

## ABSTRACT

Aaron KyserPegram

**“Locked Up and Locked Out: An Examination of Race, Federally Calculated Mean Sentence Length, and their Relation to GED Completion Rates”**

Under the direction of Jeanita W. Richardson, Ph.D., Shahid M. Shahidulla, Ph.D., and Justina Osa, Ed.D.

This study examined if differences in General Educational Development (GED) completion rates existed among Federal Correctional Institutions (FCIs) according to racial composition and federally calculated mean sentence lengths. The purpose of this study was to help develop research-based strategies to increase GED completion rates at FCIs. The GED program, one of the most popular correctional education programs, was examined because it is the foundation of all correctional education and reentry programs and the basic prerequisite for securing employment. Because there is a high recidivism rate in the United States and there are enormous costs associated with incarcerating offenders, a large body of research concludes that completion of correctional education programs can reduce the rate of prisoner reincarceration (Bazos & Hausman, 2004; Cecil, 2000; Daniel & Anderson, 2003; Tolbert, 2002). Social capital and coercive mobility frameworks were used to understand the role of correctional education programs on recidivism.

The sample (n = 66) included FCIs with male inmates throughout the United States. Measures of race (Caucasian-American and African-American) and federally calculated mean sentence length were collected. The researcher predicted that significant

differences in GED completion rates existed among FCIs that have low, medium, and high percentages of African-Americans and Caucasian-Americans and low, medium, and high federally calculated mean sentence lengths. The data were analyzed through a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) via SPSS.

The most important finding was that significant differences in GED completion rates among FCIs that have low, medium, and high federally calculated mean sentence lengths exist. This finding may be particularly important in deciding the most opportune time to enroll inmates in GED programs. This study found no significant differences in GED completion rates among FCIs that have low, medium, and high percentages of race. However, the results suggest that more accurate accountability of all races be recorded.

Abstract

Michelle R. Belle

The Efficiency and Production Function Model:  
An Application to Rural School Districts in Three States  
2001-2004

Under the direction of

Dr. Enid Jones

Dr. Kwadwo Bawuah

Dr. Jeanita Richardson

Dr. Eric Thomas

Public schools in the United States are funded primarily through federal, state and local sources. Financing schools evolves to state governments in accordance with their respective constitutions. All states have an education clause or some provision in their constitution which establishes the creation of a public school system. The presence of the education clauses in no way lends itself to uniformity in how states establish and support public schools, therefore, disparities in the distribution of funding for education have occurred as a result of the varying methods states use to finance their schools. The mandates of No Child Left Behind directly impact school funding as a result of increased costs associated with test administrations, retention and recruitment of highly qualified teachers, costs associated with providing students with a safe and drug-free environment and costs associated with the imposition of sanctions for not meeting AYP requirements. Particularly, rural schools, like many schools, face challenges that include increasing diverse student backgrounds, learning styles, new federal and state accountability requirements; and debates about the adequate allocation and availability

of education funding. Funding debates and legal challenges have long been centered on equity or how to fairly distribute enough money to educate a child. After nearly three decades of litigation, it is evident that financial disparities among states and school districts remain high. The purpose of this quantitative study is to apply the efficiency and production function models to spending and funding patterns in 31 school districts in Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. The model used to measure these relationships is one provided by Cooper et al. Cooper's efficiency/productivity model was developed in the early nineties in an attempt to measure the efficient use of funds for schools as well as determine if the level of efficiency has an impact on the productivity of the school system (Cooper, 1994). It will explore the effects of measurable school characteristics on student achievement by examining the relationship between and among variables central to answering the following questions:

- (1) Is there a relationship between the efficient use of funds and productivity as measured by student achievement?
- (2) How can rural school districts increase efficiency in the use of resources by maintaining or lowering costs while increasing student achievement?

## **ABSTRACT**

**By: Michael A. Myrick**

**Educational Leaders and Environmental Toxic Liability: An analysis of judicial decisions regarding childhood exposure to lead, asbestos, and mold**

**(Under the direction of: Jeanita W. Richardson, Enid B. Jones, and Ben U. Nwoke)**

This dissertation examines precedents set by the courts in cases involving the effect of public building-based environmental toxic exposure to mold, lead, and asbestos that can inform educational leaders of ways to reduce or eliminate legal liability associated with public K-12 schools. In order to benefit educational leaders this investigation attempted to identify, analyze, and synthesize precedents set by the courts in said cases and advance strategies educational leaders can employ to avert litigation. The researcher conducted an exhaustive search of substantive civil law legal proceedings related to schools and environmental toxins (mold, lead, and asbestos) by searching Federal cases (that included U. S. District Court Cases, U.S. Court of Appeals Cases, and U. S. Supreme Court Cases) and a cursory search of State Court Cases. In reviewing the literature it was discovered that cases involving publicly funded facilities were minimal in federal court and the implication to schools were almost non-existent. At the same time, it was evidenced in the literature of mold cases being launched by homeowners and office workers; lead cases involving low-income housing; and, asbestos in the work place. The study findings provided useful information for educational leaders, such as further evidence that some students are being reared in environments that may ultimately affect their cognitive ability.

## ABSTRACT

Carolyn S. Tisdale

### An Examination of the Factors Related to the Attrition and Retention of Teachers in a Large Suburban School District in Virginia

(Under the direction of)

Dr. Enid Jones  
Dr. James Norman  
Dr. Jeanita Richardson  
Dr. Robert Moore

The purpose of this research was to conduct a case study of attrition and retention of special education and general education teachers in a single suburban district. Are school attributes contributing factors to the attrition and retention of general and special education teachers in this district? This researcher administered to a sample of current special education and general education teachers in a large suburban school district in Virginia, a survey designed to measure their satisfaction with their teaching assignments and job level expectations. The researcher also requested completed surveys from those individuals who left the district in the past year. The survey was designed to elicit responses regarding job satisfaction issues, administrative responsiveness issues, pre-employment preparation issues, and specific reasons for terminating one's employment.

Through statistical calculations, it was determined that teachers do experience a number of work related issues that negatively impact their opinion of their working environment. Areas noted were in stress from demand of the job, class size / caseload

size, excessive paperwork, expectations regarding inclusion / collaboration, inadequate planning time, and lack of parent and / or community support. It was noted the main reason for leaving the district, however, was found to be relocating as a result of spouse's job and care of children or other family members.

**ABSTRACT**

**Dorothy S. Cosby**

**Student Outcomes of Gifted and Talented Programs: A Comparative Analysis between  
a Magnet-Model High School and Fourteen Feeder-School Districts**

**(Under the direction of)**

**Dr. Enid Jones**

**Dr. Jeanita Richardson**

**Dr. Arthur Abraham**

The Regional Magnet-Model High School for the Arts and Technology is the only full-day academic-year special school in Virginia that focuses on the arts and technology. The institution serves approximately 346 high school students selected from gifted and talented programs in central and southern Virginia (<http://www.args.k12.va.us/>). The regional special school offers the academic courses required for matriculation in a public high school program. It is assumed that apart from the specialty instructional areas, the programs for gifted education are of the same high quality as the other public high schools in Virginia. Therefore, this magnet-model high school was selected for research especially as the director of the school requested to have his school studied to ascertain if the programs offered meet the needs of the students attending the model high school adequately, appropriately, and equitably.

**Gifted and talented students have varied skills and can make important**

contributions to our democracy. As documented in the Marland Report (1972), *A Nation at Risk* (1983), and the *Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Act* (1988), the nation's attention has been focused on the population of gifted and talented students according to the events of society, such as the defense and economic needs of the country (Heath, 1997). Therefore, the attention has been inconsistent, having been consequential to national events, issues and concerns, such as the Russian launching of the Sputnik and the demands of World Wars I and II. Issues such as these have been largely responsible for emphasis the state gives to educating the gifted and talented. But do gifted and talented students perform and achieve at a higher level in English and mathematics as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) assessments in separate schools designed for this special population of students? It was this question that shaped the focus of this research.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to apply the components of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Reis, 1997) to the instructional models in the magnet-model high school and the fourteen feeder-school districts to determine a good fit as measured by the Virginia English and Mathematics SOL tests. The feeder-school districts comprise the population from which the students in the regional magnet-model high school are drawn. The study focused data gathered from one magnet-model high School and the 14 respective feeder-school districts.