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TEACHER UNREST IN WEST VIRGINIA, 2018-2019

A Dissertation submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University
In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

In
Educational Leadership

By
Lindsey D. Reed

Approved by
Dr. Barbara Nicholson, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Eugenia Damron
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Marshall University
August 2020

APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION

We, the faculty supervising the work of Lindsey Reed, affirm that the dissertation, Teacher Unrest in West Virginia, 2018-2019

meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the EdD Program in **Leadership Studies** and the College of Education and Professional Development. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughters, Kathryn and Kamryn. Never allow someone else to define the limits of your potential.

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First, I would like to thank my committee chairperson and graduate advisor, Dr. Nicholson. She has been a mentor and source of inspiration throughout my master's and doctoral work. Dr. Nicholson taught me to question the status quo and the narratives weaved throughout society's establishments, and as hard as that is to teach, it is much harder to learn. I am truly grateful to be her student and one of her starfish.

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ABSTRACT

In 2018, the United States saw an influx of teacher strikes which were largely propagated by red-state legislation. Then and now, teachers are trying to gain a voice in educational legislation despite corporate and political strongholds on legislators. As a last measure to gain access to the policymaking process, teachers strike. When teachers strike, it becomes a social issue which puts pressure on families, the economy, and legislation. The purpose of this non-experimental, descriptive study was to examine the perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes as they relate to their interactions with the Legislature and their ability to participate in shared leadership in the education reform arena. Using a web-based survey, data showed the primary reasons teachers in the sample felt compelled to strike were due to benefits, professional dignity and respect, and the lack of input into education bills. Data also found that over two-thirds of the sample indicated they felt as though their input was not heard during the legislative sessions. Exploring the extent to which teachers perceive legislative actions as provocation to strike may provide better understanding about what legislative actions spur the most strike motivation. Identifying the areas where teachers feel included or excluded in educational decision-making as well as the extent legislative practices act as strike motivators, may allow policymakers the insights needed to change their leadership practices to adopt a shared-leadership model between legislators and teachers which would allow teachers to be active, equal, and valued entities in the state's educational decision-making process.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Between the 1960s and 1990s the United States saw a number of teachers' strikes happening across the nation (e.g., New York, 1960; Wisconsin, 1974; Chicago 1980-1987; West Virginia, 1990). Most of the strikes had to do with teacher pay, benefits, and working conditions, but since then, teachers' strikes have been relatively scarce – until recently.

In 2018, teachers' strikes were ignited across the country, catalyzed largely by red-state legislation to impose market-based reforms on public schools while refusing to enact salary increases that would allow teachers' income to at least keep up with inflation. One state is considered to have been the motivation and inspiration to have sparked this movement: West Virginia. While West Virginia teachers may have a less than desirable reputation by almost all in-state institutions and policymakers, *Fortune Magazine* placed West Virginia's teachers on its 2018 list of "The World's Greatest Leaders." Debates continue as to why the state was the first to go on strike. Some attribute West Virginia teachers' motivation to long periods of working-class defeat (Blanc, 2018), and others claim West Virginia's weak institutional environment (i.e. poverty, low working wages, and a troubled economy) may be the cause (Friedman, 2018).

The 2018 strike occurred too recently for a conclusive rationale for the state's becoming the first among many striking to have emerged, as did a second two-day strike in 2019, but the prevailing consensus – provided by media accounts, professional association press releases, etc. – is that West Virginia's striking educators in both 2018 and 2019 walked out to protest not only rising health care premiums and insignificant salary increases, but proposed legislation to enact corporate sponsored initiatives as charter schools and educational savings accounts.

West Virginia's Militant Strike History

When looking at the 2018-2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes, it is necessary to understand the relationship between the recent strikes and the history of the labor movement in West Virginia. Since the late 1800s, West Virginia has been a victim of corporations exploiting her citizens in order to extract the state's abundant natural resources (i.e., coal, oil, and gas) while offering the lowest possible compensation to workers and successfully lobbying a series of Legislatures over the years to pay minimal taxes to the state and separate landowners' above-ground properties from the minerals underneath. The state has been home to some of the most violent militant strikes in the country's history due to clashes between miners and coal companies (Marcetic, 2018). Historically, West Virginia's economy has relied on extraction industries, with an almost exclusive emphasis on coal and its related industries. Out-of-state corporations found it easy to control the land and subsequently control their workers through a variety of means (i.e., paying miners with "scrip"¹ rather than money so they were forced to make all purchases at the company store, making them lease tools they needed to mine the coal, essentially requiring they live in company housing, etc.). From the miners' strike at Hawk's Nest in 1880 to the 2018-2019 teachers' strikes, West Virginia's workers have had to struggle for workers' rights and autonomy (National Coal Heritage Area, 2019).

The 1912 Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike

As the coal industry's production increased in the late 19th century, so did the exploitation of coal miners, subjecting them to unfair pay and horrid working conditions. Mining operations were minimally regulated to ensure maximum coal production, which resulted in more mine-deaths than any other state (West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, 2019b). On

¹ a private currency issued by mining companies to their employees.

December 6th, 1907, for instance, the Fairmont Coal Company in West Virginia had an explosion which killed 361 West Virginia coal miners, a catastrophe that is categorized as the worst mining disaster in American history.

Such disasters, combined with exploitative wages and living conditions, provoked the development of workers' unions across the nation. Although those early workers' unions, specifically the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), had gained both momentum and popularity, successfully organizing in other states in the nation, this did not hold true in West Virginia. Over the course of a decade and several failed attempts to unionize the southern coalfields in West Virginia, the United Mine Workers of America had finally achieved some organizational success but failed to gain any respect in the eyes of several coal companies. These tensions resulted in the 1912 Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike, a strike that spread from Paint Creek to Cabin Creek over wage increases. When the miners demanded union recognition which would help them gain better working conditions, the coal companies hired hundreds of Baldwin-Felts agents. Baldwin-Felts agents were men who had been recognized and deputized by the local sheriffs as preventative measures to help keep law and order in the communities, but they were also hired as private detectives by coal company owners to violently put an end to any unionizing endeavors. Much of the time, Baldwin-Felts agents would beat, kill, and deport miners if they attempted to unionize (Marcetic, 2018). When such actions would happen, striking miners would set up armed camps to help defend themselves against the agents' violence which was a scenario that would play out again and again.

During this time, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones became a key figure in the miners' fight for fair working wages and conditions. Since she was an influential figure in America's labor movement, her presence in West Virginia, along with her agitation strategies, helped miners

establish an organizational footing. With Mother Jones' ability to rally workers and the UMWA's support, mine workers would eventually gain the removal of Baldwin-Felts detectives at both Cabin Creek and Paint Creek, a nine-hour workday, the ability to shop outside of the coal camp, and the right to elect a checkweighman². These union wins, however, did not come about without bloodshed. Both sides had substantial casualties, which has made the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike the deadliest in the state's history.

The Matewan Massacre

Despite the union-inspired gains earned by the Paint-Creek Cabin Creek Strike, the southern coalfields were still the largest non-unionized coal region in the state. The UMWA continued to try to organize Logan, McDowell, and Mingo counties, but coal operators kept Baldwin-Felts agents on the job, instructing them to evict miners from their coal-owned houses if they unionized.

Doing as they had been hired to do, on May 19, 1920, 13 Baldwin-Felts agents began the eviction of miners in the coal camp of Matewan, West Virginia. The day the evictions happened yielded a death toll of 11 – seven agents and four townspeople (West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History [WVDACH], 2019a). Sid Hatfield, Matewan's Chief of Police (and brother to "Devil" Anse Hatfield of the notorious Hatfield-McCoy feud), had organized armed miners to intercept and attack the agents as they were leaving Matewan. The West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History provides a conclusive narrative to the massacre:

Hatfield became a local hero and was eventually acquitted of murder charges for his part in the 'Matewan Massacre.' But in the summer of 1921, Hatfield and an associate, Ed Chambers, were shot dead by Baldwin-Felts detectives on the steps of the McDowell

² Someone who is responsible for weighing coal

County Courthouse, where they were to stand trial for a shooting in a nearby coal camp.
(2019b)

The Matewan Massacre happened during the middle of the mine wars and only fueled the fire for more bloodshed to happen in the year to come.

The Battle of Blair Mountain

After the 1920 Matewan Massacre, came The Battle of Blair Mountain – the largest armed uprising in the United States since the Civil War – which happened near the end of the mine wars in 1921 (Marcetic, 2018). During the Battle of Blair Mountain, miners once again had to physically fight and die for their right to have fair wages and humane working conditions:

As many as 20,000 miners marched 90 miles and engaged in a two-week battle with more than 5,000 Logan County deputy sheriffs, mine guards, and state police. The Battle of Blair Mountain ended when President Warren G. Harding placed the region under martial law and ordered 2,500 federal soldiers and a bombing squadron into the state. (Corbin, 2016)

Despite the tragic and violent deaths that happened on Blair Mountain, the battle has had a profound effect on American history, which is often overlooked when analyzing how unionizing efforts can combat corporate power. The Cultural Landscape Foundation conveys how important the battle was to not only West Virginia's history but American history:

The Battle of Blair Mountain was perhaps the most forceful challenge to corporate power in American history, and the battle stands as a prime example of the sacrifices workers made and the struggles they faced in order to achieve union rights, benefits, living wages, safe working conditions, and pensions. It would take more than a decade after the battle

for many of the miners' objectives to be enshrined in law, but all workers in America now benefit from this early-twentieth-century struggle for workers' rights. (Keeny, 2018)

Today, the March to Blair Mountain acts as a symbol of solidarity for some of West Virginia's striking teachers. During the 1921 march to Blair Mountain, striking miners wore red bandannas around their necks as a representation of unity. Throughout the 2018-2019 teachers' strike, that same sense of unity was displayed as teachers too wore the red bandanna around their necks. Red bandanas serve as a symbol of solidarity which unites heritage with hope, miners with teachers, and their past and previous attempts to gain worker control in a corporate-controlled state.

The Battle of Blair Mountain caused the union to end their organizing efforts in the southern coalfields due to UMWA defeat, and by the end of the 1920s the union's membership in West Virginia dropped to fewer than 1,000 (2018). Despite the drop, however, in 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal revitalized union endeavors and led to the UMWA-supported Democratic Party taking control of the state legislature (National Coal Heritage, 2019).

Hawks Nest Tunnel Disaster

At the core of West Virginia's militant strike history lies the historical lack of concern industries have shown for their workers' health, safety, and financial well-being. The ability to extract the state's resources while purposefully disregarding unsafe workplace conditions is a theme woven throughout most of the state's fatal mining disasters. 18 lives were lost in the 1894 Blanche Mine Disaster; 80 were reported dead in 1907 Stuart Shaft Mine; 361 perished in the Fairmont Coal Company's Monongah mine; 191 lost their lives in the 1924 Benwood Mine Disaster; Nine men were found lost in the 1972 Blacksville No. 1 Mine Disaster; 2 were killed in

the 2006 Aracoma Coal Mine Disaster; 12 were lost in 2006 Sago Mine Disaster; 29 miners died in 2010 from the Upper Big Branch Mine Disaster. Nonetheless, industrialists continue to permit hazardous working conditions in exchange for profit which is specifically seen in West Virginia's Hawks Nest Tunnel Disaster in 1930.

The Hawk's Nest Tunnel was constructed with the intent to divert water from the New River and convert it to hydroelectric power as a means to provide more power to Union Carbide's metal plant downstream at Alloy on the Kanawha River (National Park Service, 2018b). The digging of the tunnel required hard, manual labor and needed a plethora of workers to dig through straight rock, so many men, a large number of them African American, took the job to try to make money during the Depression (Dotson-Lewis, 2009),

As the digging and blasting of the tunnel occurred, the workers – laboring without masks or proper ventilation systems – encountered intense amounts of silica coming out of the tunnel, covered in white dust which both hindered their vision and caused respiratory problems (National Park Service, 2018b). Usually within a worker's first year of tunnel employment, he would contract silicosis, be unable to work, and possibly die (2018b).

In 1931, inspired by the growing sickness associated with the tunnel's construction, *The Fayette Tribune* wrote a piece about the number of growing deaths associated with the job. The article spoke of “inhumane and unsafe” working conditions, intending to enlighten the public about the dangers associated with the tunnel. A local judge, however, issued a gag order to stop the publication and that information was never disseminated (Dotson-Lewis, 2008). Out of “approximately 5,000 men that worked on the project, an estimated 2,900 worked inside the tunnel” and at least 764 workers died of silicosis (National Park Service, 2018b). The companies involved in the tunnel's construction never took responsibility for the deaths since the “most cost

effective way to handle the crisis was not to acknowledge the dangers, stop work and provide safer conditions, but to deny the reality of the situation, keep hiring a steady stream of new workers and complete the tunnel as quickly as possible” (National Park Service, 2018a, para. 6).

Currently, the tunnel continues to do its job of diverting water to the New River to produce hydroelectricity for Alloy metals while continuing to have the title of “the worst industrial tragedy in American history” (National Park Service, 2018a).

Energy Politics

Today, there is a direct relationship between West Virginia’s political affiliation and the extraction industries, particularly coal and natural gas even though the ability for workers in the private sector to strike and unionize has created a source of pride and identity. While West Virginians have historically found solidarity through job actions and work stoppages, voting trends have shifted. Historically, Democratic voters held political views consistent with liberal or progressive politics. That, however, changed in the 2000 presidential election (Chinni & Rivera, 2016). A once traditionally blue state turned red in large part due to the Democrats’ stance on stricter environmental regulations – stricter Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) laws that would ultimately add more barriers to an already suffering coal industry that was growing close to the end of its available resources. Mining companies had already switched to mountain-top removal in order to access coal seams that could not be reached through underground mines. During the presidential election in 2000, Democratic candidate Al Gore’s platform on climate change resulted in West Virginia’s voting for a Republican presidential candidate with the hope of saving the coal industry (2016). The belief it was Republicans who would rein in the EPA and relax regulations on the energy sector quickly cemented the idea the state must vote red in order to preserve its industrial jobs.

Current labor laws in West Virginia prohibit public employees from striking and from collective bargaining. In 2018, nonetheless, over 2,000 teachers joined a union (Blanc, 2019), and in 2018 and 2019 members of the American Federation of Teachers, the West Virginia Education Association, and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association were seen rallying together at the state's capitol, supported by the presence of the United Mine Workers. Members of local firefighter and law enforcement unions, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Service Employees International Union, and the Communication Workers of America were in the crowd as well.

Summary of Related Literature

Outside the context of West Virginia's 2018 and 2019 teachers' strike, a broad spectrum of literature attempts to investigate historical contexts surrounding teachers' strikes, to provide qualitative descriptions of teachers' perceptions of workplace conditions, and to speculate as to why teachers are currently striking (Diniz-Pereira, 2003; Hemric, Eury & Shellman, 2010; Kumashiro, 2012; Molnar, 1996; Stone, 1991; Woodard 2013). For example, Schirmer (2017) found that the teachers during the 1974 Wisconsin strike molded their language to adhere to neoliberal conventions of legislators (i.e., a modified form of liberalism tending to favor free-market capitalism) instead of relying on their own discursive preferences related to creating long-term positive changes in education. The article implies teachers today remain under the same impression they need to adopt the lexicon of policymakers and have yet to escape the limitations that neoliberalism's rhetoric imposes.

Friedman (2018) largely agrees and further points out teachers strike as a last alternative since they do not have access to meaningful channels to pursue the changes they want within their profession; teachers' ability to withhold their labor by striking is the only leverage they

have against political and corporate influences. Political and corporate power in education outweigh teachers' expert opinions when legislative decisions are being made, and a sub-section of literature suggests that teachers are purposely left out of educational decision-making when they are the ones whose perspectives should be valued (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Woodard, 2013).

Arguing the same, Bowers, Ochs, Jensen & Schultz (2009) believe that social movements happen when the establishment excludes groups of people in the decision-making process; therefore, agitating those groups to act out. Bowers et al. explain how agitation happens on a persuasive continuum ranging from verbal to combative. By using past social movements to demonstrate the progression of agitation, they provide evidence to suggest all social movements follow the continuum which can also be applied to the teacher strikes.

When attempting to comprehend the context in which teachers' strikes are situated, one finds the task of separating politics from a corporate agenda all but impossible. The two concepts are intertwined throughout the research, and recent literature shows how legislative deliberations provide a venue for the pursuit of corporate agendas through government and educational policy (Kumashiro, 2012; Molnar, 1996). Stone (1991) demonstrates this concept by analyzing how corporations' funding of electoral candidates leads to the corporately funded politician's introduction of and support for educational reform bills that can further corporate interests. West Virginia's Legislature made it easier for corporations with deep pockets to do just that in the 2019 session. Senate Bill 622 increased limits on individual contributions to a candidate's committee to \$2,800 per election cycle, and donations to state party executive committees to \$10,000 per donor per year. Limits were previously set at \$1,000 (Mistich, 2019).

The primary education interests of the corporate sector and those legislators who favor private sector reforms during the 2019 West Virginia legislative session were the enabling of charter schools – allowing virtually anyone to acquire a charter to operate a school, including people who are “sponsored” by corporations (Baker & Miron, 2015) – and the establishment of educational savings accounts that allocate public money to families who wish to send their children to private schools. This development is consistent with a strand of literature that suggests corporations are taking over the American education system through government initiatives designed to privatize it (Baker & Miron, 2015; Boston, 2014; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Molnar 1996; Shields, 1973; Woodard, 2013).

Statement of Problem

Given the influence of the intertwined corporate and political agendas on education and the systematic marginalization of teachers’ voices in educational decision-making – for example, lobbyists for the school choice movement during the 2019 legislative session in West Virginia were invited to testify at length in committee meeting rooms while teachers were limited to one minute each in a public forum – teachers’ decision to strike may be viewed, as Friedman (2018) notes, as a rational response to their lack of access to channels through which to participate in the policy-making process. This lack of access then manifests itself through teachers’ strikes.

The public education system functions as part of society’s organizational structure and when striking teachers bring it to a halt, the rest of society’s operations are forced to stand still as well. Children cannot go to school when teachers strike; therefore, parents must find alternative forms of childcare or potentially take off work to care for their children, and in turn, those actions affect the local economy, put pressure on the legislature, and cause tension within and among family structures, the education system, and the government. Striking teachers interrupt

how society functions. When they leave the classroom, they leave more than schools waiting impatiently for their return.

Purpose of the Study

To keep teachers in the classroom, students going to school, and society functioning in a relatively status quo fashion, one needs to understand the various influences that have contributed to teachers' lack of access to the policymaking process, in particular how the twin corporate and political agendas have combined to essentially decimate the power of labor unions in West Virginia and have worked to systematically marginalize teachers' voices (Blanc, 2018; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Green, 2018; Kumashiro, 2012; Molnar, 1996). One way this problem was explored was by examining the extent to which teachers perceived their inclusion or exclusion, as articulated and practiced by legislative leadership, as legitimate ground for a work stoppage.

Even though there is a fairly extensive body of literature analyzing labor movements and teachers' strikes as a subset of those movements, this study intended to add to that body of knowledge by using a rhetorical framework grounded in theories on agitation and control to analyze the intergroup interactions between legislators on one hand and teachers and their representatives on the other (Bowers et al., 2009) during the 2018 and 2019 teachers' strikes in West Virginia. By examining how teachers responded to the legislative leadership's conduct during that period, we can perhaps better understand teachers' determination that they had both the need and the power to strike, as well as the right to engage in shared leadership when it comes to the state's education policies.

Research Questions

This study aimed to examine the job actions and/or work stoppages in which teachers participated; their motivations to engage in those job actions or work stoppages; their responses to specific legislative proposals related to salary, benefits and working conditions; their responses to legislative proposals related to education reform initiatives; and their perceptions of the extent of their inclusion or exclusion in the educational decision-making process, as documented in Kabler (2019a), Kabler (2018), Nelson (2019a), Zuckerman (2018), Zuckerman & Quinn (2018). This research contributed to existing literature about labor movements, particularly teachers' strikes, and investigated into whether there remains any potential for shared leadership in the education policy arena. To accomplish this research purpose, five questions are asked:

Research Question 1: To what extent were employment issues instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 2: To what extent were proposed education reform initiatives instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 3: To what extent were teachers' limited opportunities for input instrumental in their decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 4: To what extent did teachers perceive their educational leaders' (i.e., building, district, and educational associations) representation of their concerns to be effective?

Research Question 5: To what extent did demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience, school size or location, etc.) inform teachers' decisions to participate in strike and/or strike-related activities?

Theoretical Framework

This study relied on a theoretical framework consistent with Bowers, Ochs, Jensen & Schultz's (2009) concept of rhetorical strategies situated within contexts of agitation and control. Bowers et al. argue the current definition of rhetoric is too limited in scope, encompassing only verbal and written strategies used as methods of persuasion. Their framework introduces the idea that rhetorical strategies should expand past traditional definitions to include all forms of communication involving the "rationale of instrumental, symbolic behavior" (p.1). All rhetorical behavior, verbal and nonverbal, can be considered symbolic since either form can give an abstract idea a tangible, communicative purpose where underlying meanings can be inferred by those who witness the behavior.

To further the understanding of social movements, theories of agitation and control can be applied when analyzing the use of rhetorical strategies employed by agitators (e.g., activists, protesters, teachers on strike, etc.) and the establishment (e.g., those in control, for example, the government, corporate entities, etc.) to attempt to gain control of power. Bowers, et al. (2009) explain that social movements are reactions against the establishment's control of society's structure and they derive their energy from the establishment's exclusion of groups of people from the decision-making process; therefore, the excluded group is left only with the ability to agitate their way into gaining a voice within the policymaking process. Since the agitators have been systematically excluded, they have limited options when trying to gain decision-making access. When the establishment senses the agitators' disruption –a tactic to gain control – is bordering on success, the establishment then predictably attempts to react to the disruption through a series of its own strategies to maintain power.

Bowers et al. (2009) explain agitation happens on a rhetorical (i.e., persuasive) continuum ranging from the verbal to the combative. By using previous social movements to demonstrate the progression of agitation (e.g., the Chicano movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, The United Mine Workers of America's strike against the Pittston Coal Company in 1989–1990, protests about the Iraq War, etc.), they provide evidence to suggest that over time all social movements will follow the verbal-to-combative continuum.

Applying the Bowers et al. (2009) framework of agitation and control to the 2018-2019 teachers' strikes allows one to examine the rhetorical strategies undertaken by both teachers and legislators as means to either acquire or maintain power, and subsequently to either promote or prohibit social change. Bowers et al. suggest agitation strategies fall into five categories: petition, promulgation (a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals as a tactic to win public support), solidification (tactics used to unite followers and create a sense of community), violent resistance, and escalation/confrontation. Categories for control strategies, on the other hand, include avoidance, suppression, adjustment, and capitulation. Since these categories outline a progressive flow of the actions taken by teachers (i.e., agitation strategies) before and during the strike and help explain legislative reactions (i.e., control strategies), the theory provides an appropriate framework when analyzing the recent teachers' strike phenomena.

Method

This study used purposeful sampling as the procedure to collect data and relied on participants' having specific, desired characteristics. The population of interest consisted of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes, with active strike participation including any job action/activity that directly or indirectly supported the state's teacher work stoppage over the course of the nine-day striking period in 2018 and the two-day

strike period in 2019 (e.g., picketing, participating in walk-ins³, going to the state capitol, making informational signs, providing lunch for students, etc.) Since this study's sample encompassed the diversity of teachers who participated in West Virginia's teachers' strike, (i.e., urban and rural districts, large and small districts, affluent and low-SES districts, etc.), the results may be viewed as representative of the teacher population in the state.

Teacher participants were recruited through a private, Facebook group which consisted of West Virginia teachers, service personnel, and administrators. The group is called West Virginia Public Employees UNITED, and the researcher gained permission from group administrator before distributing the survey. Survey respondents provided their electronic consent to participate before beginning the survey, which had a three-week completion timeframe. Two separate reminders were sent to all potential respondents once a week after the survey's introduction and then at the beginning of the third week. Teachers could complete the survey anywhere internet access was available and were advised via the consent form their responses were anonymous, IP addresses were not collected, and responses were reported only in the aggregate. Selected demographic measures served as independent variables.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following definitions apply.

Job action means participating in an activity other than a strike/work stoppage

Strike/work stoppage is the refusal to engage in the employment for which one has been hired

Employment issues refer to teachers' problems pertaining to their salaries, health care benefits, working conditions, and job protections

Education reform initiatives are any proposed legislative changes which promote the

³ Picketing outside the school prior to walking in to teach for the day

privatization of public education; such initiatives specifically include charter schools and educational savings accounts (ESAs)

Limitations

The limitations to this study are largely those common to survey research as referenced in Creswell (2003). First, the findings were limited to the perceptions of only those teachers who responded to the survey rather than being generalizable to the larger populations of that group. The population for the study was also limited to only West Virginia teachers who went on strike in 2018-2019, and the state's economy, population, and educational system are demographically unique, further limiting generalizability.

Second, the teachers who chose to respond to the survey may have done so out of a bias, either positive or negative, toward the Legislature as a policymaking body. Third, the potential for socially desirable responses was relevant as well (McMillian 2008).

Fourth, the study's timeframe served as a potential research limitation. This study hinged on teachers' ability to recollect their perceptions about the strike without considering present-day educational matters or political news, or how the strike influenced those matters. The first strike took place in 2018 and the second in 2019, and the survey was sent out in January 2020.

Teachers knew the outcome of both strikes, which may have resulted in a form of answer bias. Bias posed a potential threat to internal validity since teachers' ability to accurately reflect on previous strikes may have been influenced by external variables (i.e., knowledge of outcomes, economic changes, political issues, educational initiatives, election campaigns, etc.).

Finally, the researcher's own professional experience may have constituted a source of empathy and provided an experiential background that enhanced effectiveness in eliciting and

understanding respondents' perceptions; it may also, however, be viewed as a limitation in that it was a potential source of bias.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The scope of this study was confined to understanding West Virginia's 2018-2019 post-strike, teacher participants' motivations for striking, both personal/economic and professional/academic, their reactions to having their input into education decision-making systematically limited, and their satisfaction with the representation their union representatives provided. To lay a foundation for such a focus, a brief overview of collective bargaining for educators was examined, as well as a review of the literature pertaining to political and corporate power in education decision-making and the social pressures that affect the degree to which teachers are actively able to exert influence in education policymaking. The review continues with a discussion centered around teacher self-efficacy, a brief examination of shared leadership, and ends with contextual information about West Virginia as one of the sites for labor's most recent stand-off with management.

Historical Overview of Collective Bargaining

Research and historical analysis suggest that teachers' strikes are embedded in educators' ability to participate in collective bargaining in the states which allow it. Around the mid-1960s, teachers' strikes became extremely prominent and literature suggests the uprisings of teachers were due to educators' ability to collectively voice their opinions, which was founded on a unified desire to improve the overall education system and teachers' job benefits (Glass, 1967; Hannaway & Rotherham, 2006; Stewart, 2018). Blanc (2018), however, suggests that during that time, all labor unions were thriving due to post-war conditions and inspiration gleaned from civil rights movements. West Virginia workers have had a history marked by working class defeat, which has led to increases in the number of labor actions. Blanc also writes that "West Virginia

shares many similarities with the rank-and-file militancy of the late 1960s and early 1970s” (para. 2), but the WV teachers’ strike was different in that the state’s working class had so consistently seen defeat, which acts as a catalyst for current empowerment. It is possible that phenomena like class power, bottom-up militancy, and the inspiration from the 2016 Bernie Sanders campaign helped inspire the strike impulse in teachers across the state in 2018 (Blanc, 2018).

During the 1960s, striking teachers could be found across the country ranging from New York to California (Glass, 1967), and these strikes helped teachers gain a newfound voice in education. Besides finding a collective voice, the strikes helped teacher organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association become political tools used by educators to help secure solidarity (Hannaway & Rotherham, 2006). Research shows an increase in union membership in the 1960s through 1980s, but after that period, one can see a steady decline (Berman, 2015; Dunn & Walker, 2016). The decline in union membership today is suggested to be a product of conservative legislation, like right-to-work laws, designed to reduce union participation as well as unions’ inability to keep up with economical demands (Berman, 2015).

Collective Bargaining’s Influence on Student Achievement

While not directly relevant to this study, it is still useful to note the decades’ worth of literature shows that there is no definitive answer to the question of whether collective bargaining positively or negatively influences student achievement, despite educators’ position that at least part of their rationale for striking is to improve educational practice. Studies by Kleiner and Petree (1988), Grimes and Register (1990), and Nelson and Rosen (1996), find a positive relationship between collective bargaining and student achievement. Peltzman’s (1993),

Eberts and Stone's (1987) and Moe's (2007) research on collective bargaining and student achievement, however, show negative effects.

For example, using the SAT as a proxy for achievement, Steelman, Powell and Carini's (2000) study examines the scores of students during a 1993 strike and concludes the students of teachers who participated in collective bargaining posted higher SAT scores, possibly due to teacher job stability and a union-founded platform for teachers to voice concerns. Steelman et al. also find lower scores among students in the South whose teachers did not participate in union endeavors.

Hoxby (1996), on the other hand, argues unionized districts have higher drop-out rates and are not as efficient with district resources pertaining to student-centered programs (i.e., pupil spending, student-teacher ratios, etc.) – which does not exactly address the issue of student achievement. Research about collective bargaining's influence on student achievement clearly varies and extraneous variables – such as student or community demographics, competing simultaneous initiatives (i.e., other initiatives being implemented to improve student performance), geographic location and the like – which play a role in students' educational successes are not always accounted for. Essentially, many, if not most, of the arguments about collective bargaining in education are perceptual, lying within proponents' and opponents' beliefs that bargaining will render better, the same, or worse results as they relate to student achievement.

Influence of Past Collective Bargaining Endeavors on Current Education System

Some of the literature in the field looks to understand how teachers' strikes have had negative or positive effects on past and current conditions of the American education system. For example, Schirmer (2017) argues that disunited liberalism weakened teachers' unions,

disempowering a woman-dominated workforce. The article looks at how teachers have defended their rights as workers in the face of emerging neoliberalism, defined as a modified form of liberalism tending to favor free-market capitalism. Schirmer suggests that teachers during the 1974 Wisconsin strike erred by molding their language to serve the very neoliberal conventions that helped crack the foundations of liberalism and true educational reform rather than challenging them. Schirmer believes the American education system is still suffering the consequences of the strike since Wisconsin's strike participants gained short-term satisfaction instead of long-term results.

While Schirmer suggests the long-term, negative outcomes of the Wisconsin teacher strike are still being experienced today, Hertel-Fernandez, Naidu and Reich (2019) found evidence to support that teacher strikes can positively change public opinion. Hertel-Fernandez et al. suggest when a community has firsthand exposure to strikes, its people are likely to have stronger support for labor movements and unions. The researchers surveyed almost 4,500 parents from the states which experienced teacher job action during 2018. They found parents who had direct exposure to the job action through their school-age children were more likely to support legal rights for teachers' unions, strikes, and they were more interested on going on strike themselves in the upcoming year (para 2, p. 30) This information leads to suggest that mobilized labor movements influence political opinion since political organizations "shape the political preferences of their members" and help build union support though direct exposure, ultimately enhancing labor movement endeavors (para 2. p. 4).

Along the same lines as Schirmer's (2017) position, however, Friedman (2018), an organizer with the National Education Association in Vermont, also looks at neoliberalism as having a negative effect on teachers' ability to strike and see long-term change. Friedman

attempts to explain why there has been a recent increase in teachers' strikes across the nation, explaining strikes from an economic and political perspective and giving a labor movement analysis which portrays teachers as leaders in a social class movement. Friedman juxtaposes traditional labor unions with neoliberal principles to argue the labor unions have been negatively reshaped by neoliberalism's interest in free-market capitalism, causing havoc for the middle-class worker. Friedman points out states most likely to participate in teachers' strikes are the ones with the "weakest institutional environments," which includes poverty, low working wages, and a troubled economy. These are also the states in which it has been relatively easy to sell neoliberalism's prescriptions for laws and policies that favor the individual's interests over the collective good; deregulating financial institutions (cf., 2008 housing crisis) as well as state and federal agencies tasked with protecting workers' safety and benefits; and shifting away from government programs to ensure health and welfare. The article argues one of the reasons it is so easy to persuade people of the value of those neoliberal principles is that teachers, as well as other workers, do not have access to meaningful channels to pursue the changes they want within their professions, so withholding labor is the only leverage available to them.

Political and Corporate Power in Education

The highest number of teachers' strikes happened between the 1960s and 1980s, with the last occurring in the 1990s. Teachers' strikes have been relatively sparse for the past 40 years. To understand the wave of teachers' strikes happening currently, however, one must understand how political and corporate powers influence education.

Recent literature about corporate involvement in education (Kumashiro, 2012; Molnar, 1996) shows corporate involvement permeating throughout government and educational politics. Diann Woodard (2013), the President of the American Federation of School Administrators,

suggests corporations are attempting to take over the American education system through government initiatives with the hopes of dismantling public education through privatization.

Privatizing education puts money into corporate pockets, which comes from legislative establishment of such corporate-friendly initiatives as voucher programs, educational savings accounts, and charter schools. From real estate funding to hiring for-profit management companies, charter schools are in the business to make money (Green, 2018), and the money made from charter schools does not have to be invested back into the school or the students. Both forms of charter schools, for-profit and nonprofit, are educational businesses, which means the “interests of the students and the interests of the businesses involved in school are in opposition of each other” (para. 7).

Not only are individual states trying to pass charter school bills which take away from public school funding, but the U.S Department of Education is continuously awarding millions of dollars to failing charter school systems. For example, in 2010 the U.S Department of Education released their budget with a 12% decrease in educational funding (Murry, 2019). The proposed decrease comes from Special Olympics and 21st Century Community Learning Center; however, an additional \$500 million dollars was requested to expand charter school programs (2019). An investigation of the U.S Department of Education’s Charter Schools Program found application and funding discrepancies in the program:

...[The report] found a troubling pattern of insufficient applicant review, contradictions between information provided by applicants and available public data, the gifting of funds to schools with inadequate financial and governance plans, a push-out of large grants to the states with little supervision by the department, and the waste of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. (Burriss & Bryant, 2019)

Stone (1991) supports the same premises as Woodard, pointing out corporate programs have slowly worked their way into the education system by offering various levels of financial support and training programs, which leads communities to assume businesses' involvement in education helps promote a better education. Stone also observes since the deep pockets of big businesses help politicians become and stay elected, they can expect those politicians to introduce educational reform bills to further their privatization agenda. Both Stone and Woodard point to the establishment of charter schools as an example of an educational reform concept that helps to further privatization.

Boston (2014) also poses the argument that educational reform involving charter schools and voucher programs is supported by legislatures/legislators who are sponsored by large corporate entities. Such entities include the Koch brothers' American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Americans for Prosperity as well as EdChoice groups which favor school privatization. School privatization is also supported by Basis, the corporation that services charter school franchises, and in the 2014 school year, Basis made \$60 million from charter schools (Blanc, 2018). Woodard adds to the topic by writing "by 2010, \$540 million — fully 64% of major foundation giving — was directed to these private groups, including Knowledge is Power Program, Teach for America, the NewSchools Venture Fund, the Charter School Growth Fund, and the D.C. Public Education Fund" (2013, para. 3). Woodard's work demonstrates a vast amount of funding supporting charter school and privatization initiatives comes from corporate groups which are derived from political entities.

It is useful to look at how some corporate or political action entities view their involvement in education. Their vocabulary choices, for instance, are carefully designed to take advantage of a lexicon that individuals in a capitalist society find favorable. For example, the

American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) says it promotes school choice through charter schools in the interest of “striking a balance between [sic] innovation, autonomy, and accountability” (2019). ALEC’s broader statement of support for privatizing education conforms to the same terminology, relying on such well-worn economic tropes as “competitive,” “innovative,” and “empowering”:

Instead of throwing more money at the problem, it’s time to let parents take back control over their children’s educations by allowing them to apply competitive pressure to schools and educational providers. Innovative, parent-empowering choices such as charter schools, voucher programs, tax credit scholarships, homeschool, and education savings accounts allow each child the opportunity to reach his or her potential. (2019, para. 3)

When looking at ALEC’s standpoint, views, and motives about education and comparing them to educational reform initiatives, one can see how the terminology used by corporate initiatives and proposed legislation is essentially the same.

Most charter school reform bills allow anyone to establish a charter through a specified process, and this includes ones that are “sponsored” through corporations (Baker & Miron, 2015). Woodard (2013) argues school administrators and educators are constantly being silenced and played for invisible entities in educational reform decisions because allowing those involved in education to have decision-making power would take away the corporate power in education. Cohn and Kottkamp’s (1993) book supports the same themes Woodard presents, while advocating for teacher-voice, participation, and involvement in all parts of educational policy and decision-making.

Social Influences and Pressures

Outside of political and corporate power in education, the researched literature also suggests there are social aspects that play roles in adding pressure to the education system. Diniz-Pereira (2003) finds social interpretations about or attitudes toward teaching, for example, influence the way a person perceives the school system. Educators have had to learn how to work within the social contexts of their organizations, therefore, molding to social conventions of how they and their schools should perform.

This adaptation to social conventions is seen in Stone's writing (1991) as well, when she suggests public opinions about education are shaped by people's preconceived ideas about schools' functioning. Much of the public's thinking about education's inner workings is viewed from a consumer or instrumental (i.e., education is a means to an end) standpoint, which has made it difficult for the education system, with its focus on the inherent value of learning, to adjust to social expectations. The book *Teachers: The Missing Voice in Education* (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993) examines some of the social pressures coming from parents and their school-age youths. The book notes 90% of the teachers who were interviewed for the book's publication maintained parents and students have changed from past years due to the change in society's priorities which, in turn, influenced teachers' ability to achieve "curricular and broader purposes" (p.86).

According to a 2018 poll "The Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," conducted by Phi Delta Kappan, Americans trust and support teachers, but they draw the line at wanting their own children to join a profession they see as undervalued and low-paid. Additionally, Nebor (1984) writes, "Many experts in education and public relations believe that the major

problem with school/community relations is the public's lack of knowledge of the success of education..." (p.3). Nebor suggests teachers are the ones who must make favorable community impressions to maintain public support. Since the school board creates policies and administrators interpret the policies -- and neither engages in much contact with the public -- it is teachers who become the faces of policies and who become the martyrs for the community's perceptions of the school and county (p. 3). While aspiring administrators are taught that it is they who are responsible for maintaining school/community relations, it is teachers who are most often in the trenches fielding phone calls and e-mails from parents. The public's lack of knowledge and respect for the education system is still being viewed as a problem in current school systems, which is also supported in studies by McElroy (2004) and Russell (2010).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an important theme related to teacher's perceptions of power since it contributes to teachers' feelings about job satisfaction. Blanc (2018) notes the lack of teacher autonomy and creativity are the two main reasons teachers leave the profession and "93 percent of teachers affirmed that they should have 'a great deal' or 'a lot' of input in school decisions." Only 31 percent, however, feel they have it (p. 25). Richmond (2013) reports in survey sampling of 1,000 teachers and 500 principals in K-12 schools across the country, only 39 percent of teachers described themselves as "very satisfied" with their job, which is a 23 percent point drop since 2008. Given teachers feel as though they do not have autonomy within their own profession, as reflected in the drop of job satisfaction rates, the concept of teacher self-efficacy has a relevant connection to teachers' participation in job actions.

For review purposes, this study adopts Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise

influence over events that affect their lives” (1994, p. 1) specifically as it relates to teachers’ perceptions about their ability to influence change in educational settings.

To begin, the researched literature suggests there is a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy and their influence in the organizational structure. Hemric, Eury, and Shellman’s (2010) study, for example, provides correlations between perceived teacher empowerment and perceived sense of teacher self-efficacy. The study uses predictive and descriptive statistics and includes a population of 70 elementary teachers from two schools. Hemric et al.’s findings pose inferences about the extent to which the organizational structure can be influenced by the level of control teachers feel they have in their educational system. In turn, their perceptions of control promote the growth of professional self-efficacy.

The same theme of organizational structure is also found in Avidov-Ungar, Friedman, & Olshtain’s work (2014) which explores teacher empowerment as it relates to leadership positions. They find the level of perceived power was related to the leadership position as well as teacher’s perceptions of that position. Broadly speaking, Avidov-Ungar et al. research helps one understand how teachers’ self-efficacy influences not only their job satisfaction, but also the overall organizational structure of society.

Adding to the literature about teacher self-efficacy and power, Morris and Nunnery (1993) administered a survey to 140 teachers in six participating elementary schools which measured teacher empowerment related to a pilot, professional development program. After attending the professional development program, the authors report teachers had a heightened sense of empowerment in the areas of mentoring self-efficacy, teaching self-efficacy, collegiality, and professional knowledge. Morris and Nunnery also find, however, the teachers felt they had little power to make changes within their schools which would affect both teaching

and learning, despite feelings of higher self-efficacy. This study, combined with Bosso's qualitative study (2017) about teachers' morale, perceptions, and satisfaction as having a positive relationship to educational change, allows one to understand how teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy is an essential factor when looking at teachers' ability to influence educational change.

Shared Leadership

Closely related to the concept of self-efficacy, as it pertains to the ability to influence policy, is the model of shared leadership, which acknowledges influence may originate from multiple directions and multiple people engaging in leadership in different ways depending upon the tasks at hand (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003; Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003). Organizations and institutions are typically thought of in hierarchical terms with a single individual at the top who bears the burden of accountability. If the organization or institution falters, it is the leader whose job is most in jeopardy (Locke, 2003; O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, III, 2003). Shared leadership reconceptualizes this model in order to allow for a leadership process that is more distributive or interdependent. Northouse (2016) writes that it occurs when members of a team "take on leadership behaviors to influence the team and to maximize team effectiveness" (p. 365), while Pearce and Conger (2003) define it as "a dynamic interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). In addition to maximizing effectiveness of the team and more readily accomplish goals, Cox et al. (2003) observe shared leadership can "improve the experience of work" for those involved by offering "an incremental measure of self-determination and opportunity for meaningful impact" (Cox et al., 2003, p. 54).

Shared leadership, thus, requires formal or assigned leaders accept others have the potential to make significant and meaningful contributions when given the opportunity (Day, 2000). As Maak and Pless (2006) and O'Toole et al. (2003) note, however, leaders who doubt the competence or abilities of those with whom they are asked to share leadership often view the practice as counterintuitive.

West Virginia's Economic Conditions

To understand the West Virginia teachers' strikes, it is necessary to view West Virginia as an entire entity as opposed to viewing its education system in isolation. The state's economy relies on the extraction industries, particularly coal and natural gas, and in the past years, declining coal production has hurt the state's ability to produce an economically stable environment for its people. This, combined with the Legislature's history of allowing industry owners to extract minerals with only the smallest of severance taxes and passing tax cuts that benefit business and industry, has left the state with a massive and ongoing deficit.

Research by Rickman & Wang (2018) suggests that analysis of past state tax cuts does not provide adequate evidence to conclude that lowering business taxes is an effective way to help a state's economy. In 2006, Governor Joe Manchin and the Democratic majority party passed tax cuts which cost the state approximately \$220 million in yearly revenue (Blanc, 2018). Those initial legislative acts led to Democratic lawmakers cutting the corporate net income tax from 9 to 6.5 percent in the following years, and then eliminating the business franchise tax (2018, p. 34). Instead of creating economic growth, the cuts impeded it. Before the tax cuts, West Virginia's tax revenue was 85 percent higher than the 2000-2006 average; from 2006-2015, the implemented tax cuts have cost the state \$450 million a year and it has never recovered (O'Leary, 2019).

The proposed tax cuts that were meant to help West Virginia's economy, have proven to do more harm than good. Despite that knowledge, legislators have continued to make tax cuts. The 2019 Legislative Session introduced two proposals for a constitutional amendment "to eliminate or reduce the business personal property taxes paid on machinery, inventory, and equipment" in an attempt to increase manufacturing while shifting the tax burden to the people" (Boettner, 2019):

The House Finance Committee originated HB 3137 that would reduce the state's five personal income tax rates by a half of a percentage point (0.5%) each time a newly created 'personal income tax reduction fund' that is funded by online sales taxes and lottery revenues reaches a balance of \$200 million. Since higher-income people would benefit from each marginal tax rate reduction, they would see the biggest tax cuts from this proposal. The proposal would eventually lead to large compounding revenue losses and budget holes that would likely require more cuts to schools, colleges, and other budget priorities or tax increases that will most likely fall on working families. (Boettner, 2019)

Phil Kabler (2019b) of *The Charleston Gazette* sums up in similar fashion the effects of a corresponding piece of 2019 legislation reducing, again, the severance tax on coal in a pointless effort to prop up a dying industry:

... [The] successes cited by the [Governor's] campaign were in the form of tax breaks to prop up coal: \$60 million a year, ultimately, in severance tax cuts for steam coal, and \$12.5 million a year in business and occupation tax waivers to keep an antiquated coal-fired power plant ... operating During the session, coal industry lobbyists told legislators that the tax cuts would not only slow the downturn for West Virginia coal, but

would create new jobs and economic growth ... [The] West Virginia Coal Association cited a study showing that the tax break would create 400 new jobs and generate more than \$400 million in new economic activity ... [We] now know [this] study was either vastly inaccurate or a fabrication. It's becoming increasingly clear that \$60 million a year of tax cuts won't save coal mining jobs, or preserve miners' pensions, but will allow out-of-state coal barons ... to line their pockets one last time. The lost revenue will, however, make it tougher for future Legislatures to balance state budgets without cutting needed programs and services. We're seeing that already, when just three months after declaring that the economy is booming, the Justice administration is instructing state agency heads to prepare to cut their budgets by a collective \$100 million this budget year. (Paras. 13-15)

This economic deficiency can also be seen in its broader context when looking at a previous *U.S. News and World Report's* feature pertaining to West Virginia's declining economy and high poverty rates (2016). *U.S. News* reports the median household income in West Virginia was \$43,385 in 2016, the second lowest in the country, and West Virginia had a poverty rate around 17% at the time, about 3% higher than the national average. According to their report, West Virginia was the only state to experience a population percentage decline from 2010-2016, and for years it has one of the oldest median ages, 42 years (*U.S. News and World Report*, 2016).

West Virginia thus suffers in terms of economic stability, high poverty rates, and the ability to replenish its population. The state also has high numbers of kinship families, specifically in the southern part of the state. For example, 80% of Logan County High School's students are not living with their biological parents, and at Man High School, 18 students out of a class of 21 live with someone other than their birth parents (Vidovich, 2019). These realities,

combined with other external factors such as the state's average 5.1% unemployment rate from 2018-2019, make West Virginia's institutions vulnerable especially when it comes to education (United States Department of Labor, 2019).

Overview of West Virginia's Education Standing

Unfortunately, West Virginia's education system has developed a reputation for inefficiency and underperformance when comparing it to other states in the nation. When looking at statistical comparisons, however, one must keep in mind such broad-based statistics generally do not take into account the demographic markers that identify documented negative effects on students' test scores (e.g., poverty, geographic constraints, family education levels, etc.). In head-to-head comparisons, therefore, West Virginia's education system yields less than admirable results. For example, in 2017, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed West Virginia had only 32 percent of fourth graders score at or above proficiency in reading, and only 35 percent of them scored at or above proficiency in math (West Virginia Department of Education, 2018). When comparing West Virginia's NAEP scores to scores from states with similar demographics, Dr. Steven Paine, West Virginia Superintendent of Schools, said the NAEP test scores are not a fair comparison for the state to be "ranked based on the sample size, which he said were less than 1-percent of the kids in a random sample population" (MetroNews Staff, para. 13, 2019).

Currently, West Virginia's high schools are ranked 35th in the nation by *U.S News and World Report*, but when including elementary and middle schools in the rankings, West Virginia drops to 45th in the country. The West Virginia Department of Education reports the state had an overall graduation rate of 89.40% for the 2016-2017 school year, which remains constant with previous years. Some local media entities such as the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* have questioned

how the graduation rate can be an accurate portrayal of educational preparedness since West Virginia has such low assessment scores (Jarvis, 2018). According to the ACT's 2017 average score by state, however, West Virginia had a 20.4 state average for the graduating class of 2017 compared to the national average of 21.0 (2017).

1990 West Virginia Teacher Strike

Even though West Virginia has the reputation of being the state that started the current wave of teachers' strikes, most have forgotten the West Virginia teachers' strike in 1990 played an instrumental role in statewide educational change. Largely, the strike is overlooked by those who live outside the state and by younger teachers since they did not participate in its job action endeavors. Seasoned West Virginia educators, however, remember the 1990 strike as revolutionary and empowering.

The 1990 teachers' strike in West Virginia was a landmark event that helped inspire confidence in teachers' ability to withhold labor as means to promote change. Similar to the state's recent reasons for striking, the 1990 strike was prompted by low teacher pay, attacks on public employees' insurance, and a lack of teacher-support programs. During that time, West Virginia teachers' pay was ranked forty-ninth in the nation, the public employees' insurance plan had a six-month back log, and the teachers' retirement fund was shorted by \$2 billion (Mochaidean, 2018). Funding in the state's public service budget became "depleted as only meager tax hikes were introduced and corporate subsidies ballooned" (para.7). Teachers, with union efforts, tried to negotiate with legislators about a proper teacher pay increase, but when an agreement could not be met, 47 out of 55 counties decided to strike. The work stoppage prompted the state's attorney general, Roger Tompkins, to characterize the strike as illegal. Tompkins mailed teachers a formal letter demanding they return to work or face reprimands:

Any teacher participating in a strike or work stoppage is failing to fulfill their contract and shall, pursuant to W. Va. Code § 18A-2-2 , be disqualified from teaching in a public school for one year, and the state department of education or county board of education may withhold all papers and credentials of such teacher. Furthermore, a county board may suspend or dismiss a striking teacher for insubordination or willful neglect of duty under the provision of W. Va. Code § 18A-2-8... (Tompkins, 1990, para.13)

The strike in 1990, nonetheless, lasted 11 days, and some of those days were not without violence. Seven teachers were arrested in Kanawha County for blocking school buses and one picketer was hit by an angry parent's car (Mochaidean, 2018). Eventually, though, West Virginia educators would see some results of their job action as they would receive five thousand dollars of incremental pay over three years, the establishment of faculty senates in every school, and new-teacher support programs (Powell, 2017). Additionally, the public employee's insurance plan would be fully funded so premiums would not rise, and the \$2 billion gap in retirement would be addressed in the future budgets (Mochaidean, para.19, 2018).

The circumstances surrounding the 2018-2019 teachers' strikes and the one in 1990 are not only similar in actions but also in unrequited legislative resolutions. Low wages and questionable insurance funding are concepts teachers were fighting for 30 years ago and yet, are still fighting for today. The proposed legislative actions during 1990 were only a band-aid solution and were made as a scant attempt to temporarily appease striking teachers, however. Today, the removal of the decades-old band-aid reveals a wound that remains affected by ongoing underfunding due in large part, if not exclusively, to extremely high corporate tax cuts compounded by attempts to privatize the education system.

2018-2019, West Virginia Strike

Taking into consideration West Virginia's past and current trends in tax cuts, educational rankings, militant strike history, and the decline of the coal industry, it becomes easy to legitimize West Virginia's 2018-2019 teachers' strikes. On February 22nd, 2018 West Virginia's teachers made history. That day, West Virginia teachers and school service personnel became the first group to declare a unified, educational work stoppage.

Strike Conditions

The conditions leading up to February 22nd, 2018 are ones rooted in an ongoing lack of educational funding for teachers' benefits, pay, and policymaking representation. These deficiencies in West Virginia's 2018 legislative session sparked frustration from teachers and school service personnel mainly due to the rising cost of health care premiums and low pay. The benefits cut would have been about \$55 million, and active employees with the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) Plans A, B, and D would have seen their deductibles increase by \$200 for a single employee plan and \$400 for a family plan. Out-of-pocket maximums would increase by \$1,000 for a single plan and \$2,000 for a family plan (WVEA Communications Staff, 2018). The rising cost of health care through PEIA, combined with several years' worth of insignificant pay increases, left education employees feeling the proposed pay increase would not combat rising inflation and health premiums.

Along with rising healthcare premiums, the number of teacher vacancies in the state became a focus for concerned educators. Since the 2017-2018 school year featured approximately 700 vacant teacher positions throughout the state, it was suggested a relationship existed between teacher pay and teacher vacancies (Allen & Arkin, 2018). At the beginning of the 2018 West Virginia legislative session, the Legislature announced their intent to give

teachers and service personnel only a 2% pay increase in 2019 followed by a 1% raise every year until 2021. This announcement came as an unwelcome surprise since Governor Jim Justice had previously promised a full 5% raise. At the time, West Virginia was ranked 48th in the nation for teacher pay, and the National Education Association reported West Virginia's teachers' mean salary to be \$45,555, which is above only two other states in the country (Allen & Arkin, 2018; Will, 2018).

Strike Mobilization

The 2018-2019 West Virginia teachers' strike did not happen spontaneously. Grassroots efforts combined with social media as an organizational tool allowed teachers and service personnel to mobilize and plan their job action. Strike mobilization, however, occurred prior to 2018-2019. In 2017, a private Facebook group, *West Virginia Public Employees UNITED*, was strategically created to be used as a statewide teacher and service personnel communication tool. At the time, though, it was not known the extent to which the private page would play a key role in creating statewide solidarity among educational employees in the 2018 and 2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes.

When the 2018 Legislature proposed an insignificant pay raise, claiming lack of funding for health insurance and salary increases, it was enough to move one of the southern coalfield counties, Mingo County, to vote on January 23rd to plan a walkout to protest (Petras, 2019). The Mingo County mobilization created a domino effect which led to other counties following in its footsteps.

The initial Mingo County mobilization led to "Fed Up Friday" on February 2nd, 2018, when all public schools in the coalfield counties of Mingo, Logan, McDowell, and Wyoming counties were closed. Teachers from these southern counties, along with others whose schools

were closed due to inclement weather, flooded the state’s capitol rotunda to cheer, chant, and rally with signs; all actions showed their disdain for the proposed educational and employment legislation (Petras, 2019; Coyne, 2018).

The southern counties’ walk-out inspired many other walk-outs and walk-ins across the state. Blanc (2018) writes “organizers called for another round of one-day walkouts in mid-February, with seven counties participating. By this time, the upsurge had grown so large that it superseded the organizational capacity of West Virginia’s militant minority” (p. 132). Seeing that counties were pleading for a unified vote to strike, on February 11th the American Federation of Teachers – WV, the West Virginia Education Association, and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association voted to authorize a statewide strike effective February 22nd, 2018.

During the strike, unified teachers and service personnel used the slogan “55 Strong, 55 United” – representing the state’s 55 county school districts – as a symbolic representation of their statewide commitment. Striking personnel were seen picketing or rallying at the capital wearing the logo or displaying it on signs. The “55 Strong” movement, coupled with UNITED’s page and grassroots efforts, made it possible to have true, statewide solidarity.

Temporary Resolution and Ongoing Efforts

The 2018 teachers’ strike affected over 277,000 students and involved approximately 20,000 teachers and service personnel (Allen & Arkin, 2018; Stewart, 2018). The nine-day work stoppage ended on March 7, 2018. At the end of the stoppage, teachers and service personnel were able to gain a 5% pay raise over three years but were unable to resolve the impending problem of rising healthcare costs. Instead, the governor called for a PEIA task force to be

established and charged with the responsibility to find a permanent solution for funding PEIA (Bidgood, 2018).

Unfortunately, the unrest for teachers continued in the following 2018-2019 school year. During the 2019 legislative session, the West Virginia Senate introduced an educational omnibus bill, Senate Bill 451, which rolled teacher pay raises and the state's first education privatization efforts (i.e., charter school and education savings accounts [ESAs]) into a single bill that included a non-severability clause in an effort to force teachers who supported salary increases to accept charter schools and education savings accounts as well or lose their raises.

The bill was drafted on January 24, 2019 and was sent to the West Virginia House finance committee on January 25, 2019 (Adams, 2019a). The bill's stated purpose was to promote education reform through privatization and included language to allow more students in elementary classrooms, codify procedures for handling teacher work stoppages and/or strikes (i.e., withhold daily pay from teachers participating in a strike), and offer additional pay increases beyond the universal salary increase for teachers in difficult-to-staff subject areas (i.e., math and special education).

Neither the state's governor, Jim Justice, nor teachers supported tying these multiple reform issues to teachers' pay, and Justice promised teachers he would veto any bill that included charter schools (Zuckerman, 2019). Teachers decided to rally again at the state's capitol, however, before such a bill would go as far as the governor's desk.

Knowing the harm charter schools and ESAs would exert on public schools' funding, teachers across the state reignited the "55Stong, 55United" movement by participating in a two-day, statewide walkout starting on February 19, 2019, which closed 54 of the 55 county school systems (Staglin, 2019). One county, Putnam County, remained open despite having inadequate

school staffing as well as no transportation for students. During this time, teachers were not only supported by their local unions, but by other non-educational organizations which included the United Mine Workers of America, Communications Workers of America, local firefighters and police officers associated with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

The two-day strike ended on February 20, 2019 when the House “killed the bill” and teachers returned to their classrooms the day after (Raby, 2019). Even though teachers hoped they had won the battle against privatization legislation, a 2019 special legislative session proved otherwise.

A new omnibus education bill – West Virginia’s Student Success Act (Senate Bill 1039) – was introduced June 1, 2019 (Adams, 2019a). A partisan bill sponsored by 10 Republican Senators, SB 1039 was much like the omnibus bill introduced during the regular session, but added more forceful language to the provision that school workers could be fired if they strike:

Public employees in West Virginia have no right, statutory or otherwise, to engage in collective bargaining, mediation, or arbitration, and any work stoppage or strike by public employees is hereby declared to be unlawful If an employee remains employed by the county board of education, notwithstanding his or her participation in a concerted work stoppage or strike, which the Legislature hereby determines to be a ground for termination, the county board of education shall withhold the prorated salary or hourly pay of each employee participating in the concerted work stoppage or strike for each day that such employee participates in a concerted work stoppage or strike, and such sums shall be forfeited to the county board of education. (S.B. 1039, 2019)

Once again, West Virginia teachers found it necessary to flood the capital during the early months of their summer break to protest the bill. Opponents of the bill argued putting salary increases and healthcare benefits into the same bill as education reform measures violated the state Constitution's "single object" prohibition (Izaguirre, 2019). Despite concerns about the violation, Senate President Mitch Carmichael worked with Republicans in the state's Senate to continue to roll out a bill that lumped together multiple education issues. Even though the bill would give teachers an estimated \$2,000 pay raise, educators and service personnel still rallied at the capital in opposition to the bill, specifically the establishment of charter schools.

Unfortunately, when educators stormed the capitol rotunda in the summer, it did not have the same momentous effect as when done during the school year. Since schooling does not occur year-around in West Virginia, teachers did not have the leverage of withholding labor to pressure the Legislature. Despite support from two teachers' associations and one service personnel association, teachers were not able to combat the new, comprehensive educational reform bill, ultimately amended to become House Bill 206.

When House Bill 206 replaced the Senate Bill 1039, the House removed items such as the anti-strike provisions which were geared toward discouraging teacher work stoppages, and it made changes to the Senate's provisions for public charter schools – now allowing for only three charter schools starting in 2021, three more charters after 2023, and continually adding three more every three years rather than the 10 stipulated at the outset by the Senate (Adams, 2019b). HB 206 also restored seniority in reductions-in-force (RIF) decisions, restored class size caps, increased school funding for schools servicing smaller student populations, gave teachers and service personnel a 5% pay raise with a second 5% raise in two years, and also provides more funding for mental health professions in schools (2019).

At the end of the special session, a governor who once said he would not support charter schools in West Virginia nonetheless signed HB 206 on June 28, 2019 which would introduce the state's first charter schools in the 2020-2021 school year (McElhinny, 2019).

Strike Analysis

Some who covered the strikes focused on their economic consequences. For example, Jones (2018) writes the pay raise deal struck in 2018 for educational employees will likely force the state to cut public spending elsewhere in the budget (e.g., Medicaid matching), since legislators showed no inclination to find another revenue stream to fund the salary increases. The suggestion offered by advocates for teachers that legislators raise severance taxes on coal and natural gas to fund the raise was rejected out of hand. Marks (2018) speculates the strike would lead to some Republican legislators losing their seats in November 2018, as it was primarily Republican senators who objected to the salary increase. Only two incumbent Senate Republicans were defeated though.

Michael Pisapia, an assistant professor of politics and international affairs at Wake Forest University, writes often about women in politics and sees the West Virginia teachers' strike as illustration of women's power in leadership. Pipsapia (2018) specifically talks about women's electoral power increasing, which influences educational decisions. Pointing out in West Virginia "70 percent of 51 county presidents in NEA affiliates and 59 percent of 37 county presidents in AFT affiliates are women," Pipsapia observes union affiliation promotes collective voice. Using statistics from the Center for American Women and Politics, she points out that the strike was a movement led by women on behalf of a largely female workforce, adding 76% of strike participants were female in a state where government is 85% male. Like Friedman (2018), Pisapia also discusses the last-resort strategy of withholding labor when collective bargaining is

prohibited by state law. West Virginia conforms to all the characteristics Friedman describes when he suggests that the states more likely to strike are those with the “weakest institutional environments” — and West Virginia fits that description.

Summary

Wong (2018) discusses how West Virginia’s striking teachers have helped lead a movement for educators across the country, with both Oklahoma and Arizona teachers striking shortly after West Virginia’s. He says, “it’s debatable as to why exactly West Virginia was the state to precipitate this fledgling national teachers’ movement, but experts tend to agree it comprised, in the words of Paul Reville, a professor of education policy and administration at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, ‘a perfect storm of factors’” (para. 10). When looking at the intersection of legislative power in making educational policy with teachers’ ability to influence educational politics, one can see teachers’ strikes and work stoppages as both a historical occurrence and a recent trend in education. Whether they continue is open to question.

The existing literature on teachers’ perceptions of their power to influence educational reform efforts through strikes and to affect legislative policy is limited largely to quantitative studies that investigate their historical contexts, provide qualitative descriptions of teachers’ perceptions of workplace conditions, or speculate as to why teachers are currently striking. A sub-section of this literature focuses on corporate, political, and social dimensions of educational reform and suggests educational decision-making power is not so much held by elected officials as by corporate entities which support the exclusion of teachers from any educational decision-making processes. All themes, as well as information about the current economic, political, social, and educational state West Virginia is in, help to provide a foundation for examining

West Virginia's teachers' perceptions of their ability to evoke change within the education system.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes as they relate to their interactions with Legislative leadership and their ability to exert their own leadership in the education reform arena. Corporate and political agendas have been shown and documented to work together to exclude teachers' voices from the education decision-making process (Blanc, 2018; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Green, 2018) so examining the extent to which teachers perceived legislative actions as inclusive or exclusive can provide insight about the possibility for shared leadership between policymakers and practitioners.

This chapter provides information about research design, population selection and sample, the survey instrument, survey distribution, data collection, and data analyses.

Research Questions

In order to examine teachers' perceptions of their interactions with Legislative leaders and their ability to influence educational policymaking through the 2018 and 2019 teachers' strikes, five questions were asked:

Research Question 1: To what extent were employment issues instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 2: To what extent were proposed education reform initiatives instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 3: To what extent were teachers' limited opportunities for input instrumental in their decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 4: To what extent did teachers perceive their educational leaders'

(i.e., building, district, and educational associations) representation of their concerns to be effective?

Research Question 5: To what extent did demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience, school size or location, etc.) inform teachers' decisions to participate in strike and/or strike-related activities?

Research Design

This was a non-experimental, descriptive study that utilized a web-based survey compatible with any electronic device capable of internet or wi-fi capabilities. Information was gathered and analyzed by using both Qualtrics and SPSS Statistics 24. The survey instrument consisted of 19 questions divided into sections which assess teachers' perceptions of 1) legislative leadership's practices, 2) legislative leadership's practices as provocation to strike and 3) educational leaders' ability to represent them. Sections were assessed by using Likert-like scales, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank statements to gather data from respondents.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was confined to teachers who participated in the 2018-2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes. Participation was defined as any amount of activity that directly or indirectly supported the teacher work stoppage beginning in January of 2018 and ending in June 2019, and included, but was not limited to, picketing, participating in walk-ins, going to the state capital, making informational signs, providing lunch for students, etc. West Virginia's teacher population is diverse, including those who teach in rural and urban areas and those who teach in affluent and low-socioeconomic status districts. The study's sample was thus representative of teacher diversity across the state and reflective of the population. Using

purposeful sampling for this study was the optimal sampling method since the research relied on specific population characteristics to provide validity.

Survey Instrument

To collect data for this study, a 19-item survey was designed by using a combination of original questions inspired by the theoretical framework outlined in Bowers et al. (2009) eight modified questions from Alday's (1981) instrument which measures perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of teachers who participated in the 1978 Verde Unified School District in Arizona.

The survey consisted of 19 items with some questions featuring sub-categorical questions after the initial item. The survey allowed participants to rate extent or degree without having to read lengthy, redundant sentences. Throughout the survey, one will find Likert-like scale, multiple choice, and select all that apply questions. The last section of the survey, the demographic section, allowed the participants to indicate their highest level of education, school size and type, and years of experience.

Survey Distribution

Before the surveys were distributed, the researcher conducted a pilot test of the survey with 13 high school teachers who were diverse in not only teaching experience but teaching expertise. Those who participated offered input on how to make the survey's format, phrasing, and question placement more effective and user-friendly.

Once the researcher received the improvement suggestions from the pilot test, the instrument was finalized and the administrator from the West Virginia Public Employees UNITED Facebook group was contacted so the researcher could seek permission to use the private, Facebook group as a survey distributor. The researcher asked if the group's

administrator could post the survey's link to UNITED's homepage. Once permission was granted by UNITED's administrator, the instrument's link was posted to the group.

When UNITED's administrator received the survey's link through email, he posted the survey's web address to the group's homepage which occurred in January 2020. Survey participants were given three weeks to complete the survey, and a participation reminder was posted by the group's administrator at the beginning of each week after the initial survey invitation was extended. The reminder post contained the same survey link as originally posted and was redistributed in the same fashion.

Data Analysis

Survey responses were stored and analyzed by using Qualtrics, Excel, and SPSS Statistics 24 software. Data from multiple choice and Likert-type questions were analyzed to produce both descriptive and comparative statistics from survey responses. Analysis of responses from the survey's open-ended questions followed the steps outlined by Cresswell (2003): organizing and preparing the data, which includes scanning material and typing field notes; reading through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning; and assigning a coding process that was used to identify and discuss categories or themes that emerge from the data.

Summary

This was a non-experimental, descriptive study which examined perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018-2019 teachers' strikes in West Virginia. The research was designed to add to the literature in leadership, specifically shared leadership, as it is operationalized in teachers' strikes, in two ways: 1) by using a rhetorical framework grounded in theories on agitation and control to examine interactions between the West Virginia Legislature, primarily

the Senate, and striking educators (Bowers, et al., 2009); and 2) by focusing specifically on the communication strategies of the leadership, both legislators' and labor's, in the 2018 and 2019 teachers' strikes in West Virginia.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter reports findings, provides statistical analyses, and offers a description of the research population and sample related to the data collected. The survey instrument (see Appendix C) was researcher designed, administered electronically by using Qualtrics survey software, and analyzed by using Qualtrics and SPSS Statistics 24 software. The survey instrument addressed five research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent were employment issues (e.g., salary, benefits, seniority) instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions (e.g., picketing, participating in walk-ins, going to the state capital, making informational signs, providing lunch for students, etc.) or a strike?

Research Question 2: To what extent were proposed education reform initiatives (i.e., charter school authorization, education savings accounts, changes in working conditions) instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 3: To what extent were teachers' limited opportunities for input instrumental in their decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 4: To what extent did teachers perceive their educational leaders' (i.e., building, district, and education associations) representation of their concerns to be effective?

Research Question 5: To what extent did demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience, school size or location, etc.) inform teachers' decisions to participate in strike and/or strike-related activities?

Population and Sample

The population of interest for this study consisted of West Virginia teachers who actively participated in the 2018 and/or 2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes. Active strike participation included any job action/activity that directly or indirectly supported the state's teacher work stoppage over the course of the nine-day strike period in 2018 and the two-day strike period in 2019. Since the researcher utilized social media, specifically a Facebook group for West Virginia educators, for survey distribution, it is unknown how many in the target population saw the survey and/or shared the survey link with others.

At the end of the three week data collection period, 487 surveys were submitted. After reviewing the responses, the researcher found 20 of the surveys were left incomplete, although those responses that were submitted were included where appropriate. Out of the remaining 467 submissions, 68 (14.0%) were completed, but did not meet the target population's description (i.e., they were not teachers), which left 398 (81.7%) completed submissions as the sample size.

The survey instrument was designed to measure perceptions and motivations belonging to only the target population; therefore, SQ1 evaluated participants' desired characteristics: 1) former or present West Virginia teacher, who 2) participated in 2018 and/or 2019 West Virginia teachers' strikes. When participants indicated "yes" as a response to SQ1, they were then prompted to complete the rest of the survey. From that point, participants were guided through each section of the survey. The survey was divided into five sections: 2018 Strike Participation (SQ2-SQ4), 2019 Strike Participation (SQ5-SQ7), Perceptions Related to Both Strikes (SQ8), Education Association Satisfaction (SQ9-SQ14), and Demographics (SQ15-SQ19).

By using the Qualtrics' skip-logic function, the researcher was able to design the survey to fit the participants' exact strike participation year. As seen in Table 1, respondents could have participated in both 2018 and 2019 teachers' strikes or just one in a specified year; therefore the total reflects all occurrences of strike participation during one specific strike year (i.e., 75.9% of 379 responses participated in only the 2018 strike). If a respondent did not participate in a strike during a certain year, the skip-logic function would move the respondent to the next relevant section. All participants were asked to complete the last three sections of the survey since those items were applicable to any amount of strike participation or job action during the 2018 and/or 2019 teachers' strikes.

Table 1

Strike Participation by Year

Strike Participation Year(s)	<i>N</i>	Percent
Only 2018	378	75.9%
Only 2019	346	1.4%

This study's sample reflects the diversity of teachers who participated in West Virginia's teachers' strikes, functioning as a reasonably representative slice of the target population. As seen in Table 2 and evaluated through SQ15, every level of school type is represented with the largest two concentrations being elementary and high schools.

Table 2

Participants' School Levels

School Level	<i>N</i>	Percent
Preschool	4	1.2%
Elementary	129	37.7%
Middle	72	21.1%
Junior High	3	0.9%
High School	104	30.4%
Other	30	8.8%
Total	342	100%

Not only was every school level represented in the sample, but so were different levels of teaching experience. This is presented in Table 3 and was evaluated through SQ18.

Table 3

Participants' Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Experience	<i>N</i>	Percent
0-5	31	9.1%
6-10	69	20.2%
11-15	90	26.4%
16-20	49	14.4%
>20	102	29.9%
Total	341	100%

The experience levels of participants were dominated by teachers who had 11 or more years of teaching (70.7%), with those who reported over 20 years of experience constituting the largest group in the sample. A little less than a third of those surveyed represented teachers who have taught 10 or fewer years.

Through SQ16, the researcher was able to determine participants' school locations through three descriptor item choices: 1) rural school district, 2) urban school district, or 3) suburban school district. The data in Table 4 show that teachers most commonly reported their schools are in rural districts, while urban districts were the least represented group.

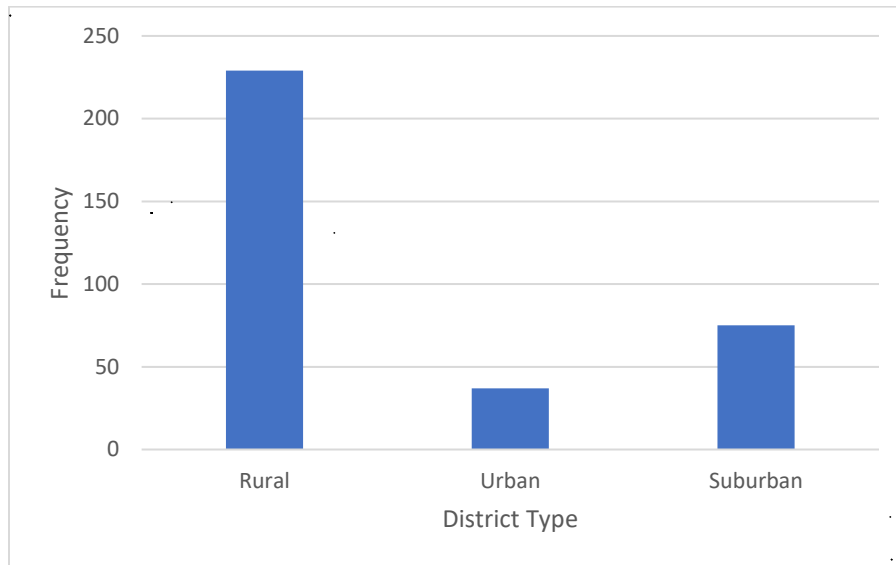
Table 4

Participants' School District Type

District Type	<i>N</i>	Percent
Rural	229	67.2%
Urban	37	10.9%
Suburban	75	22.0%
Total	341	100%

As Table 4 shows, 67% of the respondents described their counties as rural while only 33% selected either the suburban or urban descriptors. Although West Virginia is a rural state, it does have some suburban and urban areas, relatively speaking. This observation is made not to question the respondents' choices, but to point out that the large number of rural responses to the district location variable has the capacity to skew the sample which can be seen in Figure 1. This skew could complicate analysis and make the drawing of inferences more suggestive than conclusive.

Figure 1



A histogram showing the skew of rural responses.

In addition to demographic information about participants' school levels, years of teaching experience, and district types, respondents were also asked to report their schools' student enrollment figures. SQ17 gave participants five multiple choice items from which they were to select the intervals that best describe their schools' enrollment. Table 5 shows teachers who worked in schools with 500 students or fewer made up over half the sample, while only 11.1% of survey participants reported having more than 1,000 students in their schools. These data are consistent with the dominant school district type in the sample (i.e., rural area schools tend to have lower enrollments).

Table 5

School District Enrollments

Number of Students	<i>N</i>	Percent
< 250	48	14.1%
251-500	152	44.6%
501-750	78	21.9%
751-1000	25	7.3%
> 1000	38	11.1%
Total	341	100%

The last demographic item respondents were asked to complete, as demonstrated in Table 6, related to teacher organization membership (i.e., affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, or neither). SQ19 gave participants five multiple choice options, and Table 6 illustrates 80.8% of teachers who provided a response were members of a leadership organization, while 19.5% of teachers did not belong to an organization or preferred not to disclose that information.

Table 6

Teacher Organization Affiliation

Leadership Organization	<i>N</i>	Percent
AFT-WV	157	46.3%
WVEA	114	33.6%
AFT and WVEA	3	0.9%
I do not belong to a teacher organization.	29	8.9%
I prefer not to disclose.	36	10.6%
Total	339	100%

Teachers had the opportunity to participate in various strike-related activities in both 2018 and 2019, and respondents were asked to record that activity by using select-all-that-apply items featured in SQ3 and SQ6. Table 7 displays the number and percentage of people who participated in these activities in 2018. Respondents were able to choose more than one answer, therefore the percentage of cases is higher than 100%, while the percent column shows how many responses were recorded for each item. Additionally, the total amount varies since participants could chose more than one activity.

Table 7

2018 Strike/Job Action Frequency Participation Type

Participation Type	<i>N</i>	Percent	Percent of Cases
Rally at the capitol	281	23.2%	75.9%
Picketed outside of school before strike started	195	16.1%	52.7%
Picked outside of school during strike	298	24.6%	80.5%
School walk-in	190	15.7%	51.4%
Attended AFT-WV or WVEA meetings	246	20.3%	66.5%
Total	1210	100%	327.0%

Table 8 shows responses for 2019. Again, respondents were able to choose more than one answer, therefore the percentage of cases is higher than 100%, while the percent column shows how many responses were recorded for each item.

Table 8

2019 Strike/Job Action Frequency Participation Type

Participation Type	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Rally at the capitol	193	17.9%	57.6%
Picketed outside of a school before strike started	147	13.6%	43.9%
Picketed outside of a school during the strike	257	23.9%	76.7%
School walk-in	133	12.3%	39.7%
Attended AFT-WV or WVEA meetings	210	19.5%	62.7%
Attended a WVDE public forum	137	12.7%	40.9%
Total	1077	100%	321.5%

When comparing the 2019 activities with the 2018, one can see a general decrease in participation in all activity categories in the second year. While the ranges between some of the 2018 and 2019 activities are not extremely notable (e.g., picketing during the strike fell from 24.6% to 23.9%), the number rallying at the capitol showed a more precipitous drop (i.e., 23.2% to 17.9%, or 281 people vs. 193), as did the number of school walk-ins. There were no WV Department of Education forums held in 2018.

Findings

The results of this study indicate the primary reasons teachers in the sample felt compelled to strike were due to benefits, professional dignity and respect, and the lack of input into education bills. The vast majority of the sample (i.e., 98.65%) participated in both the 2018 and 2019 strikes. As was reported in Chapters One and Three, however, the strikes in those years involved different issues, with the 2018 strike focused on employment matters and perceptions of professionalism, while the 2019 strike incorporated privatization issues (i.e., authorization for charter schools and education savings accounts) in addition to employment concerns which focused on increasing class sizes. Survey results will be reported by research question.

Findings Related to Research Question One

One intent of this study was to evaluate the extent to which particular issues motivated teachers to strike. During the 2018 teachers' strike, it was reported employment issues were among teachers' educational concerns (Allen & Arkin, 2018; Bidgood, 2018; Stewart, 2018). Taking this into consideration, the researcher designed SQ4 to measure the motivational impact employment issues exerted on teachers' decision to participate in the strikes. By using a Likert-type scale, participants were able to indicate responses ranging from 1) "not at all important" to 6) "extremely important."

Table 9 shows which issues had the most influence on teachers' decision to strike as it relates to employment issues. Since respondents were able to use a six-point Likert-type scale to provide responses, any response given a three or below was considered to be less important, while a four or above was considered more important. With that noted, 97.8% of teachers rated benefits (i.e., health insurance, retirement) with a four or above, making it the most important motivating factor, followed by professional respect at 95%, and then personal dignity at 90.5%. External pressures (e.g., from coworkers, community, family, etc.) acted as the lowest form of motivation, with 60.1% rating it at three or below. The next lowest motivator was the Attorney General's threat of injunctions at 45.4%, followed by professional associations' support for a strike at 27.1%. These data acknowledge teachers' salary as an important motivator when deciding to strike (81%), but it was not ranked in either the top or bottom three issues in this analysis – it remained in the middle at fourth of the seven options.

Table 9

Motivation to Strike

Reasons to Strike	1-Not at all Important	2	3	4	5	6-Extremely Important	Total
Benefits	0.3%	1.1%	0.8%	2.2%	13.7%	81.9%	100%
Professional respect	1.4%	0.8%	2.8%	9.4%	15.7%	69.9%	100%
Professional dignity	2.2%	1.7%	5.6%	14.5%	18.1%	57.9%	100%
Salary	2.5%	4.4%	11.3%	20.9%	19.8%	41.1%	100%
Professional associations support for a strike	9.8%	4.2%	13.1%	20.1%	20.4%	32.4%	100%
Threat of injunction	27.2%	5.9%	12.3%	10.1%	12.0%	32.5%	100%
External pressures	29.9%	14.0%	16.2%	16.2%	8.5%	15.1%	100%

Table 10 presents these same data in a different format. The item means show the top three issues (i.e., benefits, professional respect, and personal dignity) and the bottom three issues (i.e., external pressures, threat of injunction, and professional association support for a strike), consistent with their percent frequencies as previously displayed in Table 9.

Table 10

Employment Issues: Mean Responses

Employment Issue	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
Benefits	364	5.74
Professional respect	362	5.47
Personal dignity	359	5.18
Salary	363	4.47
Professional association support for a strike	358	4.43
Attorney General's threat to file an injunction against striking teachers	358	4.34
External pressures	357	3.71

In response to RQ1, then, it appears employment issues were central motivators in teachers' decisions to strike in 2018, with benefits (i.e., health insurance and retirement) being their primary concern, followed by a desire for acknowledgment of their professionalism and concern for their personal dignity. Of the seven options from which teachers could choose, salary came fourth in the rank ordering.

Findings Related to Research Question Two

During the 2019 West Virginia legislative session, education reform initiatives – privatization as well as a number of proposals affecting teachers’ working conditions – became key motivators when teachers made the decision to strike. Legislation authorizing private education options such as charter schools and education savings accounts (ESAs), both of which involved families’ using public monies for their children to attend private schools, combined with employment issues to lead to the two-day strike in 2019. Legislators, led by the Republican leadership in the Senate, combined privatization reforms with employment issues into a single omnibus bill (Adams, 2019A) that would have forced educators and their professional associations to accept losses in salary, benefits and working conditions in order to prevent authorization of privatization initiatives.

By using a Likert-type scale, SQ7 asked participants to report the extent to which each initiative motivated them to participate in the strike, ranging from 1) “not at all important” to 6) “extremely important.” Table 11 illustrates the responses for those items related to the Legislature’s 2019 reform initiatives.

Table 11

Reform Initiatives 2019 Legislative Session

Initiative	1-Not at all important	2	3	4	5	6-Extremely important	Total
Authorization for privatization initiatives (i.e., charter schools, ESAs)	1.5%	0%	3.6%	6.1%	10.0%	78.8%	100%
Increasing class size	2.8%	0.6%	3.1%	8.3%	20.6%	64.6%	100%
Combining salary and benefit increases with privatization efforts in a single omnibus bill	0.9%	1.8%	2.1%	4.6%	10.1%	80.5%	100%
Employment termination for teachers who participate in strikes	7.1%	4.6%	4.6%	6.4	12.3%	65%	100%
Paying higher salaries to teachers with in-demand expertise (e.g., math, special education, science)	11.7%	8.9%	16%	16.3%	12.9%	34.4%	100%

Initiative	1-Not at all Important	2	3	4	5	6-Extremely Important	Total
Paying higher salaries to teachers in hard-to-staff geographic locations	9.4%	8.0%	17.4%	15.0%	14.1%	36.1%	100%
Forcing educators to restart payroll deduction for association dues annually	9.3%	5.0%	11.8%	11.8%	16.7%	45.5%	100%
Weakening the role of seniority in layoffs and transfers	3.1%	4.95%	5.2%	9.2%	15.7%	61.8%	100%

When looking at the percentages in Table 11, one will notice the majority of responses for individual items were ranked at four or above on the Likert-type scale, suggesting all were at least reasonably important motivators in teachers' decision to strike as it relates to reform initiatives. Within those parameters, however, the two issues that appear to have been the prime catalysts were the legislators' choice to combine salary and benefit increases with their privatization proposals into a single bill (95.2% ranked the item at a four or above, with 80.5% ranking it at 6 or extremely important) and the legislative recommendation to authorize charter schools and education savings accounts (94.9% ranked the item at a four or above with 78.8% ranking it at 6 or extremely important). Increasing class sizes ranked a close third with 93.5% selecting it at 4 or above, followed by an attempt to weaken seniority at 86.7%, the threat of termination at 83.7%, forcing teachers to restart the deduction of their professional association dues each year at 74%, paying some teachers higher salaries in hard-to-staff geographic areas at 65.2%, and paying some teachers higher salaries in hard-to-staff academic subjects at 63.6%.

Findings Related to Research Question Three

As reported previously, the 2019 legislative session featured an effort to gain passage for privatization reforms by combining authorization for charter schools and education savings accounts with other initiatives perceived to be valuable to teachers, specifically salary and benefit enhancements. It was thought by bundling these enhancements into an omnibus bill, teachers would be more likely to support the legislation:

Carmichael, R- Jackson, said Saturday that while senators agree teachers and other state employees deserve raises, they also remain supportive of school choice in West Virginia.

We're not ruling that out completely, he said, referencing pay raises without other reforms. Obviously, we wanted some reform measures included in it. Those didn't happen, so we're still evaluating the various options that we have that would be germane to a pay raise only bill. But I can say the Senate's pretty hesitant to just pass out pay raises without any corresponding reforms. We recognize there are teachers underpaid and we want to pay them more. We're not 100 percent there with the concept of a straight pay raise without any reforms. (Beck, 2019)

It was not only the contents of the legislation, however, that drew teachers' ire. The development of the omnibus bill, from its inception to the final vote, was also problematic for them. Among the processes they found objectionable were the limitation of teachers' talk time during hearings (i.e., in a public hearing in the House of Delegates chamber, individuals who signed up to speak against the bill were limited to one minute each) while allowing out-of-state lobbyists unlimited time to speak in committee hearings; soliciting lobbyists' input in drafting the language of the omnibus bill; and bypassing the Legislature's regular committee structure (i.e., creating four new committees in the House rather than referring the bill to the established Finance and Education Committees in each chamber, where it was unlikely to have passed, and then convening the Senate as a committee of the whole to vote the bill up or down). These legislative maneuvers also contributed to the conditions that led to teachers' motivation to strike.

By using a Likert-type scale, SQ7 asked participants to report the extent to which each of the following initiatives motivated them to participate in the strike, ranging on a Likert-type scale from 1) "not at all important" to 6) "extremely important." Table 12 illustrates the responses.

Table 12

Impact of Education Reform Initiatives

Type of Reform Initiative	1-Not at all important	2	3	4	5	6 – Extremely important	Total
Lack of teacher input into omnibus bill development	0.9%	0	2.1%	5.2%	12.7%	79.1%	100%
Limiting teachers' talk time in committee sessions and public hearings devoted to the omnibus bill	1.5%	2.4%	5.5%	10.2%	17.7%	62.7%	100%
Out-of-state lobbyist input into development of the omnibus bill	1.8%	0.3%	2.1%	4.3%	10.6%	80.9%	100%
Unlimited time for out-of-state lobbyists to speak in committee sessions and public hearings on the omnibus bill	1.5%	0.9%	5.2%	8.5%	11.3%	72.6%	100%
Bypassing the Legislature's regular committee voting structure	0.9%	0.6%	2.7%	7.1%	13.1%	75.6%	100%

Table 12 illustrates that “lack of educator input into bills” (97%), “bypassing the Legislature’s regular committee structure to take up the omnibus bill” (96%), and “input of out-of-state lobbyist in drafting the omnibus education bill” (95.8%) had the highest percentage of responses at four or above, making them the three issues to have had the greatest influence on strike motivation as it relates to teacher input. The remaining issue of who was permitted to speak and for how long generated a response of 92.4% who selected a four or above to object to out-of-state lobbyists’ input and a response of 90.6% who selected four or above to indicate an absence of teachers’ input.

Throughout the 2018 and 2019 teachers’ strikes, there was a reoccurring perception teachers were being silenced or ignored (Kabler, 2019a; Kabler, 2018; Nelson, 2019b; Zuckerman, 2018; Zuckerman & Quinn, 2018). During the 2019 strike, for example, teachers were limited to one 60-second statement during a public hearing on the omnibus education bill, leading one teacher to duct-tape her lips and stand silent for the entire minute (Quinn & Zuckerman, 2019). Understanding this, SQ8 served to evaluate the extent to which teachers’ perceptions of limited opportunities for input, as well as the broader opportunities for input offered to privatization advocates (Adams, 2019a; O’Neal, 2019; Quinn & Zuckerman, 2019) played in their decision to participate in job actions or strike. Participants were able to indicate responses ranging from 1) “strongly disagree” to 6) “strongly agree” when rating statements about their input in both strike years. Table 13 displays the participants’ responses as they relate to their perceptions of limited input in legislative decision-making.

Table 13

Teachers' Perceptions of Input

Input	1- Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6- Strongly agree	Total
The teacher strikes ended because legislatures adequately met the demands of teachers.	34.1%	20.6%	20.3%	18.1%	4.9%	2.0%	100%
I felt like my opinions about educational issues were heard by legislators.	42.2%	21.8%	19.3%	12.1%	2.9%	1.7%	100%
Teachers had a strong influence in the educational decision-making process during state legislative sessions.	34.3%	19.0%	17.2%	17.0%	8.0%	4.5%	100%

Over two-thirds of all respondents selected 3 or below on all three items (i.e., 75%, 83.3%, and 71%), indicating they felt as though their input was not heard during the legislative sessions. The majority of striking teachers, thus, felt at a substantial level of exclusion. These responses, coupled with the those reported in Table 14 relative to promoting change in legislative decision-making regarding education, illustrate the extent to which teachers feel their opinions were not heard.

Table 14

Perceptions of Educational Change

Strike Effects	1-Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6-Strongly agree	Total
Strikes led to positive changes in education	18.1%	17.8%	20.6%	22.1%	12.5%	8.9%	100%
I currently feel there are ways to promote change in legislative decision-making regarding education other than striking	24.1%	18.3%	20.3%	16.9%	12.9%	7.5%	100%

Table 14 also illustrates data which show 56.5% of teacher participants do not feel as though the strikes lead to positive change in education while 62.7% do not feel there are ways to promote change in legislative decision-making regarding education other than striking.

Findings Related to Research Question Four

While teachers in West Virginia may not have the ability to bargain collectively through union affiliation, they do have “education leadership associations” through which educational leaders represent teachers’ concerns formally. Education leadership associations (i.e., AFT-WV, WVEA) were active throughout the 2018 and 2019 teachers’ strikes, but the extent of their leaders’ ability to represent teachers’ concerns effectively remained unknown. To measure the extent of perceived representation effectiveness, the researcher designed SQ9-SQ14 to use a Likert-type scale with item choices ranging from 1) “strongly disagree” to 6) “strongly agree.” Table 15 shows the range of teachers’ perceptions of educational leadership effectiveness regarding input into the pay raise bill in 2018 and omnibus education bill in 2019. As with previous data arrays, responses in the 1-3 range may be considered to show disagreement, while responses in the 4-6 range may be viewed as agreement.

Table 15

Perceptions of Leadership Effectiveness

Association Input	1-Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6-Strongly agree	Total
WVEA and AFT-WV representatives had sufficient opportunity to have input into the pay raise bill 2018	27.9%	24.1%	27.1%	13.5%	5.3%	2.1%	100%
WVEA and AFT-WV representatives had sufficient opportunity to have input into the omnibus education bill in 2019	45.0%	26.3%	17.8%	8.0%	1.5%	1.5%	100%

As can be seen in Table 15, respondents largely perceived WVEA and AFT-WV representatives did not have sufficient opportunity to have input into either the pay raise bill (i.e., 79.1% responded with a three or below) or the omnibus education bill (i.e., 89.1% responded at a three or below). Teachers were less emphatic but no less clear about the extent to which their representatives satisfactorily communicated their educational concerns in either year. While 59.9% agreed that WVEA and AFT-WV represented educational concerns satisfactory in 2018, 40.1% disagreed. Those figures were essentially the same regarding the 2019 strike: 58.1% agreed and 41.9% disagreed. These percentages show the overall perceptions of representative communication effectiveness to be basically the same for both years. These responses may be seen in Table 16.

Table 16

Satisfaction with Leadership Communication of Teachers' Concerns

Strike Year	1-Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6-Strongly agree
WVEA and AFT-WV representatives communicated my educational concerns satisfactorily during the 2018 strike.	12.7%	9.1%	18.3%	23.6%	24.2%	12.1%
WVEA and AFT-WV representatives communicated my educational concerns satisfactorily during the 2019 strike.	12.1%	9.7%	20.1%	21.2%	24.2%	12.7%

Findings Related to Research Question Five

The purpose of this research question was to explore any potential relationships between selected demographic variables and strike-related activities. Seven such possibilities are noted.

The first demonstrates a positive relationship between school location and rallying at the capitol in 2019. This relationship, shown in Table 17, is likely attributable to the large number of teachers reporting they work in rural schools/districts (see Table 4). Such districts dominate the school landscape in West Virginia. It is possible, however, at least some of the issues on the 2019 legislative education agenda were more likely to affect rural schools – for example, increasing salary levels for teachers willing to work in hard-to-staff rural counties or teaching in-demand subjects. An incursion of charter schools could also be more detrimental to rural counties, many of which have only one middle and one high school.

Table 17

Bivariate Correlation: School Location and Rallying at the Capitol in 2019

	Rally at the capitol	School location
Rally at the capitol	--	.136*
School location	.136*	--

*Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed).

Several relationships also emerged in relationship to job actions taken by striking teachers. One, reported in Table 18, reflects a negative correlation between school population and school walk-in participation in both 2018 and 2019. As was the case with the relationship between school location and rallying at the capitol, it is possible that the composition of the sample (i.e., dominated by rural schools) contributed to this finding. West Virginia’s more populous schools are all located in urban and suburban areas. These phenomena are demonstrated in Table 18 and suggests that there is a relationship between school walk-in participation and school enrollment.

Table 18

Bivariate Correlation: School Population and Walk-in Participation 2018 and 2019

	School Population	Walk-ins 2018	Walk-ins 2019
School population	--	-.156**	-.162**
Walk-ins 2018	-.156**	--	.671**
Walk-ins 2019	-.162**	.671**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

Additionally, further analysis shows there to be a strong correlation between walk-in participation in each strike year. Table 19 demonstrates that relationship and may suggest that those who participated in walk-ins in 2018 were more likely to do so again in 2019.

Table 19

Bivariate Correlation: School Walk-in Participation in 2018 and School Walk-in Participation in 2019

	School walk-in participation in 2018	School walk-in participation in 2019
School walk-in participation in 2018	--	.671**
School walk-in participation in 2019	.671**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

School population not only had an influence on walk-in participation in 2019, but Table 20 illustrates it was also related to teachers' picketing participation, specifically before the strike started. The negative correlation suggests the lower a school's student enrollment, the more likely teachers were to picket before the strike began in 2019. Again, it is possible the composition of the sample (i.e., dominated by rural schools) affected this finding.

Table 20

Bivariate Correlation: School Population and Picketing Before the Strike in 2019

	School population	Picketing before the strike
School population	--	-.132*
Picketing before the strike	-.132*	--

*Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed).

As reported earlier in Table 8, 257 of the 341 responding teachers reported picketing outside of a school during the strike, which made it the most frequent strike activity. A strong correlation existed between teachers' school levels and their picketing activity during the strike, which is presented in Table 21. Analysis shows elementary and high school teachers to be the most likely to picket during the strike, likely due to the composition of the sample's being predominantly elementary and high school teachers.

Table 21

Bivariate Correlation Between School Level and Picketing During the Strike in 2019

	School level	Picketing during the strike
School level	--	.196**
Picketing during the strike	.196**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

Other than school location and school enrollment, relationships between demographic variables and strike-related activities emerged from teachers' education association affiliations. As previously discussed, 80% of those who provided demographic responses indicated education association affiliation, but not all variations of strike activity are positively correlated with such affiliation. For example, in 2018 there was a relationship between education association affiliation and rallying at the capitol, which is presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Bivariate Correlation: Education Association Affiliation and Rallying at the Capitol in 2018

	Education Association Affiliation	Rallying at the Capital
Education association affiliation	--	.140*
Rallying at the capitol	.140*	--

*Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed).

No such relationship was seen in 2019. As is demonstrated in Table 23, however, there was a relationship between education association affiliation and picketing activities both before and during the 2019 strike.

Table 23

Bivariate Correlation: Education Association Affiliation and Picketing in 2019

	Education Association Affiliation	Picketing Before the Strike	Picketing After the Strike
Education association affiliation	--	.148**	.146**
Picketing before the strike	.148**	--	.477**
Picketing during the strike	.146**	.477**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

As one may expect, teachers who reported education association affiliation were more likely to attend association meetings in both 2018 and 2019, even though it was reported education associations' support for a strike was not a motivating factor (see Table 9). Table 24 shows a positive correlation between education association affiliation and meetings.

Table 24

*Bivariate Correlation Between Education Association Affiliation and Attending Education**Association Meetings in 2018 and 2019*

	Education Association Affiliation	Attended Meetings in 2018	Attended Meetings in 2019
Education association affiliation	--	.167**	.250**
Attending association meetings in 2018	.167**	--	.569**
Attending association meetings in 2019	.250**	.569**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

Furthermore, the data also show a positive relationship between education association affiliation and those who attended West Virginia's Department of Education's 2019 public forums. Table 25 demonstrates the relationship and is consistent with previous findings relating education association with the likelihood of attending professional meetings held locally or statewide.

Table 25

*Bivariate Correlation: Education Association Affiliation and Attendance at WVDE Public**Forums*

	Education association affiliation	Attendance at WVDE public forums
Education association affiliation	--	.191**
Attendance at WVDE public forums	.191**	--

**Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes as they relate to their interactions with the Legislature and their ability to participate in shared leadership in the education reform arena. The analyzed data yielded several notable findings regarding West Virginia's teachers' strike and strike related activities, their motivation for participating in those activities, their feelings about whether their voices were heard, and their satisfaction with the leadership provided by their professional associations. These findings and their implications will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the late 1800s, West Virginia's workers have been in a constant struggle to gain and maintain workplace rights and autonomy, and the recent West Virginia teachers' strikes reiterate that struggle. At the end of every teachers' strike also comes a desire to believe teachers' opinions have been heard and their expertise valued at the legislative level, not only for that year, but permanently. Unfortunately, meaningful, long-term change in education policymaking which allows teachers to have equal opportunity for shared decision-making and professional autonomy has yet to happen.

West Virginia's history of worker exploitation and opposition to unions has proven difficult to overcome, but teachers have shown themselves willing to persevere in the fight for input into their working conditions, salary, and benefits. This fight was first seen in 1990 when an 11-day teachers' strike was prompted by low teacher pay, attacks on public employees' insurance, and a lack of teacher-support programs. Almost the same employment issues were seen again in the 2018 nine-day teachers' strike when the Legislature proposed an insignificant pay raise and claimed lack of funding for health insurance and salary increases. During the 2019 West Virginia legislative session, education reform initiatives – privatization as well as a number of proposals affecting teachers' working conditions – became key motivators when teachers made the decision to strike again. Legislation authorizing private education options such as charter schools and education savings accounts (ESAs), both of which involved families' using public monies for their children to attend private schools, combined with employment issues to lead to the two-day strike in 2019.

When teachers set out to strike in 2019, their opposition was to charter schools and educational savings accounts; but because the omnibus bill tied these privatization efforts to teachers' potential pay increase, they were put in the position of opposing their own raise. While this may seem different from the 1990 and 2018 strikes, it is not. Found in all three strikes is the ongoing issue of legislators' refusing to acknowledge and respect teachers' professionalism and expertise through shared leadership in education policy development, and the reality of legislative authority to unilaterally determine not only teachers' benefits and working conditions, but alter the structural landscape of public education as well.

Purpose of the Study

West Virginia's back-to-back teachers' strikes provided an opportunity to examine teachers' perceptions of legislators' willingness to participate in shared leadership on matters of education policy. As was noted in Chapter Two, shared leadership functions properly only if formal leaders accept others have the potential to make significant and meaningful contributions when given the opportunity (Day, 2000). When leaders doubt the competence or abilities of those with whom they are asked to share leadership, they are unlikely to view the process as beneficial (Maak & Pless, 2006; O'Toole et al., 2003).

Documenting the perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes as they related to their interactions with legislative leadership and their ability to exert their own leadership in the education policy arena helped provide insight about the possibility for shared leadership between policymakers and practitioners. To accomplish this research purpose, five questions were asked:

Research Question 1: To what extent were employment issues instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 2: To what extent were proposed education reform initiatives instrumental in teachers' decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 3: To what extent were teachers' limited opportunities for input instrumental in their decisions to participate in job actions or a strike?

Research Question 4: To what extent did teachers perceive their educational leaders' (i.e., building, district, and educational associations) representation of their concerns to be effective?

Research Question 5: To what extent did demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience, school size or location, etc.) inform teachers' decisions to participate in strike and/or strike-related activities?

Survey Response Rate

At the end of the data collection period, 487 surveys were received. After reviewing the responses, the researcher found 20 of the surveys were left incomplete; those responses that were submitted were included where appropriate. Of the remaining 467 submissions, 68 (14.0%) were completed, but did not meet the target population's description (i.e., they were not teachers), which left 398 (81.7%) completed submissions as the sample size.

Summary of Findings

The first research question was designed to gauge the extent to which employment issues and benefits (i.e., health insurance and retirement) had on teachers' motivation to strike. 97.8% of teachers rated benefits (i.e., health insurance, retirement) with a four or above, making it the most important motivating factor, followed by professional respect at 95%, and then personal dignity at 90.5%. External pressures (e.g., from coworkers, community, family, etc.) acted as the lowest form of motivation, with 60.1% rating it at three or below.

The responses from this item suggested teachers in this sample were more likely to strike over benefits (i.e., health insurance, retirement) or to maintain or gain professional respect and dignity than they were over threats of jail time. It should be noted while many stereotype teachers to be more motivated to strike to gain salary increases, this study suggests that is a false view, at least as it relates to this sample. Participants in this study acknowledged their salaries as an important motivator, but salary increases failed to place in the top three of any rankings, which suggests teachers were more concerned with benefits, job security and professional respect than they were with salary increases. This concept is consistent with the research literature (Blanc, 2018 & 2019; Conye, 2018; Nelson, 2019a) that found West Virginia's teachers to be striking due to inconsistent funding for health insurance plans and their desire for professional, workplace respect.

This study also explored the effect(s) specific education reform issues had on teachers' decision to strike. This was asked in Research Question 2 and was evaluated through SQ7. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of motivation on a Likert-type scale with ranges from 1) "not at all important" to 6) "extremely important."

While this study found almost all educational reform initiatives were at least reasonably important motivators in teachers' decision to strike, there were two initiatives that seemed to spur more strike motivation than the others: 1) legislators' choice to combine salary and benefit increases with their privatization proposals into a single bill (95.2% ranked the item at a four or above on the six-point scale, with 80.5% ranking it at 6 or extremely important) and 2) the legislative recommendation to authorize charter schools and education savings accounts (94.9% ranked the item at a four or above on the six-point scale with 78.8% ranking it at 6 or extremely important). These two initiatives may rank the highest because of the Senate leadership's plan to

essentially extort teacher support for charter schools and education savings accounts by tying salary and benefit increases to them. It is possible that strong-arming teachers' support for privatization reform boomeranged, causing educators to not only strongly oppose the initiatives but, in turn, make them the foundation for the 2019 strike. It should also be emphasized in SQ7, respondents ranked "paying some teachers higher salaries in hard-to-staff geographic areas" and "paying some teachers higher salaries in hard-to-staff academic subjects" as the lowest motivators when making the decision to strike. Once again, this supports the findings in Research Question 1: teachers may be less likely to strike over salary-related issues than over employment benefits or privatization initiatives.

In addition to investigating the impact employment issues and privatization initiatives had when teachers made the decisions to participate in job actions or a strike, this study also evaluated the extent to which teachers' limited opportunities for input influenced their strike participation. SQ8 provided participants the opportunity to indicate responses ranging from 1) "strongly disagree" to 6) "strongly agree" when rating three statements about their input in both strike years: 1) the teacher strikes ended because legislatures adequately met the demands of teachers; 2) I felt like my opinions about educational issues were heard by legislators; and 3) teachers had a strong influence in the educational decision-making process during state legislative sessions. Over two-thirds of all respondents selected 3 or below on all three statements (i.e., 75%, 83.3%, and 71%), indicating they felt as though their input was neither solicited nor heard during the legislative sessions.

The majority of teachers' indicating they felt their input was not heard coincides with the theoretical framework set forth at the beginning of this research by Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, and Schultz (2009) and their concept of rhetorical strategies situated within contexts of agitation and

control. This model of agitation and control can be applied when analyzing West Virginia's striking teachers' (i.e., agitators) perceptions of lack of input and West Virginia's legislative body's (i.e., the establishment) ability to exclude teachers from decision-making processes.

Bowers et al. (2009) explain social movements arise as reactions against the establishment's control of a particular structural element, and they derive their energy from the establishment's exclusion of groups of people from the decision-making process within that structure – in this case, public education. When this part of the theory is applied to the 2018 and 2019 teachers' strikes, specifically the exclusion striking teachers expressed in their responses to SQ8, one can potentially understand why teachers felt justified in their decision to strike.

Research Question 4 evaluated the extent to which teachers perceived their educational leaders' (i.e., building, district, and educational associations) representation of their concerns to be effective. SQ9-SQ14 measured these perceptions of representational effectiveness using a Likert-type scale with item choices ranging from 1) "strongly disagree" to 6) "strongly agree." The data showed while 59.9% agreed WVEA and AFT-WV represented educational concerns satisfactory in 2018, more than a third of respondents (40.1%) disagreed. Those figures were essentially the same regarding the 2019 strike: 58.1% agreed and 41.9% disagreed. This study did not yield any evidence to suggest a rationale as to why the majority of teachers felt their concerns were communicated effectively by WVEA and AFT-WV, especially since the majority of teachers felt that representatives did not have sufficient opportunity to have input into either the pay raise bill (i.e., 79.1% responded with a three or below) or the omnibus education bill (i.e., 89.1% responded at a three or below). It should also be noted 80.8% of participants were affiliated with WVEA and/or AFT-WV, which may explain the majority of teachers responding more positively toward educational affiliation survey items.

The last research question's purpose was to explore any potential relationships between selected demographic variables and strike-related activities, which were evaluated through SQ4 and SQ15-SQ19. First, it is important to bear in mind 67.2% of this study's sample size identified as teaching in a rural district. Since this is quite a large percentage of the sample, it has the potential to skew findings, although not necessarily calling them into question. Additionally, almost half (46.3%) of the sample who claimed association affiliation identified as being members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), while 33.6% identified as having WVEA membership (0.9% reported belonging to both AFT and WVEA), and 19.5% indicated that they did not belong to a teacher organization or preferred not to disclose. AFT refers to itself as a union which, at its inception, was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor until the 1950s when it became part of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). From a historical perspective, it is possible at least this part of the sample leans more toward the left of the political spectrum, making them more predisposed to strike.

Not only could AFT's political association make its members more predisposed to a strike, but so could a portion of the survey's method. The sample for this research was drawn through a private Facebook group, *West Virginia Public Employees UNITED*, which was strategically created in 2017 to be used as a statewide teacher and service personnel communication tool. Upon the group's creation, though, it was not known the extent to which the private page would play a key role in uniting educational employees to participate in the 2018 and 2019 strikes. Since the survey's sample was drawn from UNITED's population, teachers' who have membership with the group could view the act of striking more positively.

With those details being noted, several small relationships were found between school demographics and specific strike-related activities, while the largest significances pertained to teachers' education association affiliations.

First, a positive relationship existed between school location and rallying at the capitol in 2019. Even though the data do not point to what type of relationship exists, it may be suggested since West Virginia consists of primarily rural school districts, as does the composition of this sample, those from rural schools are more likely to rally at the capital because they are simply the majority of the state's population of teachers. The 2018 and 2019 legislative agendas may also have affected rural area schools more, pulling teachers from rural districts to rally at the capital. Even though increasing salary levels for teachers willing to work in hard-to-staff rural counties or teaching in-demand subjects was part of the 2019 legislative agenda, so was the charter school initiative. Having charter schools could be more detrimental to rural counties given their low student populations. Many have only one middle or high school, and the state's K-12 funding mechanism allows funding to follow students. Hence, poorer rural schools stood to lose substantial funding were charter schools authorized.

Next, this study found relationships between specific strike-related activities and teachers' education association affiliations. As one may expect, teachers who reported education association affiliation were more likely to attend association meetings in both 2018 and 2019, even though it was reported education associations' support for a strike was not a motivating factor. Those who indicated education association affiliation were also those more likely to attend West Virginia's Department of Education's 2019 public forums. These findings, although not necessarily surprising, add evidence to suggest the possibility education association affiliation is linked to individual participatory involvement related to job action.

Not all strike-related activities, however, showed relationships with association affiliation. For example, in 2018 there was a weak relationship between education association affiliation and being present to rally at the capitol, but no such relationship was found in 2019. Data showed capital rally participation dropped from 2018 to 2019 (i.e., from 23.2% to 17.9%, or 281 people vs. 193). This information, coupled with survey data that showed 56.5% of the study's respondents did not feel as though the strikes led to positive change in education, could help explain the drop in capital rally participation. If the majority of teachers surveyed did not feel the strikes led to positive changes in education, they may have been less inclined to participate in capital rallies the following year.

Another notable yet negative correlation existed between school enrollment and walk-in participation in 2019. As was the case with the relationship between school location and rallying at the capitol, it is possible that the composition of the sample (i.e., dominated by rural schools with smaller student populations) contributed to this relationship. The direction of the correlation suggests the lower a school's student enrollment, the more likely teachers were to picket before the strike began in 2019. Picketing before the strike could allow smaller schools to call attention to their cause in an effort to gain community support, whereas the larger schools in the state are found in more populous areas with daily newspapers and local broadcast media, giving them more public exposure.

Discussion of Findings

Employment issues were among the top motivators when teachers made the decision to strike in 2018, with the main issue being teachers' benefits. Teachers' benefits were at risk due to budget cuts that would have totaled around \$55 million, and active employees with the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) would have seen their deductibles and out-of-pocket

maximums increase (WVEA Communications Staff, 2018). The rising cost of health care through PEIA, combined with several years of insignificant pay increases, would not combat rising inflation and health premiums.

At the end of the nine-day strike, teachers and service personal were unable to secure an agreement regarding the impending problem of rising healthcare costs but were able to get a 5% pay raise over the next three years. Since the issue of funding PEIA was left unresolved, the governor called for a PEIA task force to be established and charged with the responsibility of finding a permanent solution for funding PEIA (Bidgood, 2018).

West Virginia's teachers' benefits have stayed the same into 2020, and even though the task force offered some solutions for permanently funding PEIA, December, 2019 showed possible discrepancies in the state's ability to do that. PEIA's director, Ted Cheatham, said the program "is well funded for a long time" and is expected to be fully funded by 2028 (Delpleche, 2019). He also claimed that in 2021 "we may need a little extra revenue that we will take out of the rainy-day fund" (2019). Currently, West Virginia's PEIA rainy day fund has \$105 million in it and West Virginia's state employees will not see any hikes in premiums or benefit cuts in 2020-2021 (2019).

Privatization reforms were critical issues in 2019. Respondents were less motivated to strike in objection to salary increases for those teaching in difficult subjects or pay increases for teachers working in remote areas than they were when efforts to decrease funding for public education were put on the legislative agenda. Redirecting public money to privatization initiatives would ultimately cause an already underfunded state obligation to become even more so while furthering the equitable education gap. While this study cannot definitively conclude that teachers were as motivated by privatization reforms as they were by employment benefits, it

does suggest that teachers' opposition to charter schools and educational savings accounts were grounded more in what they thought best for the majority of West Virginia students than in what they thought best for themselves.

Even though West Virginia's teachers went on strike in 2019 to combat privatization initiatives, several county boards of education have nonetheless taken advantage of the Legislature's approval of charter school establishment and are discussing approving charter school policies for their districts. House Bill 206 allows three charter schools statewide starting in 2021, three more charters after 2023, and continually adding three more every three years (Adams, 2019b). Kanawha county, West Virginia's most populous county and the location of the state capital, is one of the latest to "use locally the process that the state board developed for approving charter schools" (Quinn, 2020). Cabell county, the location of the state's second largest university, has approved a charter school policy as well as Monongalia county

Limited input in education decision-making became an important issue as the 2019 session progressed. When charter school initiatives were being discussed, out-of-state lobbyists for the school choice movement were invited to testify at length in committee meeting rooms while teachers were limited to a minute each in a public forum. Interestingly, teachers appeared to not oppose their own lack of input so much as they objected to lobbyists' having extensive access to lawmakers.

Over two-thirds of all respondents indicated they felt as though their input was not heard during the legislative sessions. The majority of striking teachers, thus, felt at a substantial level of exclusion, demonstrating in 2019 teachers once again felt left out of the decision-making process. According to Bowers et al. (2009), continual exclusion of a subgroup from an establishment yields progressions of agitation which could ultimately lead to broader and

sustained social movements. As previously discussed, West Virginia was the first to start a wave of teacher strikes throughout the nation in 2018, and Bowers et al. (2009) suggest over time all movements will follow the same verbal-to-combative continuum until there is an equal, redistribution of perceived power between the establishment and the agitators. It is too soon to tell whether West Virginia started a social movement, but the state's teachers may have given others the courage to do what they, the stereotyped underdogs, did. Even though West Virginia's teachers did start a strike trend, they did not go on strike during the 2020 legislative session and the state's educational system did not see any major policy changes that year.

While approximately two-thirds of respondents were generally satisfied with their associations' attempts to communicate their educational concerns, they also indicated that their representatives did not have sufficient opportunity to have input. These findings could be viewed in two ways: 1) perhaps respondents felt as though their associations did the best they could despite limited opportunities for input, or 2) not all interactions were relayed to teachers, possibly making associations' attempts seem more limited than they were. It is worth mentioning again West Virginia has a rich history embedded in labor strikes and union affiliation, which provides a source of pride, loyalty, and solidarity for many of its citizens. The majority of this sample also claims association affiliation, which may also account for supportive responses despite associations' ability to negotiate desired outcomes.

None of the demographic data collected returned meaningful findings in terms of teachers' decision to strike. The survey yielded 398 applicable teacher responses, and the sample was dominated by teachers who had 11 or more years of teaching (70.7%), with those who reported over 20 years of experience constituting the largest group. The majority of respondents (67.2%) self-identified as working in a rural school district. Even though the sample is largely

homogenous, it is almost a mirror image of West Virginia's population. About two thirds (64%) of West Virginians live in rural areas (West Virginia Health Care Authority, 2002) and with the school system being one of the biggest employers, it is logical the sample is reflective of that population. Additionally, almost half the respondents claimed AFT membership and chose to participate in UNITED's Facebook group, suggesting a more activist sample than may be common in the broader population.

Discussion Summary

Altogether, the findings of this study suggest teachers' motivation to strike was largely grounded in their need for professional respect and dignity, in terms of both salaries and benefits and their input into education decision-making. Despite two years of teachers' strike endeavors, however, West Virginia remains at the bottom of the national rankings with an average salary of \$45,642, ahead of only Mississippi where the average is \$43,107. Adjusted for inflation, the state's teachers have actually lost 11% in compensation since 1999-2000 (Perino, Kiersz, & Hoff, 2020). They have also taken on higher health care premiums and seen their retirement system changed from a defined benefit system to a defined contribution one. These issues sent them from their classrooms to the capitol in 2018, and they returned to the capitol in 2019 when the GOP Senate attempted to coerce their support for charter schools and education savings accounts by tying them to not only salary and benefits, but to changes in working conditions such as the elimination of seniority in reduction-in-force decisions, increases in class size, etc.

Legislation is always politically charged, and education legislation is no exception. It is often strong-armed by corporate lobbyists who can easily gain access to legislators via their campaign donations, and in 2019 those lobbyists represented the conservative Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which writes

legislation for Republican-led initiatives in state legislatures and in Congress, representatives from the state and national Chambers of Commerce, and a statewide conservative think tank called the Cardinal Institute. Teachers found themselves striking as a communicative strategy – as a means to gain a voice during legislative sessions.

It remains unknown whether teachers were successful in their strike endeavors. In 1990, West Virginia teachers had thought they achieved long term change after an 11-day strike, but teachers today fight for the same issues West Virginia’s teachers were fighting for 30 years ago. Even though the long-term effects the strikes will or have had on West Virginia’s education system are unknown, this research shows there are teachers who feel striking is the only way to promote change in education. West Virginia’s strikes originated as a grassroots effort by a small number of teachers, which eventually amounted to a state-wide effort to change the status-quo of public education. If there are teachers who feel the only way to make changes in education is through striking, then another grassroots effort strike like 2018’s is plausible.

Implications for Practice

This study provided the first, formal quantitative study to examine the perceptions of West Virginia teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes as they relate to their interactions with the Legislature and their ability to participate in shared leadership in the education reform arena. By specifically focusing on the various influences that have contributed to teachers’ lack of access to the policymaking process, in particular how the twin corporate and political agendas have combined to essentially decimate the power of labor unions in West Virginia, one can better understand the relationship between legislators and teachers and teachers’ expressed need for shared leadership in educational legislation.

In an attempt to understand teachers' determination that they had both the need and the power to strike, as well as the right to engage in shared leadership when it comes to the state's education policies, this study also shed light on how teachers responded to the legislative leadership's conduct during the 2018 and 2019 strike period. Understanding teachers feel excluded from educational decision-making, as well as the extent to which that exclusion can act as a strike motivator, may allow policymakers the insight necessary to adopt more of a shared leadership model between legislators and teachers in which teachers feel they are active, equal and valued entities in the state's education decision-making process. If teachers and legislators can work together to create agreed upon changes in education, teachers' motivation to strike may subside and West Virginia may be able to slowly but steadily move up in its national education ranking while creating teacher job security and an equitable education for all West Virginia's students.

Recommendations for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes as they relate to their rationale for participating, their interactions with legislative leadership, and their perceptions of education leadership associations' ability to communicate issues effectively. The research was designed to add to literature in leadership, specifically shared leadership. This study's literature review and data analysis suggested multiple areas for future research; therefore, the following recommendations are made to further this area of study.

1. West Virginia's teachers' strikes were unique since teachers as well as service personnel participated in multiple job actions. A study with West Virginia service personnel as the sole population would allow another perspective from which to view

- perceptions of legislative practices in education and could also allow a comparison between teachers and service personnel when trying to understand the strikes' various phenomena.
2. Even though this research was focused on West Virginia's teachers who participated in the 2018 and 2019 strikes, the study's survey instrument could be revised to fit any state that has experienced teachers' strikes. By expanding this study to include strikes in other states, one could perhaps better understand the legislature-teacher relationship and its effects on policymaking.
 3. A potential limitation to this study was the use of only one social media platform as a survey distributor. While many people do have social media accounts, those who did not have Facebook did not have access to the survey link. Since this survey was distributed through a private Facebook group consisting of West Virginia public education employees, it remains unknown how many teachers had the ability to complete the survey. Future research needs to use various modes of survey distribution (e.g., Twitter, listservs, LiveGrades, Office365 teacher groups, etc.) since it could yield a larger sample size and dataset.
 4. This study's survey instrument could be used as a model to evaluate perceptions of shared leadership between boards of education and teachers in individual counties. Since this study relied heavily on Likert-type survey items, revising the survey to fit each counties' unique decision-making actions would be achievable.
 5. A portion of this study was focused on teachers' perceptions of their education associations' ability to effectively communicate their concerns during the 2018 and 2019 legislative session. To further research teachers' representation through

professional associations, a study measuring teachers' perceptions of how well their education associations are able to influence educational policymaking is recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A...Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Appendix B...Survey invitation and Consent Form

Appendix C...Abbreviations

Appendix D...Survey Instrument: Reed Survey of Teachers' Strike Perceptions and Motivations

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

December 11, 2019

Bobbi Nicholson
Leadership Studies Department

RE: IRBNet ID# 1536109-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Nicholson:

Protocol Title: [1536109-1] Teacher Unrest in West Virginia

Site Location: MU

Submission Type: New Project APPROVED

Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.104(d)(2), the above study was granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee. No further submission (or closure) is required for an Exempt study **unless** there is an amendment to the study. The pilot survey data cannot be used for the study and that any amendments must be submitted for approval by the IRB Chair/Designee.

This study is for student Lindsey Reed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Anna Robinson at (304) 696-2477 or robinsonn1@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

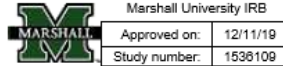
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director, Office of Research Integrity

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INVITATION AND CONSENT FORM

Anonymous Survey Consent



You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Teacher Unrest in West Virginia, 2018-2019 designed to analyze your perceptions relating to legislative rhetorical actions and educational leaderships' associations representations' effectiveness. The study is being conducted by Dr. Barbara Nicholson and Lindsey D. Reed, Ed.D candidate from Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research is being conducted as part of the conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies at Marshall University.

The survey is comprised of a series multiple choice, select all that apply, and Likert scale questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you can leave the survey site. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Once you complete the survey you can delete your browsing history for added security. Completing the on-line survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Barbara Nicholson at 304-746-2094 or at bnicholson@marshall.edu, or Lindsey Reed at bailey280@marshall.edu.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey, you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Please print this page for your records.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will find the survey on the next page.

APPENDIX C: APPREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO.....American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFT.....American Federation of Teachers
ESA.....Education Savings Account
UMWA.....United Mine Workers of America
WVEA.....West Virginia Education Association
WVSSPA.....West Virginia School Service Personnel Association

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT: REED SURVEY OF TEACHERS' STRIKE
PERCEPTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS**

SQ1. Are/were you a West Virginia *teacher* who participated in the 2018 *and/or* the 2019 West Virginia teachers' strike?

- Yes
- No

The following questions focus on participation in the 2018 teachers' strike (January through March, 2018).

SQ2. Did you participate in either the strike and/or in any strike-related activities (e.g., walk-in, picketing outside of school before or during the strike, attendance at a WVEA or AFT-called meeting, lobbying individual legislators, attending House and/or Senate floor sessions, speaking at public hearings, etc.) in 2018?

- Yes
- No

SQ3. In 2018, which of the following strike activities did you participate? Select all that apply.

- Rally at the capitol
- Picketed outside of a school before the strike started
- Picketed outside of a school during the strike
- School walk-in
- Attended meetings hosted by county or state professional associations (i.e., AFT-WV or WVEA)
- Other _____

SQ4. To what extent did the following items act as important motivators when you made the decision to strike or to engage in strike-related activities in 2018?

	Not at all important				Extremely Important	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Benefits (i.e., PEIA, retirement)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional respect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal dignity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
External pressures (e.g., coworkers, community, family, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attorney General threatening to file an injunction against striking teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional associations' (i.e., WVEA, AFT) support for a strike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following questions focus on participation in the 2019 teachers' strike (January through March, 2019).

SQ5. Did you participate in either the strike or in any strike-related activities (e.g., walk-in, picketing outside of school before or during the strike, attendance at a WVEA or AFT-called meeting, lobbying individual legislators, attending House and/or Senate floor sessions, speaking at public hearings, etc.) in 2019?

Yes

No

SQ6. In 2019, which of the following strike-related activities did you participate? Select all that apply.

Strike at the capitol

Picketed outside of a school before the strike started

Picketed outside of a school during the strike

School walk-in

Attended meetings hosted by county or state professional associations (i.e., AFT-WV or WVEA)

Attended one or more of the public forums hosted by the WV Department of Education

Other _____

SQ7. To what extent did the following items act as important motivators when you made the decision to strike or to engage in strike-related in 2019?

	Not at all important			Extremely Important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The education privatization initiatives (i.e., charter schools, educational savings accounts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of educator input into the bills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limiting teachers' talk time on the legislative floor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Input of out-of-state lobbyists in drafting the omnibus education bill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing unlimited talk time to lobbyists for education privatization interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rolling teacher and service personnel salary increases into the bill authorizing charter schools and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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education savings accounts

Declaration that strike participation should lead to termination of employment

Paying some teachers more for in-demand expertise (e.g., math and special education teachers)

Paying some teachers more based on their geographic location (e.g., in counties that border higher-paying states)

Increasing maximum class size from 25 to 28

Requiring educators to restart payroll deduction for professional association dues annually

Weakening the role of seniority in lay-offs or transfers

Bypassing the Legislature's regular committee structure to take up the bill (i.e., establishment of a committee of the whole in the Senate and the creation of four new committees in the House rather than referral to the established Finance and Education Committees in each chamber)

Other

The following questions focus on your strike perception(s) from January 10, 2018 through June 2019.

SQ8. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The teacher strikes ended because legislators adequately met the demands of the teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt like my opinions about educational issues were heard by the legislators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers had a strong influence in the educational decision-making process during state legislative sessions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I currently feel there are ways to promote change in legislative decision-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

making
regarding
education
other than
striking.

The strikes
led to
positive
changes in
education.



The following questions focus on your perceptions of satisfaction pertaining to educational leadership associations (i.e., AFT-WV and WVEA) from January 10, 2018 through June 2019.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ9. Legislators generally give WVEA and AFT-WV sufficient opportunity to have input into education bills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SQ10. WVEA and AFT-WV representatives had sufficient opportunity to have input into the pay raise bill in 2018.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SQ11. WVEA and AFT-WV representatives had sufficient opportunity to have input into the omnibus education bills in 2019.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SQ12. WVEA and AFT-WV representatives communicated my educational concerns satisfactorily during the 2018 strike.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SQ13. WVEA and AFT-WV representatives communicated my educational concerns satisfactorily during the 2019 strike.

SQ14. AFT-WV and WVEA played a central role in the outcome of the teacher strikes

The following statements focus on your current workplace and your affiliation with an educational leadership association.

Please choose the option which best describes you.

SQ15. What level do you teach?

- Preschool
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school
 - Junior high school
 - High school
 - Other _____
-

SQ16. Which option best describes your school district?

- Rural school district
 - Urban school district
 - Suburban school district
-

SQ17. How many students are in your school?

- < 250
 - 251-500
 - 501-750
 - 751-1000
 - > 1000
-

SQ18. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- 0-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - 16-20
 - >20
-

SQ19. To which teacher leadership organization(s) are you a member?

- AFT-WV
 - WVEA
 - Both AFT-WV and WVEA
 - I do not belong to a teacher leadership organization
 - I prefer not to disclose
-