, and the GMAS group scored slightly lower than the No GMAS group in 8th grade responding to overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher status." However, the observed variation did not support a definitive claim due to the lack of statistical significance, suggesting the need for a larger sample size or further research.

Key Findings for Research Question Two

- Significant differences were found among grade-level groups responding to overall teacher morale and two subscales of "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load."
- Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test revealed that teachers at the 7th grade level reported significantly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" than those teaching at the 6th and 8th grade levels. Also, teachers at the 7th grade level reported a significantly higher mean score for "teacher load" than those teaching at the 8th grade level.
- The ANOVA results suggested that grade level had a significant impact on overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load."

Research Question Three

Research question three sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in teacher morale between teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and those who did not across different content areas (English, mathematics, science, and social studies). Several notable patterns emerged from descriptive data for RQ3. First, the mean scores for "satisfaction with teaching" in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups were slightly higher than those for overall teacher morale and the three subscales in both Science and Social Studies. The same pattern emerged even among the GMAS groups in ELA and Math. Second, the GMAS group scored slightly higher in Math for overall teacher morale and two subscales, "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load." Third, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups reported slightly lower mean scores for overall teacher morale and two subscales, including "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher load," except for the GMAS group responding to "satisfaction with teaching" and "teacher status." Lastly, the No GMAS group exhibited slightly higher mean scores in overall teacher morale and three subscales - "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status" - compared to the GMAS group in both Science and Social studies, except for Science teachers' responses to "teacher status."

Regarding the main effect of GMAS on teacher morale, significant differences were found between the No GMAS and GMAS groups in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(1, 180) = 5.815$, $p = .017 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .031$, and "teacher load," $F(1, 180) = 13.127$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .068$. However, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" between the No GMAS and

GMAS groups. The results of these comparisons may suggest that while there was some variation in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" between the No GMAS and GMAS groups, the differences were not statistically robust. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Although post hoc analysis revealed no significant differences, the descriptive data showed a notable pattern: the No GMAS group had slightly higher mean scores for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" compared to the GMAS group in both Science and Social Studies. Additional research with a larger sample size is necessary to identify significant differences and support prior findings that high-stakes testing affected teacher morale and job satisfaction (Berryhill et al., 2009).

Regarding the main effect of content areas on teacher morale, significant differences were found across content areas in responding to overall teacher morale, $F(3, 180) = 3.127$, $p = .027 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .050$, and "teacher load," $F(3, 180) = 4.831$, $p = .003 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .075$. However, post hoc analyses did not show any significant differences in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" across content areas. The results of these comparisons may suggest that although some variation in overall teacher morale and "teacher load" across content areas was present, the differences were not statistically strong. This could be attributed to sample variability or the need for a larger sample size to detect significant differences. Although post hoc analysis revealed no significant differences, the descriptive data showed some notable patterns. For instance, the GMAS group in Math scored slightly higher for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than other content areas. In addition, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups scored slightly lower for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than

other content areas. Further research with a larger sample size is needed to more conclusively determine the direct impact of content areas on teacher morale.

Pertaining to the interaction effect of GMAS and content areas on teacher morale, the interaction effect between content areas and the presence of GMAS was found significant, $F(1, 180) = 5.022$, $p = .026 < .05$, $\eta^2 = .027$, suggesting that the effect of GMAS presence on "teacher status" varied by content area. Since only GMAS groups existed for ELA and Math, the interaction effect occurred between Science and Social Studies. The ANOVA results were aligned with the pattern observed in the descriptive data. The GMAS group had a higher mean score than the No GMAS group in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a higher mean score than the GMAS group. Although differences in teacher morale were noted across content areas and between the GMAS and No GMAS groups, the findings of the interaction effect on "teacher status" indicated that GMAS may influence teacher morale, especially within certain content areas. Yet, additional research is necessary to fully understand its impact.

Key Findings for Research Question Three

- The interaction effect between content areas and the presence of GMAS was significant, suggesting that the effect of GMAS presence on "teacher status" varied by content area.
- For "teacher status," the GMAS group had a higher mean score than the No GMAS group in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a higher mean score than the GMAS group.

Brief Summary

In conclusion, regarding the main effect of GMAS presence on teacher morale, statistically significant results were found only in Research Question 3, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Descriptive data revealed notable patterns that indicated the No GMAS group consistently scored slightly higher than the GMAS group in teacher morale. However, these patterns are not definitive enough to strongly support prior findings that high-stakes testing negatively affects teacher morale and job satisfaction (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Musoleno & White, 2010). Further research with a larger sample size is needed to identify significant differences and provide stronger supporting evidence.

Concerning the main effect of grade level on teacher morale, significant results were found among grade-level groups in responding to overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," and "teacher load" for RQ2. Post hoc comparisons showed that seventh-grade teachers had significantly higher scores in overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" than sixth- and eighth-grade teachers. Seventh-grade teachers also scored significantly higher than eighth-grade teachers in responding to "teacher load." The results indicated that grade level significantly influences teacher morale in this study; however, similar findings were lacking in existing research. Therefore, additional research is needed to determine whether this is a unique occurrence within the RESA or part of a broader statewide pattern.

Concerning the main effect of content areas on teacher morale, statistically significant results were found only in Research Question 3, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Descriptive data revealed notable patterns. First,

the GMAS group in Math scored slightly higher for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than other content areas. Second, teachers who taught Science in both the No GMAS and GMAS groups scored slightly lower for overall teacher morale and "teacher load" than other content areas. Further research with a larger sample size is needed to more conclusively determine the direct impact of content areas on teacher morale.

Regarding the interaction effect of GMAS with grade level and content area on teacher morale, a significant interaction was found between content areas and the presence of GMAS, indicating that GMAS affected perceptions of "teacher status" differently across content areas. Similar patterns were observed in the descriptive data. The GMAS group had a higher mean score than the No GMAS group in Science. Conversely, in Social Studies, the No GMAS group had a higher mean score than the GMAS group. The findings of the interaction effect on "teacher status" suggested that GMAS may influence teacher morale, especially within certain content areas. Yet, additional research is necessary to fully understand its impact.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Statistically significant results for the effect of GMAS presence on teacher morale were found only for Research Question three, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Although descriptive data revealed notable patterns that indicated the No GMAS group consistently scored slightly higher than the GMAS group in teacher morale, they were not definitive enough to strongly support prior findings that high-stakes testing negatively affects teacher morale and job satisfaction (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Musoleno & White, 2010). In addition, statistically significant results for the direct effect of content areas on teacher morale were found for Research

Question three, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Although the descriptive data showed notable patterns in Math and Science, the findings were not strong enough to draw a definitive conclusion about the direct impact of content areas on teacher morale.

Significant results were found regarding the direct effect of grade level on teacher morale for Research Question two, indicating that seventh-grade teachers scored significantly higher in overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" compared to both sixth- and eighth-grade teachers. Seventh-grade teachers also scored significantly higher than eighth-grade teachers in responding to "teacher load." The results indicated that grade level significantly influences teacher morale in this study. School leaders should work to understand and address the issue of teacher load for teachers in grades six and eight compared to grade seven. If teachers in grades six and eight feel that their workload is greater, school leaders must work to change that perception or lighten the load. School leaders must address teachers' workloads, as increased responsibilities and demands negatively affect teacher morale (Iwu et al., 2018; Mackenzie, 2007). This does not mean that school leaders should not have high expectations for teachers, but school leaders can work to limit unnecessary meetings, obligations, and loss of planning time to decrease teacher stress levels. Since prior research determined that stress is the primary factor in teacher burnout (Wong et al., 2017), school leaders must do what they can to be supportive.

Additionally, significant interaction was found between content areas and the presence of GMAS on teacher morale for Research Question three, indicating GMAS may influence teacher morale, especially within certain content areas such as Science and

Social Studies. From a practical perspective, these results offer valuable insight to school leaders and policymakers. Prior research suggested that high teacher morale is vital to school and student success (Akhtar et al., 2016; Iqbal et al., 2016; Mackenzie, 2007). While prior research also concluded that stress negatively impacted teacher morale (Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007), school leaders and policymakers can explore additional sources of stress beyond the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, including factors such as grade level and content area. With the issue of teacher retention across the country, focusing on factors that improve teacher morale and school climate is vital to maintaining quality teachers. School leaders must look for realistic ways to improve teacher morale that fall within budgetary, time, and professional constraints.

In this study, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two Factor Motivator Hygiene Theory was used to explain interactions between the variables for each research question. Based on descriptive statistical patterns, it is evident that teachers experience motivators and hygiene factors differently based on the grade level, content area, and GMAS status. Teacher morale scores varied between the GMAS and No GMAS groups. However, the evidence of statistically significant differences was limited, the notable patterns from descriptive data indicated that teachers in the No GMAS group experience hygiene factors and motivators slightly differently than teachers in the GMAS group, with NO GMAS teachers scoring higher in overall teacher morale, "satisfaction with teaching," "teacher load," and "teacher status."

Descriptive statistics revealed differences across content areas and grade levels, with some of these differences reaching statistical significance. With these differences, school leaders must work to understand motivators and learn how to use them to impact

schools positively. Motivators such as achievement, responsibility, recognition, personal growth, and advancement are all areas that school leaders can positively influence to improve teacher morale. School leaders must empower teachers and work with them to help them achieve their goals. Creating a positive school culture that builds teacher capacity is vital to motivating teachers. In their study, Iwu et al. (2018) concluded that growth opportunities, responsibilities, and teacher salary encompassed the top three variables that impacted teacher job satisfaction. While school leaders may not be able to increase teacher salary, leaders can commit to providing teachers with opportunities to grow and develop.

While increases in teacher salaries are not an option in most schools, supporting teachers and helping them build higher levels of self-efficacy is something that leaders must strive to implement. When teachers possess higher levels of self-efficacy, they manage job stressors better than teachers exhibiting low self-efficacy (Collie et al., 2012). Von der Embse et al. (2016) evaluated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teacher test-related stress. They concluded that self-efficacy significantly influenced teacher stress factors (Von der Embse et al., 2016). To improve teacher self-efficacy, school leaders can empower teachers by encouraging them to set and achieve small, attainable goals. School leaders can also improve teacher self-efficacy by providing targeted professional development opportunities and implementing mentoring programs where experienced teachers help newer teachers refine their practices. School leaders should also work to establish and monitor professional learning communities within the school where teachers can collaborate with each other to create a supportive school climate. By empowering teachers through these practices, leaders will promote

teacher autonomy, which will have a positive impact on their self-efficacy. By implementing research-based strategies, school leaders can significantly enhance teacher self-efficacy, leading to improved instructional practices and better student outcomes.

Teachers in this study demonstrated moderate to moderately high levels of morale, regardless of content area, grade level, or GMAS presence. To sustain high levels of teacher morale, school leaders must work to nurture the drive that teachers have for the profession and enhance their capacity through intentional professional development and support. School leaders can also recognize and celebrate teachers' efforts and successes to increase motivation and job satisfaction. School leaders can celebrate success by acknowledging teachers' efforts in staff meetings, newsletters, and school assemblies. Providing formal awards, such as having a "Teacher of the Month," is also a way to recognize and celebrate teachers intentionally. When possible, gift certificates and financial incentives could also be used to celebrate teachers and increase motivation and job satisfaction. Additionally, school leaders can build a school culture of appreciation by implementing peer recognition programs where teachers encourage colleagues and celebrate their successes by giving them shoutouts to be posted publicly for everyone to see. By creating a culture of respect and inclusion, administrators can build positive relationships that make teachers feel supported. Maintaining a supportive and growth-oriented school environment can help teachers feel motivated and committed to their jobs.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several opportunities for future research based on the results of the current study. Future research should include a larger sample size, as recommended,

based on the findings related to GMAS presence and content areas. Rather than evaluating teacher morale in one RESA district in southeast Georgia, the study could be expanded to encompass more than one RESA, or the entire state of Georgia. A larger sample size would allow for more participants, more participants in each group, and more reliable comparisons among groups. In the current study, the RESA did not allow for large numbers of teachers in each group for the study, especially when looking at individual content areas.

As recommended, based on the findings related to GMAS presence and content areas, the research could also be expanded to include a qualitative portion. Participants from each group could be interviewed to gain a more in-depth perspective on their perception of how the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment affects their teacher morale and its impact across different content areas. The qualitative data could provide valuable insight to further explain the patterns observed in the quantitative findings.

Another recommendation for future research would be to expand on the current research by determining if seventh-grade teachers have higher morale levels across a larger sample. If the same findings were made, future researchers could try to determine why seventh-grade teachers have higher morale levels than teachers in grades six and eight. Researchers could also explore whether any underlying factors contribute to the differences observed in teacher morale across grade levels.

Additionally, future research should be conducted at different times throughout the school year. This study was conducted at one point in time, which made the results indicative of the current state of teacher morale at that moment. To gain a better understanding of teacher morale changes based on the time of the year, or how teachers

perceive morale at different times of the year, future researchers could survey the same group of teachers multiple times throughout the school year. This would provide more complete data and offer insight into how stressors vary for teachers at different times throughout the school year.

Conclusions

This study focused on the problems of teacher retention, morale, and stress related to high-stakes testing. This study aimed to examine teacher morale levels among middle school teachers with a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and teachers who did not have a Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. This study also examined teacher morale among teachers in different middle school grade levels (six, seven, and eight) and academic content areas (English, math, science, and social studies). Teachers' responses from an abbreviated version of *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* were used to determine their teacher morale levels.

Statistically significant results for the effect of GMAS presence on teacher morale were found only for Research Question three, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Although descriptive data revealed notable patterns that indicated the No GMAS group consistently scored slightly higher than the GMAS group in teacher morale, they were not definitive enough to strongly support prior findings that high-stakes testing negatively affects teacher morale and job satisfaction (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Musoleno & White, 2010). In addition, statistically significant results for the direct effect of content areas on teacher morale were found for Research Question three, with limited evidence emerging from post hoc comparisons. Although the

descriptive data showed notable patterns in Math and Science, the findings were not strong enough to draw a definitive conclusion about the direct impact of content areas on teacher morale.

Significant results were found regarding the direct effect of grade level on teacher morale for Research Question two, indicating that seventh-grade teachers scored significantly higher in overall teacher morale and "satisfaction with teaching" compared to both sixth- and eighth-grade teachers. Seventh-grade teachers also scored significantly higher than eighth-grade teachers in responding to "teacher load." The results indicated that grade level significantly influences teacher morale in this study. Additionally, significant interaction was found between content areas and the presence of GMAS on teacher morale for Research Question three, indicating GMAS may influence teacher morale, especially within certain content areas such as Science and Social Studies.

Previous studies have suggested that high-stakes testing causes stress that negatively impacts teacher morale and job satisfaction (Abrams et al., 2003; Berryhill et al., 2009; Collie et al., 2012; Mackenzie, 2007; Musoleno & White, 2010). School leaders and policymakers can explore additional sources of stress beyond the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment, including factors such as grade level and content area. They can implement actionable steps to tackle stressors that are within their control to improve teacher morale, such as helping teachers build higher levels of self-efficacy through professional development, removing unnecessary tasks from teachers' plates, and limiting the loss of teacher planning time. These are practical and realistic areas where school leaders can work to decrease teacher stress and build a more positive school climate.

More research is needed to investigate the direct impact of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and content areas on teacher morale to be able to generalize these findings. Future studies could increase the number of participants and expand the sample area to include more than one RESA district. Ideally, a statewide study would provide the best results. By having a larger number of participants in each group of the study, more reliable data would be available. In addition, further work is needed to deepen our understanding of the factors that impact teacher morale in today's school environment, particularly the direct impact of grade level and the interaction between GMAS presence and content areas, which would benefit our ever-changing schools.

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APPENDIX A:

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (Full Version)

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire
Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel (1980)

This instrument is designed to allow you to express your opinions about your work as a teacher and various school problems in your particular school situation. No right or wrong responses exist, so do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly.

Please **do not** record your name on this document.

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate whether you (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, and (4) agree with each statement. Circle your answers using the following scale:

1= Disagree2=Probably Disagree 3=Probably Agree4=Agree

1	Details, "red tape," and required reports absorb too much of my time.	1	2	3	4
2	The work of individual faculty members is appreciated and commended by our principal.	1	2	3	4
3	Teachers feel free to criticize administrative policy at faculty meetings called by our principal	1	2	3	4
4	The faculty feels that their suggestions pertaining to salaries are adequately transmitted by the administration to the appropriate personnel within your state (i.e., school board, department of education, etc.)	1	2	3	4
5	Our principal shows favoritism in his/her relations with teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
6	Teachers in this school are expected to do an unreasonable amount of record-keeping and clerical work.	1	2	3	4
7	My principal makes a real effort to maintain close contact with the faculty.	1	2	3	4
8	Community demands upon the teacher's time are unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
9	I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted.	1	2	3	4
10	My teaching load is greater than that of most of the other teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
11	The extra-curricular load of the teachers in our school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
12	Our principal's leadership in faculty meetings challenges and stimulates our professional growth.	1	2	3	4
13	My teaching position gives me the social status in the community that I desire	1	2	3	4
14	The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
15	Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural things I like.	1	2	3	4
16	My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.	1	2	3	4
17	Our school has a well-balanced curriculum.	1	2	3	4
18	There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding among our teachers	1	2	3	4
19	Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	1	2	3	4

20	The curriculum of our school makes reasonable provision for student individual differences.	1	2	3	4
21	The procedures for obtaining materials and services are well-defined and efficient.	1	2	3	4
22	Generally, teachers in our school do not take advantage of one another.	1	2	3	4
23	The teachers in our school cooperate with each other to achieve common, personal, and professional objectives.	1	2	3	4
24	Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society.	1	2	3	4
25	The curriculum of our school is in need of major revisions.	1	2	3	4
26	I love to teach.	1	2	3	4
27	If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	1	2	3	4
28	Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.	1	2	3	4
29	I would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of high scholastic ability.	1	2	3	4
30	If I could earn as much money in another occupation, I would stop teaching.	1	2	3	4
31	The school schedule places my classes at a disadvantage.	1	2	3	4
32	Within the limits of financial resources, the school tries to follow a generous policy regarding fringe benefits, professional travel, professional study, etc.	1	2	3	4
33	My principal makes my work easier and more pleasant.	1	2	3	4
34	Keeping up professionally is too much of a burden.	1	2	3	4
35	Our community makes its teachers feel as though they are a real part of the community.	1	2	3	4
36	Salary policies are administered with fairness and justice.	1	2	3	4
37	Teaching affords me the security I want in an occupation.	1	2	3	4
38	My school principal understands and recognizes good teaching procedures.	1	2	3	4
39	Teachers clearly understand the policies governing salary increases.	1	2	3	4
40	My classes are used as “dumping grounds” for problem students.	1	2	3	4
41	The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well-developed and maintained	1	2	3	4
42	My teaching load in this school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
43	My principal shows a real interest in my department.	1	2	3	4
44	Our principal promotes a sense of belonging among the teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
45	My teaching load unduly restricts my nonprofessional activities.	1	2	3	4
46	I find my contacts with students, for the most part, highly satisfying and rewarding	1	2	3	4
47	I feel that I am an important part of this school.	1	2	3	4
48	The competency of the teachers in our school compares favorably with that of teachers in other schools with which I am familiar.	1	2	3	4
49	My school provides the teachers with adequate audio-visual aids and projection equipment.	1	2	3	4
50	I feel successful and competent in my present position.	1	2	3	4

51	I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs, and societies.	1	2	3	4
52	Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.	1	2	3	4
53	My teaching associates are well prepared for their jobs.	1	2	3	4
54	Our school faculty has a tendency to form into cliques.	1	2	3	4
55	The teachers in our school work well together.	1	2	3	4
56	I am at a disadvantage professionally because other teachers are better prepared to teach than I am.	1	2	3	4
57	Our school provides adequate clerical services for the teachers.	1	2	3	4
58	As far as I know, the other teachers think I am a good teacher.	1	2	3	4
59	Library facilities and resources are adequate for the grade or subject area which I teach.	1	2	3	4
60	The “stress and strain” resulting from teaching makes teaching undesirable for me.	1	2	3	4
61	My principal is concerned with the problems of the faculty and handles these problems sympathetically.	1	2	3	4
62	I do not hesitate to discuss any school problem with my principal.	1	2	3	4
63	Teaching gives me the prestige I desire.	1	2	3	4
64	My teaching job enables me to provide a satisfactory standard of living for my family.	1	2	3	4
65	The salary schedule in our school adequately recognizes teacher competency.	1	2	3	4
66	Most of the people in this community understand and appreciate good education.	1	2	3	4
67	In my judgment, this community is a good place to raise a family.	1	2	3	4
68	This community respects its teachers and treats them like professional persons.	1	2	3	4
69	My principal acts interested in me and my problems.	1	2	3	4
70	My school principal supervises rather than “snoopervises” the teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
71	It is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people in this community.	1	2	3	4
72	Teachers’ meetings as now conducted by our principal waste the time and energy of the staff.	1	2	3	4
73	My principal has a reasonable understanding of the problems connected with my teaching assignment.	1	2	3	4
74	I feel that my work is judged fairly by my principal.	1	2	3	4
75	Salaries paid in this school compare favorably with salaries in other schools with which I am familiar.	1	2	3	4
76	Most of the actions of students irritate me.	1	2	3	4
77	The cooperativeness of teachers in our school helps make our work more enjoyable.	1	2	3	4
78	My students regard me with respect and seem to have confidence in my professional ability.	1	2	3	4
79	The purposes and objectives cannot be achieved by the present curriculum.	1	2	3	4

80	The teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the values and attitudes of their students.	1	2	3	4
81	This community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable personal standards.	1	2	3	4
82	My students appreciate the help I give them with their schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
83	To me, there is no more challenging work than teaching.	1	2	3	4
84	Other teachers in our school are appreciative of my work.	1	2	3	4
85	As a teacher in this community, my nonprofessional activities outside of school are unduly restricted.	1	2	3	4
86	As a teacher, I think I am as competent as most other teachers.	1	2	3	4
87	The teachers with whom I work have high professional ethics.	1	2	3	4
88	Our school curriculum does a good job of preparing students to become enlightened and competent citizens.	1	2	3	4
89	I really enjoy working with my students.	1	2	3	4
90	The teachers in our school show a great deal of initiative and creativity in their teaching assignments.	1	2	3	4
91	Teachers in our community feel free to discuss controversial issues in their classes.	1	2	3	4
92	My principal tries to make me feel comfortable when visiting my classes.	1	2	3	4
93	My principal makes effective use of the individual teacher's capacity and talent.	1	2	3	4
94	The people in this community, generally, have a sincere and wholehearted interest in the school.	1	2	3	4
95	Teachers feel free to go to the principal about problems of personal and group welfare.	1	2	3	4
96	This community supports ethical procedures regarding the appointment and reappointment of members of the teaching staff.	1	2	3	4
97	This community is willing to support a good program of education.	1	2	3	4
98	This community expects the teachers to participate in too many social activities.	1	2	3	4
99	Community pressures prevent me from doing my best as a teacher.	1	2	3	4
100	I am well satisfied with my present teaching profession.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX B:

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (Abbreviated Version)

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (Abbreviated Version)
Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel (1980)

This portion of the instrument is designed to allow you to express your opinions about your work as a teacher and your teacher morale. No right or wrong responses exist, so do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly.

Please **do not** record your name on this document.

Section 1: Background Information
The following information will contribute to my efforts to gain greater insight into morale among middle school teachers in southeast Georgia.

Gender: __Male __Female

Ethnicity: (circle one) African American; Caucasian/White; Hispanic; Asian; Other

Age group: (circle one) <25; 26 - 30; 31 - 35; 36 - 40; 41- 45; 46 - 50; 51-55; 56 and over

Years of teaching experience:
0-5 6-10 11-17 18-24 25-30

Highest degree obtained:
Bachelor's Masters Specialist Doctorate

Current grade level:
6th 7th 8th Multiple

Current subject area: (Select One)
ELA Math Science Social Studies
Vocational Special Education Other
Multiple Subjects

Section 2: Read each statement carefully. Then indicate whether you (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, and (4) agree with each statement. Circle your answers using the following scale:

1= Disagree2=Probably Disagree3=Probably Agree4=Agree

1	Details, "red tape," and required reports absorb too much of my time.	1	2	3	4
2	Teachers in this school are expected to do an unreasonable amount of record-keeping and clerical work.	1	2	3	4
3	Community demands upon the teacher's time are unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
4	My teaching load is greater than that of most of the other teachers in our school.	1	2	3	4
5	The extra-curricular load of the teachers in our school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
6	My teaching position gives me the social status in the community that I desire	1	2	3	4
7	The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
8	Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural things I like.	1	2	3	4

9	Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	1	2	3	4
10	Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society.	1	2	3	4
11	I love to teach.	1	2	3	4
12	If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	1	2	3	4
13	I would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of high scholastic ability.	1	2	3	4
14	If I could earn as much money in another occupation, I would stop teaching.	1	2	3	4
15	The school schedule places my classes at a disadvantage.	1	2	3	4
16	Keeping up professionally is too much of a burden.	1	2	3	4
17	Our community makes its teachers feel as though they are a real part of the community.	1	2	3	4
18	Teaching affords me the security I want in an occupation.	1	2	3	4
19	My classes are used as “dumping grounds” for problem students.	1	2	3	4
20	My teaching load in this school is unreasonable.	1	2	3	4
21	My teaching load unduly restricts my nonprofessional activities.	1	2	3	4
22	I find my contacts with students, for the most part, highly satisfying and rewarding	1	2	3	4
23	I feel that I am an important part of this school.	1	2	3	4
24	I feel successful and competent in my present position.	1	2	3	4
25	I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs, and societies.	1	2	3	4
26	I am at a disadvantage professionally because other teachers are better prepared to teach than I am.	1	2	3	4
27	As far as I know, the other teachers think I am a good teacher.	1	2	3	4
28	The “stress and strain” resulting from teaching makes teaching undesirable for me.	1	2	3	4
29	Teaching gives me the prestige I desire.	1	2	3	4
30	My teaching job enables me to provide a satisfactory standard of living for my family.	1	2	3	4
31	This community respects its teachers and treats them like professional persons.	1	2	3	4
32	It is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people in this community.	1	2	3	4
33	Most of the actions of students irritate me.	1	2	3	4
34	My students regard me with respect and seem to have confidence in my professional ability.	1	2	3	4
35	My students appreciate the help I give them with their schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
36	To me, there is no more challenging work than teaching.	1	2	3	4
37	As a teacher, I think I am as competent as most other teachers.	1	2	3	4
38	I really enjoy working with my students.	1	2	3	4
39	I am well satisfied with my present teaching profession.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX C:

Questionnaire Permission

Questionnaire Permission

Permission to Use Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire

Inbox ×

Cole Walsh <cwalsh@pierce.k12.ga.us> May 1, 2023, 9:19 PM (2 days ago)

to racej

Mr. Race,

My name is Cole Walsh and I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. I am currently working on a study examining the impact of high-stakes testing on middle school teachers' morale levels in southeast Georgia. As I work to complete my dissertation, I would like to use a portion of The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire created by Bentley and Rempel (1968). In 1980 a booklet, the "Manual for the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire" (1980) by Ralph R. Bentley, was published through Purdue University Press.

Please let me know what I need to do to secure permission to use this questionnaire. Thank you in advance for any help you can provide.

Thank you,
Cole Walsh

Race, Justin C May 2, 2023, 7:32 AM (1 day ago)

to me

Dear Cole,

Yes, no problem, you can use the questionnaire for your dissertation, including printing it in your dissertation, so long as you properly credit it.

All My Best,
Justin.

Justin Race
Director
Purdue University Press
www.press.purdue.edu

APPENDIX D:

IRB Approval

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

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04454-2023 **Responsible Researcher:** Nicholas Walsh

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Taralynn Hartsell **Co-Investigator:** n/a

Project Title: *The Impact of High-Stakes Testing on Morale Levels of Middle School Teachers in Southeast Georgia.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations, **category 2**. If the nature of the research changes such that exemption criteria no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research study.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of the approved research study collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*
- *Qualtrics setting must allow participants to skip questions and/or not provide an answer.*

☒ ***Please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at tmwright@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***

Elizabeth W. Olphie *10.11.2023*
Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator Date

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX E:

Summary of Significant Results and Descriptive Data

Summary of Significant Results and Descriptive Data Related to Teacher Morale

RQs	Indicators	Significant Results		Post Hoc Comparisons		Notable Patterns in Descriptive Data	
All Responses (n = 282)	Gender	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	$M_{male} > M_{female}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	$M_{male} > M_{female}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	$M_{male} > M_{female}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	$M_{male} > M_{female}$
	Ethnicity	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{African\ American}$ Lowest: $M_{Hispanic}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{African\ American}$ Lowest: $M_{Caucasian}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: $M_{African\ American}$ Lowest: $M_{Hispanic}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{African\ American}$ Lowest: $M_{Hispanic}$
	Age	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{age\_36\text{-}40}$ Lowest: $M_{age\_<25}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{age\_36\text{-}40}$ Lowest: $M_{age\_<25}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: $M_{age\_46\text{-}50}$ Lowest: $M_{age\_>56}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{age\_36\text{-}40}$ Lowest: $M_{age\ 31\text{-}35}$
	Year of Experience	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{experience\ 18\text{-}24}$ Lowest: $M_{experience\ 25\text{-}30}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{experience\ 18\text{-}24}$ Lowest: $M_{experience\ 25\text{-}30}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: $M_{experience\ 0\text{-}5}$ Lowest: $M_{experience\ 25\text{-}30}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{experience\ 18\text{-}24}$ Lowest: $M_{experience\ 25\text{-}30}$
	Highest Degree Earned	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{Specialist}$ Lowest: $M_{Bachelor's}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{Specialist}$ Lowest: $M_{Bachelor's}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: $M_{Bachelor's}$ Lowest: $M_{Doctorate}$

		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{Doctorate}$ Lowest: $M_{Bachelor's}$
	Grade Level Taught	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
	Subject Taught	OTM	-	OTM	-	OTM	Highest: $M_{Special\_Education}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$
		SWT	-	SWT	-	SWT	Highest: $M_{Special\_Education}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$
		TL	-	TL	-	TL	Highest: M_{Math} Lowest: $M_{Science}$
		TS	-	TS	-	TS	Highest: $M_{Special\_Education}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$
RQ1 (n = 255)	w/o GMAS	OTM	No	OTM	No	OTM	$M_{No\ GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	$M_{No\ GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$
		TL	No	TL	No	TL	$M_{No\ GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$
		TS	No	TS	No	TS	$M_{No\ GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$
RQ2 (n = 188)	w/o GMAS	OTM	No	OTM	No	OTM	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
		TL	No	TL	No	TL	$M_{GMAS} = M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 7th $M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 8th
		TS	No	TS	No	TS	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\ GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
	Grade Level	OTM	Yes	OTM	$M_{7th} > M_{6th}$ $M_{7th} > M_{8th}$	OTM	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
		SWT	Yes	SWT	$M_{7th} > M_{6th}$ $M_{7th} > M_{8th}$	SWT	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{6th\ Grade}$
		TL	Yes	TL	$M_{7th} > M_{8th}$	TL	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$

		TS	No	TS	No	TS	Highest: $M_{7th\ Grade}$ Lowest: $M_{8th\ Grade}$
	w/o GMAS * Grade Level	OTM	No	OTM	No	OTM	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
		TL	No	TL	No	TL	$M_{GMAS} = M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 7th $M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 8th
		TS	No	TS	No	TS	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: 6th, 7th $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: 8th
RQ3 (n = 186)	w/o GMAS	OTM	Yes	OTM	No	OTM	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		TL	Yes	TL	No	TL	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		TS	No	TS	No	TS	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: Science $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Social Studies
	Content Area	OTM	Yes	OTM	No	OTM	No GMAS - Highest: $M_{Social\_Studies}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$ GMAS - Highest: M_{Math} Lowest: $M_{Science}$
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	No GMAS - Highest: $M_{Social\_Studies}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$ GMAS - Highest: M_{Math} Lowest: $M_{Social\ Studies}$
		TL	Yes	TL	No	TL	No GMAS - Highest: $M_{Social\ Studies}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$ GMAS - Highest: M_{Math} Lowest: $M_{Science}$
		TS	No	TS	No	TS	No GMAS - Highest: $M_{Social\_Studies}$ Lowest: $M_{Science}$ GMAS - Highest: M_{ELA} Lowest: $M_{Social\ Studies}$
	w/o GMAS * Content Area	OTM	No	OTM	No	OTM	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		SWT	No	SWT	No	SWT	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		TL	No	TL	No	TL	$M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Science, Social Studies
		TS	Yes	TS	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: Science $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Social Studies	TS	$M_{GMAS} > M_{No\_GMAS}$: Science $M_{No\_GMAS} > M_{GMAS}$: Social Studies