Candidate: Gregg Dionne  
For the degree of: Doctor of Philosophy  
Department: Educational Leadership, Research and Technology  

Title: Federal School Improvement Grant Implementation: Telling the Story Through Quantitative Outcomes  

Committee: Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer, Chair  
Dr. Sue Poppink  
Dr. Patty Farrell-Cole  

Time/Place: Friday, May 13, 2016  
1 to 3 p.m.  
2401 Sangren Hall  

Student success and the mitigation of achievement gaps has been a focus of the federal government since passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) is the latest in federal policy inducements to address this. To tell the story of SIG implementation in one Midwestern state, data was collected from two groups of SIG-eligible schools, one group which received SIG funding and the other group which did not. Data was collected over multiple years and included mathematics and reading outcomes as well as graduation, dropout, and attendance rates. Data was obtained for 49 SIG-eligible and funded schools, and 156 SIG-eligible, but not funded schools. In addition, the SIG applications submitted to the state were analyzed for those SIG funded schools, as was implementation survey data as collected by the state. An analysis examined the differences in outcomes between the SIG-funded and non-funded schools, and the extent to which, if any, SIG funding, levels of per-pupil SIG funding, and chosen reform model could predict outcomes. This study also examined implementation activities to determine if reported levels of sustainability, buy-in and support, and success could also predict outcomes.

Findings from this study indicate that differences in mean outcome changes were not statistically significant between SIG funded and SIG non-funded schools. The receipt of SIG funding, per-pupil SIG funding, and chosen reform model were predictors of some

(over)
outcomes; however, covariates such as the percent poverty and the percent minority were more consistent in predicting outcomes. Levels of overall reported sustainability were also a predictor of improved outcomes in several models. The extent to which other variables could predict outcomes was not consistent; however, reported technology implementation and extended learning time actually predicted decreased outcomes in some models. Overall, race and poverty are more consistent predictors of outcomes than SIG funding, SIG per-pupil funding, chosen reform model, and multiple implementation variables. More research is needed on federal school reform efforts, such as SIG, to determine what is happening in these schools and how outcomes are being impacted by implementation efforts.