# Reviewer Comments and Author Response

Below I copied and pasted your comments and the peer reviewer’s recommendations. They are in italics and in the order in which you presented them. Underneath each or your main suggestions, I have provided an explanation of how or whether the comment was addressed. I genuinely appreciate the time and effort you and the reviewers took to make suggestions that undoubtedly improve this manuscript.

Reviewer Comment:*The first recommendation is that the introduction should be clearer and more explicit about the purpose of the study and the questions that the study raises (it should come sooner than methodology section). Moreover, the information about the actual process the teachers were being asked about should be highlighted early in the text and the differences to what was the practice before should be noted, so that the reader has a clear idea of why the teachers may be concerned. It should also immediately be clarified whether the paper mainly focuses on “concerns only" or “concerns and changes.”*

The introductory sections of the paper have been revised to address these concerns.

Reviewer Comment:*The argument made in the paper that educators should be part of the process of statewide reforms appears reasonable to the reviewers, but they requested that it be presented more clearly and carefully.*

I believe the revised introduction addresses this reviewer concern.

Reviewer Comment:*On page three, “congressional intent behind NCLB” is referenced, but it remains unclear if this is a statement of fact or the author’s opinion? A citation would be helpful here.*

Thank you for pointing out that some readers might not be aware of U.S. Congressional intent behind NCLB. I have added references as suggested.

*On the same page, the statement that “educators must be engaged in the process of change, and their input valued, for implementation of a new policy to be successful” would be strengthened by contextualizing it in more detail. Again, the question posed by the reviewers was whether this statement is a previously published finding, an opinion, or the author’s conclusion.*

I appreciate the reviewers’ need for a point of reference, and I have added references. In response to your question, the statement was the author’s informed conclusions based on significant reading, research, and practice.

Reviewer Comment: *The section discussing the CBAM (p. 10) would benefit from the addition of examples or perhaps a graphic representation in order to the elements and dimensions listed in the paragraph*.

As suggested, I have clarified the CBAM elements, expanding the section overall

Reviewer Comment: *There were various comments requesting the clarification of key terminology:*

* *One reviewer commented that the distinction between Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching (1999) and the Common Core should be clarified in more detail.*

Additional information was added to further clarify the reference is to Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching, which is the only “common core noted in the manuscript.

* *In addition, it needs to be clarified how the term “value added outcomes” (p. 22) is used. There is a large existing body of literature on value-added models (VAM) that should be reference here.*

The term “value added outcomes” as used in the manuscript was a label I gave to themes that focused on focus group participants’ comments related to what they valued about and the benefits of having participated in the SEED pilot process. It does not refer in any way to VAM. Wording changes were made to make this clear, and I believe they should clear up any confusion.

* *The reviewers were also wondering how a “teaching goal”, a “professional goal”, and a “SMART goal” (p. 26) are differentiated.*

Additional information was added to clarify the difference.

* *Finally, it was pointed out that the survey lists “four items” (p. 12), but five items appear on the survey (p. 37).*

Thank you. I corrected this error.

* *In the same vein, “four domains of teaching responsibility” are discussed on page six, but five are listed in the paragraph.*

Thank you. This was a punctuation error, and it has been fixed. There are four domains.

Reviewer Comment: *Concerning the methodology, it was first pointed out that it should be clarified in more detail and earlier how and why the eight focus group participants were selected (from the thirteen interested individuals). It would also be helpful to present the respondents’ backgrounds in more detail.*

Additional phrasing has been added to inform the reader that the eight focus group participants self-selected to attend. Respectfully, no additional information about the focus group participants can be shared. These are very small school districts, with single administrators at each of the schools. Any additional demographics would violate participants’ confidentially, as delineated to in the informed consent form, and as stipulated by the university’s IRB.

Reviewer Comment: *Moreover, it was suggested that the section “Description of the Pilot Process” be moved before the Methodology section as it provides information about the context of the study that is important to know before reading the Methodology section.*

Thank you for this suggestion. The section was moved to before a description of the guiding framework.

*Finally, it should be explained why the study included both teachers and administrators when these two groups have different roles, duties, and, most likely, concerns. Were any analyses conducted to compare the two groups in term of their concerns?*

The focus of this exploratory and descriptive study was on school personnel’s concerns as a whole, not administrators vs. teachers. The aggregation of the data was a condition of the university’s IRB approval. Respectfully and as noted above, these are very small districts and disaggregating results would clearly point to who said what, and this would violate participant confidentiality. In responses to your question “*Were any analyses conducted to compare the two groups in term of their concerns?”* Yes. I was curious and did explore this; there were none.

Reviewer Comment: *Concerning the presentation and discussion of the results, the following suggestions for improvement were made:*

* *For the survey results, only the significance level is reported. It is, however, important to report effect sizes as well to indicate the importance/ meaningfulness of the significant differences/changes.*

The effect sizes were added.

* *In addition, it was suggested that tables be provided on t-test measures, p-values, and other relevant measures.*

The t values and other relevant measures are now described in the narratives. I am worried that the manuscript had become too long; therefore, I did not add tables. Respectfully, I believe the figures tell the important story of the trends in the data, and I prefer to include them. Please let me know if you still want a table.

* *The quantitative results should be presented and discussed in more meaningful* *ways. For instance, it was noted that means in the spring are lower than in the fall for most of the survey items. What are/could be the reasons for this? With respect to these results, it was also suggested that the quantitative results could have been connected to the qualitative results to reveal how changes occur and why, rather than just describing teachers’ concerns.*

Thank you for these suggestions. I have included explications and made connections.

* *Adding a summary at the end of the Survey Results section to summarize the key findings from the survey data would benefit clarity of the section.*

A brief summary was added to this section.

* *If there were any differences, in terms of quantitative and/or qualitative data, across districts and participants with different characteristics (e.g., teaching experience, highest degree, etc.), these differences could help explain some of the patterns in the data (e.g., survey findings).*

There were no differences observed by district or school personnel type (etc.), and a sentence to that effect has been added to the manuscript.

* *In general, the analysis appeared overly descriptive to the reviewers. They recommended that it be more strongly linked to the theory and that possible reasons for the teachers’ concerns were elaborated on in more detail and linked to other research findings.*

As noted under earlier comments, this suggestion was addressed.

Reviewer Comment: *The paragraph on the study’s limitations (p. 27-28) should be strengthened by elaborating more clearly on why/how the listed issues are limitations.*

This section was expanded.

Reviewer Comment: *Concerning the conclusion, the reviewers first pointed out that it would be important to add a connection to the background/rationale as stated in the introduction. The reviewers also pointed out that the conclusions/implications of the study mostly apply to the context where the study was done. They thus wondered what the implications/ lessons for theory, research, and practice in other contexts relevant to a wider audience are? What can readers in other contexts learn from this study and its findings?*

The discussion section was revised.

Reviewer Comment: *The following final comments are of a more stylistic nature:*

* *First, the Survey Results section (p. 20-22) could be improved through re-writing it in order to strengthen its narrative flow.*

As note above, this section was revised.

* *Then, it was recommended that the article is reviewed again to check for scholarly voice throughout. For example, it was suggested to re-phrase “did not really change” (p. 27).*

I attempted to correct this and additional feedback would be welcome.