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TEACHERS' UNION'S COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SCHOOL
FUNCTIONS

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

CHAD J. BORSETH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

TEACHERS' UNION'S COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SCHOOL
FUNCTIONS

CHAD J. BORSETH

MAY 2022

APPROVED

Thesis Advisor: Lisa M. Silmser, Ed.D.

Program Director: Katie Bonawitz, Ed.D.

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I dedicate this work to the former residents of the Vasa Children's Home of Red Wing, MN. Although it took me 25 years to answer the call to teach, the experiences I shared with you were truly life-changing and a constant motivator to complete this work and my graduate studies.

Abstract

Teachers' unions have a vital role in public education. The collective bargaining agreements negotiated between them and school districts are viewed by many as the de facto rule book for how a school is organized and how it shall operate. Despite the importance of these formal contracts, the measurable effects of the teacher's union's collective bargaining agreements on school functions remain understudied. This literature review seeks to identify how teachers' union's efforts influence school funding, productivity, and educational inputs and outputs through their collective bargaining agreements. In summary, this literature review finds that collective bargaining agreements have a tremendous influence on school funding/allocating efforts and a school's overall productivity. However, the extant literature finds that teachers' union collective bargaining agreements have an insignificant effect on student outcomes. Is it acceptable that these de facto rule books do not affect student outcomes? As schools seek to understand the factors that impact student achievement, it is essential for them to examine their collective bargaining agreements to ensure they are properly aligned with provisions that support increasing student outcomes.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Personal Narrative

My path to becoming a licensed educator began in the fall of 1994, but it wasn't until the Spring of 2020 to realized that goal. Between these periods were a non-traditional path to an undergraduate degree, a three-year stint as a full-time line cook, a 19-year career in manufacturing, and a two-year career as a graduate student and full-time paraprofessional. I have included this personal narrative because my path to a career in education was not typical. In addition, viewing the author's presentation of his research through the lens of an older, real-world experienced, novice educator may create a perspective that may encourage the readership to consider my analysis of the literature and personal conclusions with greater interest.

In the Fall of 1994, I enrolled in an education program that lasted exactly one semester. Two things occurred: first, I ran out of money to afford the cost of private education, and two, St. Mary's College did not have a special education licensure program. As a result, I made the hasty decision to transfer to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse to enroll in their special education program. Unfortunately, my enrollment at UW-La Crosse lasted only one semester. I recall my reason for leaving UW-La Crosse was because the special education licensure I wanted to pursue was frozen, unavailable, or did not exist. Context is essential; in 1994, the internet was in its infancy, and researching a program of study was done primarily via a physical visit to qualify a program. With this context in mind, I then transferred to the University of Minnesota because, at that time, I believed that a school as large as the University of Minnesota would have a special education program; as I learned, they did not.

My failure to find a special education program led me to pursue a marketing degree. The coursework proved to be very challenging, and I struggled academically. These struggles led to a one-year suspension from daytime classes due to poor academic performance. Instead of quitting college outright, I reenrolled into a night school program reserved for "non-traditional" students. This enrollment change enabled me to work full-time as a cook at a popular Minneapolis restaurant during the daytime. I attended night school and worked in the kitchen for the next three years; although I had yet to complete my degree, an opportunity presented itself to me to work full-time in the manufacturing field. Concerned about delaying my graduation, I told my mother that it was a temporary job; however, the job turned out to be far from temporary. I worked for this company for the next 19 years in various capacities, including production supervisor, customer service representative, and quality analyst. During this timeframe, I graduated from the University of Minnesota in the Summer of 2004, 10 years from first enrolling in college. Around this time, I received a significant promotion to a design engineer position. Over the next 13 years, I successfully designed and released many new and innovative heating appliances and gas fireplaces. However, despite all the school changes, program changes, and job changes, I never lost track of my desire to become an educator. I had an *itch* that needed to be *scratched*. In the Winter of 2017, I enrolled in graduate school to pursue becoming a licensed special education teacher. I eventually quit my engineering career, a career that I loved, to accept a position as a paraprofessional in an EBD center-based program.

Today, as I participate in my fourth year in public education, I find myself trying to "square" my prior work experiences and those challenges I face as an educator. In my previous

19-year career in manufacturing, organizational goals were rooted in quantifiable data around profit, quality safety, and operational efficiency to determine our performance. However, in my experience as an educator, I found virtually no conventional means to measure school performance, efficiency, or productivity. In viewing my experience through an engineer's lens, I found this lack of data tracking quite concerning. So, as educators, how do we know if we're improving?

In my experience as a novice public school teacher and union member, I have learned how the teacher union collective bargained agreement may be the biggest influence on how schools function. A well-renowned political scientist's words inspired me to pursue teachers' union-themed research, "With teachers' unions so clearly powerful in public education, there is no excuse for not studying them" (Moe, 2019). So down *the rabbit hole* I did proceed.

Historical Context of Teacher Unionization and Collective Bargaining

It is necessary to provide a brief overview of teacher unionization and collective bargaining history starting from the early 1960s. Understanding this history will enable the reader to understand how teachers' unions grew from organizations with little power and influence to the most prominent and influential group in today's public school system.

First, teachers' unions differ from other traditional types of unions, and this type shall be referred to as a "Public Union" in this literature review. In contrast, other union members like autoworkers, electricians, and plumbers shall be referred to as "Private Union" members. Understanding the difference between "public" and "private" unions is critical. Union teachers operate in the public sector, and their salaries and benefits are funded through federal, state, and local taxes. On the other side, there are private unions, and these unions operate in the

private sector. Perhaps an easier way to determine the difference between the public sector and the private sector is to think of these sectors as owned and operated by either a government entity (public) or owned and operated by an individual or a private company (private).

In the period that extended from the late 1890s to the late 1950s, teachers found themselves members of one of two groups: the National Education Association (NEA) or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The NEA roots began as a professional organization where its leadership tended to be school administrators, superintendents, or principals, with teachers not playing an active role in its leadership (DeMitchell, 2020). On the other hand, the AFT had strong links to organized labor; from its beginnings, the ATF was a teacher-focused union with teachers representing its leadership (Streshly & DeMitchell, 1994). Although the ATF was a more active pursuant in attaining collective bargaining rights for teachers, the NEA was initially more focused on enhancing teacher professionalism. However, the NEW eventually followed the lead of the AFT and actively advocated for collective bargaining rights. (Ponessa, 1997)

In the early 1960s, federal law and state legislatures began to pass laws authorizing public union members the right to collectively bargain. Before this period, collective bargaining was only legal for private unions (DeMitchell, 2020). The term collective bargaining refers to a group that has been given the authority by state and federal law to group together and collectively negotiate items such as salary, benefits, working conditions, and work hours. In addition, collective bargaining ensures that union members have the right to due process before termination of employment, for which members receive a reason for their termination.

In other words, union members would no longer be treated as "at-will" employees, those employed at the employer's privity (Lavery, 2020).

Concept of Rent-Seeking Agency

The concept of rent-seeking is a reoccurring term found in many of the articles included in this literature review; thus, the researcher deems it critical to understand this economic term. To begin, the Oxford English Dictionary defines rent-seeking as:

Spending time and money not on the production of real goods and services, but rather on trying to get the government to change the rules so as to make one's business more profitable. This can take various forms, including seeking subsidies on the outputs or the inputs of a business, or persuading the government to change the rules to keep out competitors, tolerated or promoting collusion between those already engaged in an activity, or making legally compulsory the use of professional services.

(oxfordreference.com, n.d.)

To define this concept in simpler terms, economist Michael Munger describes *rents* as benefits created by a government. These *rents* are made in the form of tariffs, quotas, regulations, and subsidies. Entities may compete for these *rents* from the government instead of generating profits by investing in quality employees and creating quality products or services. A rent-seeking entity generates funding through governments *rents* by investing in lawyers and lobbyists to persuade politicians for favorable policy or funding that will benefit their organization, at times quite exclusively. Rent-seeking is bad for consumers because it exploits taxpayer funds and distorts the government's investment in a rent-seeking entity. In applying rent-seeking theory, an entity that petitioned (lobbied) and received funding via a government

rent, and this *rent* enabled the entity to increase its wealth without demonstrating a reciprocal return on the original investment (to the government), is rent-seeking (Munger Michael, 2020).

Rationale and Guiding Question

Over the past two years, our county, and the rest of the world, have been battling the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on nearly all of our institutions in the United States of America. Most will agree that the pandemic has been especially devastating to our public education institutions by exposing its most vulnerable shortcomings. As the COVID-19 pandemic moves into an endemic stage, considerable research is being conducted to determine its effects on our educational systems and how our policymakers chart a path to recovery. Few key policymakers are more influential than our public education teachers' unions. The following research analyzed to what degree teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements affect district productivity pre-COVID-19 and if its influence will facilitate an expedited recovery, or hindrance, from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This literature review was determined to answer the following guiding question: *Do collective bargaining agreements affect school productivity and student outcomes?* Although this literature review did examine whether teachers' unions and their collective bargaining are beneficial to their union members -- the intent was to determine if collectively bargained contracts were a benefit to school productivity, school funding, and student outcomes.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

Chapter II consists of published literature on teacher union collective bargaining and school outputs. The research was gathered and reviewed for this thesis project through Libsear, ERIC, EBSCO MegaFILE, and Google Scholar. These searches generated a listing of peer-reviewed articles, related literature, and books. These searches were expansive and included the following search terms: "school productivity," "teacher unions and outcomes," "public-sector collect bargaining," "rent-seeking teacher unions," "bargaining for the common good," and "teacher voice theory."

The author organized Chapter II to present the literature review related to the effect of teachers union's collective bargaining agreements on funding and allocation, school productivity/efficiency, and student outcomes. The author will review these three themes by examining the literature to understand how teachers' unions lobbying efforts may affect these three school functions. In particular, by examining the functions to establish a degree to which a teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements promote a positive, negative, or nil effect on these three school functions.

Teachers Unions Collective Bargaining and its Effects on School Functions

This thesis explores how teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements affect school productivity and how these agreements affect the degree to which schools are funded and organized and how outcomes are impacted.

There is an expanding body of literature that suggests teachers' unions are the most dominant special interest group in public education in their ability to influence a district's budgets, school organization, and student outcomes (Brunner et al., 2020; Cook et al., 2021;

Hoxby, 1996; Moe, 2011). This literature review aims to contribute to this area of research by exploring how the three themes identified above interact with teacher union collective bargaining agreements. The ever-increasing literature in studying teachers' union's collective bargain agreements is driven by a renewed focus on public education and the increased lobbying efforts of teacher unions, school choice advocates, and nationwide parent groups.

The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have provided these previously mentioned groups with opportunities to present alternatives to reform our public education system because many of the weaknesses of our current system were exposed. The extremely harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and how our public school decision-makers responded will provide ample opportunities for researchers to study for decades to come. In addition, the pandemic exposed the systemic weaknesses of our public education system. Finally, as an exogenous change event that exceeded the effects of Hurricane Katrina, the impacts of COVID-19 will provide reformers and school choice advocates increased opportunities to justify their efforts because the impact on our public education outputs have systems has been so devastating to school outputs.

In his 2011 book, author and researcher Terry Moe discussed the concept of "exogenous change" related to education's eventual incorporation of technology via online learning and cyber schools to increase public education competition. Considering COVID-19 and the health and safety of students and school staff, public education systems across the United States were forced into "virtual" learning to mitigate COVID-19 transmission. The success of these efforts will be determined in time by educational researchers. But one thing is clear: "virtual" learning and online schools have become viable alternatives. Many school districts across the United

States are developing online options to stave off the decline in enrollments of students and families increasingly choosing alternatives to brick-and-mortar public schools. In concluding this summary of the “exogenous change” that drove the significant education reform efforts in Louisiana post-Katrina, Moe states:

And only in New Orleans do we get a chance to see that, when the constraints of power were lifted, reformers behaved entirely differently than they did in the past - and overthrew the traditional system to make a revolution. (Moe, 2019)

The researcher's opinion is that the COVID-19 pandemic has marked the introduction of a period of significant educational reform in the United States. By developing a deeper understanding of the critical influence that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements have in public schools, better-informed policymakers can make the necessary decisions to get out public education system back on track.

In the Mid-1990s, a new education movement commonly referred to as the "accountability" movement ushered in recent educational reform efforts by groups that differed from traditional public education policymakers. These efforts were not only for significant education reforms, aimed at limiting teachers' union's role in securing and distributing educational funding. The most significant laws restricting teacher unions' fundraising occurred in 2010 in Wisconsin (Baron, 2018). With the passing of their budget repair bills, otherwise known as Act 10, not only were teachers' union's collective bargaining efforts severely curbed the very survival of teacher unions, and other public unions may become a reality. Before the passing of Act 10, Wisconsin's public union membership was around 50%; by 2016, the number of public union members had fallen to 22% (Baron, 2018).

The decade following 2010 marked a period of reform. This period marked the being of numerous reforms designed to limit, or eliminate, the right of teachers' unions that right to collectively bargain in many states. This culmination of these reforms was the decision of the United States Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME* that lifted laws that required public employees to pay "fair share" dues to unions if they declined to be members of a public union. However, in early 2018, teachers' unions organized in response to these movements; "Red for Ed" is associated with this movement. For two years, teachers' unions across the United States collectively rallied against the previously referenced movements to strike significant victories for teacher unions.

The education system is firmly rooted in politics, as is true with many other things today. However, the author of this thesis considered only high-quality, peer-reviewed, and primary sourced literature and played close attention to eliminating any potential biased or politically motivated work from this review. Lastly, the author would like the reader to view this literature review considering the education movements previously listed in the previous section. In particular, to be aware that a study of any specific aspect of education cannot be done in a vacuum and to be mindful of their own personal and political biases.

The author identified three recurring themes related to collective bargaining agreements during this literature review. Therefore, the following three sections of this paper will consist of a literature review of teachers' union's collective bargaining efforts and contracts and how they affect school funding, productivity and organization, and student outcomes. Lastly, we will revisit the rent-seeking concept introduced in part I. Specifically, the author will summarize literature related to those three themes of this economic theory. Teachers' unions

can exert tremendous influence on these three themes through lobbying efforts and the language in their collective bargaining agreements with school districts.

Effects on How Schools Funding

Regarding education funding, teachers' union's efforts resulted in steady increases from the beginning of the modern teacher union collective bargaining movement in the early 1960s. Citizens, policymakers, and politicians generally viewed teachers' union efforts as value-added initiatives to improve school funding, the organization of schools, and student outcomes without much criticism. However, this period of funding and budget autonomy would eventually lead to a more constrained era consisting of school financing reform and the passing of state legislation designed to limit, or eliminate, the influence of teacher unions' collective bargaining agreements.

In her ground-breaking 1996 study, Hoxby was one of the earliest researchers to explore the relationship between teachers' unions and increased school funding. In addition, her research was one of the earliest studies to use qualitative analysis to determine the impacts of teachers' unions on school outputs. Hoxby argued that the teacher union's efforts were positively associated with increased school funding (2.9 – 12.3%); moreover, her research found that the majority of the additional funding went to teacher salaries (1.6 - 5%) and reduced the student-teacher class ratio (1.1 - 1.7%) (Hoxby, 1996). This foundational analysis and evidence of a link between a teachers' union's lobbying efforts and increased state funding provided fertile ground for future research opportunities. Before Hoxby's contributions to the literature, the effects of teachers' union's lobbying efforts were seldom the topic of academic research (Moe, 2011). However, the extant literature on this topic is significant today, and the quality

and depth of research have expanded. As found in Hoxby's study, the following literature provides evidence of a correlation between the increased restrictiveness of collective bargaining agreements negotiated by strong teachers' unions and higher education funding levels for school districts.

Regarding school funding, research provides evidence of a link between strong teachers' unions and increased district spending (Hoxby, 1996; Marianno, 2021; Strunk, 2011). For example, in a 2021 study, researchers found that districts with a strong teacher union presence directed increased funding allocations to existing teacher salaries and compensation; students also experienced improved academic outcomes versus districts with weak teacher unions (Cook et al., 2021). However, researchers noted one caveat; that their studies did not investigate how educational outcomes may have changed if these additional funds had been allocated differently, away from salary increases. For example, it is undetermined how additional investments in curriculum materials, instructional support, school technology, or the hiring of new teachers would have affected student outcomes (Brunner et al., 2020; Cook et al., 2021). In contrast, the author of a 2011 study of California school districts found no evidence showing increased funding for teacher salaries and benefits; however, they did find evidence of increased administrator compensations (Strunk, 2011).

Regarding increased funding, the author found that strong unions with more restrictive collective bargaining agreements were positively associated with a 13% increase in district expenditure (Strunk, 2011). In another study, teachers' union strength was considered an essential factor for determining the amount of additional funding. According to this study,

teacher's unions were the primary benefactor of increased funding in school districts with an influential union (Moe, 2011; Strunk, 2011).

In contrast, districts with weak unions tended to spend these funds on hiring new teachers (Brunner et al., 2020). In a 2010 study, researchers examined district data from 771 school districts in California and found that union strength was associated with the ten largest districts. This union strength translated into positive bargaining sessions, which resulted in salaries that were 7% higher than the average district, and student-to-teacher ratios were 6% lower (Rose & Sonstelie, 2010).

Another example of the depth of recent contributions to the literature involves the timing of when teachers' unions and school districts begin renegotiating a new contract. For instance, in a recent study from 2021, researchers found that teachers' unions could assert their influence more effectively in attracting additional allocations of funding in the summer months that immediately follow the passing of beneficial tax legislation before the end of a district's budgeting process. Additionally, these researchers suggested that teachers' unions may alter their contract demand during limited available funding or other budgetary constraints by negotiating for items deemed to be cost-free, such as preparation time, class size, or personal leave (Cook et al., 2021).

Research presented by Hoxby also suggests that this increased funding generated by the teacher union's lobbying efforts resulted in a "flypaper effect," whereas government grants received by another government agency (such as schools) increase expenditures more than the original grant amount. For example, the school district received more funding than its budget required due to the teachers' union's efforts and influence. Regarding increased school funding,

teachers' unions' lobbying efforts that direct funding away from property tax relief are examples of the flypaper effect (Brunner et al., 2019). In addition, Hoxby found that teacher unions exercised their bargaining power to increase school inputs by altering its teacher inputs, such as salary/compensation and class size (Hoxby, 1996); this was also noted by another, more recent literature (Cook et al., 2021; Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Marianno et al., 2021; Moe, 2011; Strunk, 2011).

In her 1996 research, Hoxby identified several essential questions that required consideration when one is trying to determine an accurate effect of teachers' union's influence on school funding; did unions gain increased funding as a result of their influence and political efforts, or did the poor conditions of some school districts provide unions the ripe opportunity create conditions for union influence? The other significant question that Hoxby proposed was one based on competition. Hoxby suggested that teachers' unions could increase funding in districts with less competition for funding because residents had less interest in education because of their limited access to school options for their children. Areas with high enrollment concentrations and limited competition for school options for their residents were typically found in large metropolitan districts (Hoxby, 1996). Hoxby noted that this led to disparate impacts on students of color and those experiencing poverty. Conversely, a 2011 study referenced early found no evidence of the disparate impact of teachers' union's collective bargain agreements on urban districts with higher concentrations of students of color, many of which were experiencing poverty (Strunk, 2011).

As we proceed through the different themes presented in Chapter II, the author will examine the correlations between increased teacher union strength and large urban districts

with large minority student populations. The previous sections included literature and examples of how teachers' unions lobbying and organizing efforts increase funding for school districts. But how can teachers' unions use their influence to increase local funding? In local school board elections, teachers' union participation was traditionally understudied. It wasn't until the last 10-15 years, despite them being one of the oldest and most familiar democratic institutions to everyday Americans (Moe, 2011). In the words of educator and researcher Tom Demitchell, "education is a federal interest, a state responsibility, and a local function." The author of this review studied the related literature for insight into how teachers' unions gain influence. This research found that teachers' unions are active participants in local elections, whereas they endorse and support school board candidates that are friendly to the interests of their union. In a related piece of literature, Strunk and Grissom (2010) wrote:

If these candidates win elections to the board, they are likely to be more supportive of union-friendly district policies in the negotiation process. In other words, the union has influenced the outcome of the bargaining process in favor of more restrictive contracts by helping choose the preferences of the union's bargaining opponent. (p. 4)

One notable researcher noted teacher's union's influence over a local school board was a function of its political power and its ability to utilize that power at the ballot box (Moe, 2006). In one study, a researcher determined that a candidate endorsed by the local teachers' union increases their probability of winning by 56% (Sims, 2015). Additionally, teachers' unions may use the timing of off-cycle local elections to activate their union members to participate in these elections by voting at significantly higher rates than the general public (Anzia, 2011; Ford & Ihrke, 2020; Moe, 2005, 2006, 2011; Reckhow et al., 2017). These union efforts are

particularly beneficial because these off-cycle elections attract lower voter turnout instead of on-cycle elections that occur every two years on the first Wednesday in November. Therefore, in these off-cycle elections, teacher unions are more influential because it is in the best interest of school board candidates to be more responsive to the priorities of the local teachers' union (Anzia, 2011). In addition, teachers' unions can be powerful allies to a potential school board candidate because of their endorsement and the support they provide. Teachers' unions can mobilize their members to campaign for a candidate through local neighborhood canvassing, making phone calls, and writing editorials to the local newspaper voicing their public support (Rose & Sonstelie, 2010). In a 2005 study of California school boards, the researcher determined that teachers' union-endorsed candidates won 76% of the time (Moe, 2005). In addition, another study found that school boards with more educators negotiate more restrictive contracts, whereas school boards with more members identified as Republicans negotiated less restrictive contracts (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). It is also advantageous for school board candidates often seek the teachers' union's endorsement because a teacher is twice to seven times more likely to vote in a local school board election. For example, a recent poll from the 2019 election found that 36% of citizens voted compared to 54% of unionized teachers voted (Henderson et al., 2020). Considering high teacher voting turnout and the low margins of victory associated with local school board elections, this is an important finding (Moe, 2011). On the contrary, other research has found that some of the teachers' union's efforts may be offset in low turnout off-cycle elections because the composition of the average voter tends to be older, better informed, and less influenced by political campaigning (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993).

Lastly, concerning the extent to which teachers' union collective bargaining agreements influence a district's funding allocation, the author would like to summarize a few key aspects. As noted earlier, the idea of a collective bargaining agreement's restrictiveness, for example, the number of pages, amendments, and Memorandums of Understanding/Intent, significantly influences a school district's budget and allocation of funds (Strunk, 2011). Furthermore, the degree of influence is a function of the union's size, strength, and location, whereas stronger and more significant teachers' unions in densely populated urban areas have more restrictive collective bargaining agreements (Cowen & Strunk, 2014; Moe, 2011; Strunk & Grissom, 2010; Strunk, 2011). But again, union strength may be associated in these large urban areas because of overall mismanagement by district officials (Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Hoxby, 1996; Lyon, 2021).

Effects on How School Organization and Productivity

As we transition through these three themes related to functions of education identified, it is essential to consider that there is tremendous interconnectedness between the three themes this literature review will address: how teachers' unions affect school funding, as with the previous exploration of the theme related to teacher's union's effects on school funding, organization and productivity, and student outcomes. In the earlier sections, this literature review found that teachers' unions positively impact school funding, whereas their efforts increase the amount of funding brought into school districts. The literature also suggests that teachers' unions utilized their influence at the local school board elections to endorse school board candidates with similar goals to the union's.

This next section will begin with a finding that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements are negatively associated with school productivity (Hoxby, 1996). As a foundation piece of research, Hoxby's 1996 work is among the most cited research related to teachers' union's collective bargaining agreement's effects on school functions and the themes reviewed in this literature review. The literature reviewed suggests that teacher unions have a tremendous impact on school productivity. A collective bargaining agreement has many provisions beyond teacher salary/compensation, personal time off, and retirement benefits; in many public school districts, these contracts are de facto "rules of operation." A typical collective bargaining agreement contains a broad range of items that include the seniority provisions the hiring, evaluation, teacher job transfers, and termination of teachers, class sizes, length of the school day (Lovenheim & Willén, 2016; Moe, 2011; Strunk & Grissom, 2010).

In a 2010 study, researchers found that stronger teachers' unions reduced overall administrator flexibility to a greater extent than weaker teachers' unions because stronger teachers' unions have the influence to negotiate more restrictive provisions (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). This study also found that school boards with more educators seated on them were more associated with additional restrictive provisions, whereas the opposite was true when fewer educators were seated on school boards. In another study, the researchers found evidence that more "stringent" collective bargaining negotiations resulted in "less productive education production" (Hall et al., 2017). A 2007 study of collective bargaining agreements in the largest school districts in the United States classified 10% of contracts as flexible and 30% as either restrictive or highly restrictive (Hess & Loup, 2008). In a study of collective bargaining agreements in California from 2008 to 2009, researchers focused on these restrictive collective

bargaining provisions. These restrictions may limit school administrators from implementing the uses of new technology in schools, and reforms designed to improve teacher evaluations also in literature from Strunk's study of 2008-09 (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). Collective bargaining agreements often outline the process for conducting teacher evaluations out in collective bargaining agreements; these contracts may include restrictive provisions that make it very difficult for administrators to distinguish between high and low-performing teachers (Weisberg et al., 2009). For example, contracts prohibit administrators from unannounced evaluations/observations of a teacher; contracts grant teachers advanced notice to prepare for the administrator's evaluation. This study found evidence that evaluation processes outlined in collective bargaining agreements also limit administrators' ability to determine a "successful from an unsuccessful" teacher. However, this same study also suggested that these restrictions may benefit administrators, students, and schools because they may reduce teacher turnover attributed to poor working conditions.

Lastly, regarding contract restrictiveness effects on school productivity, there is considerable research to suggest the seniority-based personnel provisions significantly reduce the flexibility of administrators. In contrast, these provisions restrict administrations from placing the right teacher in the right school to address students' needs (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). The author will explore the implications of seniority-based contract provisions in more detail in the next section related to student outcomes. In a study from 2021, researchers found that strong collective bargaining agreements also included restrictive provisions that limited school administrators' abilities to manage school resources. These restrictions often were associated with increases in school funding for instruction and administrators' and teachers'

salaries; however, these measures had a null effect on the academic outcomes for students (Marianno et al., 2021). The literature reviewed also finds that collective bargaining agreements vary tremendously from State to State, district to district, and from rural to suburban/urban locations. This literature suggests a few important things: one, as populations increase, as does union strength increases, and two, districts with high populations and minority students also have stronger teachers' unions (Anzia & Moe, 2014; Cowen & Strunk, 2014; Marianno et al., 2018; Moe, 2009).

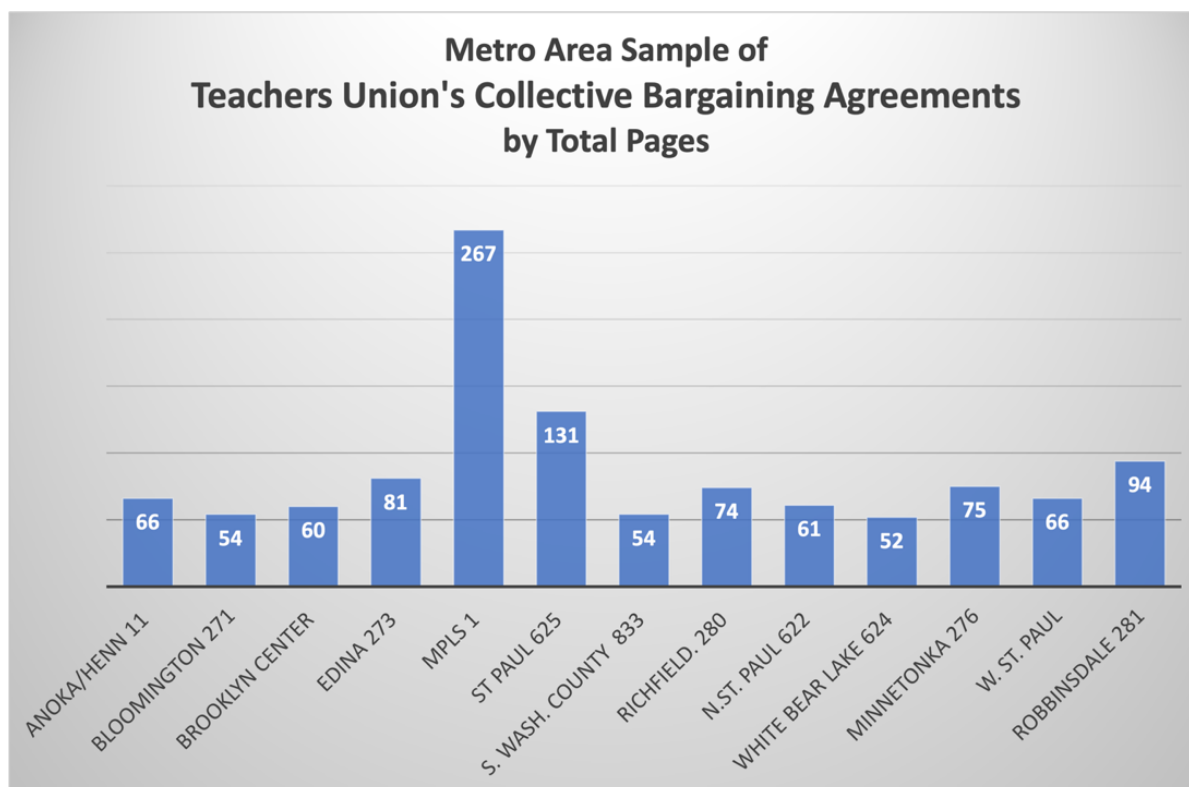
This examination of the literature also highlighted some other notable findings. As previously noted, collective bargaining agreements often contain language related to class size, whereas they contain provisions to ensure a proper teacher-to-student ratio (Marianno, 2021). This research also suggested that contract restrictions can benefit administrators by reducing teacher turnover; reducing teacher turnover can save school expenses related to the hiring and training a replacement teacher. Finally, this research provided evidence that restrictions on class size are critically crucial to addressing the achievement gaps experienced by traditionally disadvantaged students. This topic will be reviewed in the next section, "Effects on Student Outcomes."

The literature reviewed in this section noted several different measures to determine the degree of restrictiveness of a collective bargaining agreement. One common measure found to quantify contract restrictiveness was the reference to total words or pages of the contract. For example, in a recent study, researchers found that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements increased steadily in total page length. Specifically, their research related to school districts in Ohio from 2004 to 2006 found that a typical collective bargaining

agreement was 17,000 words in 1999 but increased to 24,000 in 2018 (Cook et al., 2021). For example, a recent study of teachers' union's collective bargain agreements in California from 2005 to 2015 found the average collective bargaining agreement was 94 single-spaced pages, or roughly 47,000 words (Marianno et al., 2021). Similar research also documented "significant variations" in contract lengths across districts; other researchers have also confirmed this (Goldhaber et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2017; Strunk & Grissom, 2010). From a local (Minnesota) perspective, the author of this paper, who resides in the Twin Cities Metro area of the State of Minnesota, found supporting evidence of this variation from a query of local teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements contract length. Figure 1 represents a random sampling of collective bargaining agreements accessed from the school district's homepages in February 2022.

Figure 1

Metro Area Sample of Teachers' Union's Collective Bargaining Agreements by Total Pages



In reviewing the literature to determine teachers' unions' effect on a district's productivity, the size and strength were key variables. Still, a more noteworthy finding was increased contract length and its occurrence in large, urban school districts (Marianno et al., 2018; Moe, 2011; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010; Strunk, 2011; Strunk et al., 2018). The following section will highlight the key finding from the literature related to district size and teachers' union strength.

In a 2010 study, researchers found no evidence to support the notion that contract restrictiveness is more associated with large, urban school districts with higher populations of students of color experiencing poverty over less diverse students from more affluent suburban districts (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). In a related study from 2010, researchers found that

teachers' union strength increased as the school district's size increased. This increase allowed teachers' unions to negotiate more teacher-friendly collective bargaining agreements (Rose & Sonstelie, 2010). A more recent 2018 study that researched collective bargaining agreements in Washington, California, and Michigan found that contracts were more restrictive in urban districts than in non-urban districts in all three states (Marianno et al., 2018). Other research supports this finding; a similar 2021 study where researchers also studied school districts in Washington, California, and Michigan found a correlation between restrictive collective bargaining agreements and students experiencing poverty (Strunk et al., 2021). However, other research presented in this study supports the notion that correlation is not causation. For example, the authors also found that increased teacher experience, which may also be associated with teacher quality, was associated with increased contract restrictiveness (Strunk et al., 2021). Statements such as the previous allow us to explore the literature to understand what happens if teachers' union's contract becomes less restrictive, primarily through legislative interventions.

The passing of Act 10 in Wisconsin and state laws in Michigan in 2011 for which both were designed to curb the influence of restrictive collective bargaining agreements; these reforms provided fertile ground for researchers to study the effects of the loosening of restrictive collective bargaining provisions to increase educational outputs. A common refrain echoed by teachers' union leadership is that teachers leave the profession without union support and strong collective bargaining agreements. If teachers are to leave the profession, would district productivity will decrease? As suggested by Barron, restrictive provisions, such as seniority, may provide added incentives for teachers to stay in the district throughout their

careers. A teacher remaining in the same district throughout their career may reduce the loss of experienced teachers seeking better options and reduce the costs of the hiring, training, and vetting of new teacher candidates. The loss of experienced teachers has implications for maintaining district productivity. Many researchers view teacher quality as the key attribute that affects student outcomes; a loss of experienced quality teachers would decrease student achievement (Baron, 2018). Opponents to legislative reform efforts designed to curb restrictive teachers' union collective bargain agreements argue that removing restrictive provisions from the contract will hurt districts' abilities to attract and retain teachers. A related study suggested that the weakening of collective bargaining agreements may weaken the ability of schools to attract and retain quality teachers because teacher-friendly provisions have been lessened (Marianno et al., 2018). However, as it pertains to Wisconsin and Michigan, researchers found little evidence of a mass exodus of teachers post reforms in these two states (Brunner et al., 2019).

To review the effect of the easing of restrictive bargaining agreements, the passing of Act 10 in Wisconsin and reforms in Michigan enabled researchers to determine the impact on teacher retention. Before the passing of Act 10, the average teacher contributed 6% to their health care premium and "little to nothing" towards their pension; post Act 10, the average teacher's contributions to their health care increased to 12.6, and pension contributions increased to 50% (Baron, 2018). In addition to these changes, about half of the districts eliminated the fixed salary schedules commonly associated with collective bargaining agreements (Baron, 2018). This research suggested that these changes created inter-district competition through performance-based incentives. In a follow-up study, Baron found evidence

that reforms presented with the passage of Act 10 in the ten years that followed led to an increase in the number of teacher degrees awarded by universities. Compared to the average number of teacher degrees awarded Pre-Act 10, the Post-Act 10 number of teaching degrees awarded increased by 20% (Baron, 2021). Furthermore, this research provided evidence that school districts could attract quality teachers by offering performance-driven incentives that can outperform the salary schedules (steps and lanes) offered in traditional collective bargaining agreements (Baron, 2021). A related study showed that teacher quality improved in Wisconsin districts that switched to flexible pay systems (including incentive pay) over traditional salary systems (Biasi, 2021).

In the next section, the author will present the literature related to the effects of teachers' union's collective bargaining agreement on student outcomes, or in other words, academic achievement. Although the author has attempted to categorize the three themes related to education outputs affected by collective bargaining agreements, it is important to remember that there is considerable spillover between each of these themes. While exploring the literature related to the final theme, it will be beneficial to seek to identify the relationships between all three themes collectively.

Effects on Student Outcomes

Similar to the evaluation of teachers, evaluating the outcomes of students can be equally, if not more, challenging. The reviewed literature suggests that there is no single best method to measure student performance. The literature includes studies that examined students' ACT and SAT scores, state-level scores, percentage of students that continued to college post-high school, links between complimentary breakfast and lunches, and longitudinal studies that look

at the long-term effects that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements have on students in the decades that follow high school. When evaluating student outcomes, the quality of data matters, and access to quality data can be difficult. The main point is that the evaluation of student outcomes is not perfect, and no one measure can accurately capture a student's achievement level. The author of this literature review urges its readers to remember this point as they process through this last aspect explored related to an education output.

In continuing the presentation of this literature review, this section will start with a review of the findings related to Hoxby's 1996 study. This study found that teachers' union's collective bargain agreements had a negative effect on student outcomes. Specifically, Hoxby attributed union influence with a negative 1.8% reduction in graduation rates. Hoxby stated that this effect increased with the stronger, larger teachers' unions. Additionally, her research found higher percentages of strong teachers' unions with restrictive collective bargaining agreements operating in large metropolitan; Hoxby determined that these areas offered little competition amongst public schools, which promoted union strength. These conditions enabled teachers' unions and districts to attract additional funding, resulting in higher per-pupil spending, higher teacher salaries, and lower student-teacher ratios. Conversely, a 2010 study focused on California found that "significantly more restrictive contracts" were not typically associated with urban school districts and higher poverty districts instead of more affluent, suburban communities (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). Finally, Hoxby found that this decrease in student outcomes is directly related to how schools allocate their funding (Hoxby, 1996).

In his 2009 study, researcher Terry Moe challenged a teachers' union's narrative that there was no conflict between the job interests of its members (teachers) and doing what is best for

students. His research found that restrictive provisions within collective bargaining agreements significantly impacted student outcomes. Similar to Hoxby's, research presented by Moe suggested that restrictive contract provisions had a negative impact on student achievement, in particular with students of color (Moe, 2009).

As noted earlier, access to quality data can be challenging. In Moe's research, he used California as the focus of his study because they have decades of readily available student data known as Academic Performance Data (API). The API score was one of California's accountability measures to evaluate student achievement and hold districts accountable. If school districts did not perform, they were required to enter a state accountability program called *Program Improvement* (PI) (Strunk & McEachin, 2011). This study found evidence of a disparate impact on schools with higher populations of students of color. Unfortunately, California stopped collecting this API data after 2013. Other notable studies utilized California's API data to study student achievement; these researchers found similar results ranging from slightly positive, to null, to slightly negative (Marianno & Strunk, 2018b; Moe, 2009; Strunk, 2011; Strunk & McEachin, 2011). In addition, none of these studies presented compelling evidence that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements significantly affected student outcome potential.

In a related study from 2011, researchers found evidence that linked restrictive collective bargaining agreements to a higher likelihood to be required to participate in the State's PI program for schools with below-accepted proficiency and graduation rates (Strunk & McEachin, 2011). Strunk continued her investigation of the correlation between union strength and negative student outcomes, whereas she suggested restrictive provisions that protected

bad teachers from termination and teacher transfer rights that limit administrator flexibility as possible considerations (Strunk, 2011).

Other studies have suggested that legislative reform efforts designed to roll back teachers' union's collective bargaining rights may have unintended consequences that lead to negative student outcomes. For example, a 2021 study of reforms introduced in Wisconsin found that teachers' union influence resulted in decreases in student achievement and that teachers' unions had a positive effect, particularly for black students in primary school (Han & Maloney, 2021). Additionally, researchers found that contracts effects were greater in primary of secondary schools. The research presented by Han and Maloney also identifies a watershed moment in unionism post-Janus. The authors suggested that the reform efforts enacted in Wisconsin presented teachers' union's with the opportunity to adjust their strategy from passive political lobbying efforts to direct action via teacher strikes. In 2018, massive resistance from teachers' unions spawned the Red for Ed movement, resulting in strikes in southern states. (Han & Maloney, 2021; Marianno & Strunk, 2018a). Lastly, a 2020 study of the effects of State and federal reforms found that stronger teachers' unions were positively associated with increased student achievement over weaker teachers' unions. Researchers found significant increases in student outcomes, whereas students associated with stronger teachers' unions achieved 0.16% standard deviations than those with weaker unions (0.08%) (Brunner et al., 2020).

The 2021 research presented by Cook et al. provides an excellent example of the interconnectedness of teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements on school funding, school productivity, and student outcomes (Cook et al., 2021). In particular, this study

demonstrates how the timing of elections (and the passing of tax levies), which can affect the allocation of funds within school district accounts, positively or negatively affect student outcomes. The researcher in this study analyzed 1,500 collective bargaining agreements from Ohio. Their results showed that the timing of negotiations between teachers' unions and the district concerning the passing of tax levies could yield very different results. Local levies are essential in Ohio because the average school district receives about 40% of its funding from locally sourced levies. Overall, they found that if contract negotiations began shortly after passing a new tax levy, the forthcoming collective bargaining agreements increased funding allocations for schools to a greater extent. As a result, more of the budget was allocated to teacher salaries and compensation for existing teachers because the teachers' unions negotiated from a strong position. However, student outcomes were unaffected under these conditions. On the contrary, if the negotiations of a new collective bargaining agreement occurred well after passing new tax levies, the unions negotiated from a weaker position because the district had time to allocate money to other accounts before negotiations could begin. This key difference enabled districts to hire an average of 12 new teachers in the first year post-approval of the local tax levy. Under these conditions, there were "significant student achievement gains" (Cook et al., 2021). Overall, the extant literature suggests that teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements have minimal effects on student achievement, with some literature stating that there's a slightly positive relationship, while other research suggests a slightly negative effect. In either instance, the literature suggests that if there's a correlation, it is an insignificant correlation.

Thus far, the literature indicates that teachers' unions' collective bargaining efforts and member activities impact school productivity with intentional and unintentional consequences. While preparing this literature review, the research revealed a fourth reoccurring theme: *rent-seeking*. Introduced in Chapter I, the concept of *rent-seeking* will be explored in this final section.

Teachers' Unions and the Concept of Rent-Seeking

Throughout this literature review, the author sought literature related to teachers' union's impacts on school outcomes (themes), including school funding, productivity, and student outcomes. During the literature review process, the author observed many references to *rent-seeking*, a term frequently used by economists associated with public choice theory. This literature review did not include "rent-seeking" in its original search criteria, yet the author found this phrase in approximately half of the reviewed articles. It was not the intent of the author to review the concept of rent-seeking. Due to the frequency of occurrence, the author deemed these occurrences to be far from casual. Upon completing the review of the literature related to the three themes explored, the author found it necessary to include a literature review of rent-seeking pertaining to teachers' unions because it may help better understand the efforts of teachers' unions. Additionally, the author's exploration of rent-seeking may assist the reader in understanding and synthesizing the potential identified relationships between teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements and the identified themes.

As stated previously, Caroline Hoxby's 1996 research was one of the first studies to use qualitative analysis to understand the relationship between teachers' union's efforts to

negotiate their collective bargaining agreements and the effect on school outputs. As we recall, Hoxby found that these efforts by teacher unions increased funding but harmed student achievement (Hoxby, 1996). Hoxby attributed this negative effect to restrictive contract provisions that influenced school inputs to benefit teacher union members over students. As noted by Hoxby, she sought answers to “why” student achievement plateaued in the decades since the early 1960s despite steady increases in school funding. In summary, she argued that teachers’ unions were *rent-seeking* because they sought, and received, benefits via salary and compensation without an increase in student achievement.

By altering education inputs, teachers’ unions may affect the productivity of numerous educational inputs. Teachers’ unions demonstrate rent-seeking behaviors because they pursue educational inputs that differ from those of parents, whereas teachers’ unions often pursue educational inputs that maximize member benefits over student achievement (Cook et al., 2021; Hoxby, 1996; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010). For example, restrictive provisions commonly found in collective bargaining agreements limit school administrators’ abilities to place their best, most experienced teachers in high-need classrooms. Similarly, rent-seeking behavior such as adding restrictive provisions to collective bargaining agreements, such as “union-only” or seniority-based job requirements, may prevent a more qualified teacher from applying to positions with a school district.

According to Hoxby, Teachers’ unions have monopolist control over almost all teacher activities. In her work, Hoxby refers to these previously listed examples as “imperfectly competitive” because the access to “rents” available from a school district are only open to tenured union teachers, thus limiting the district’s ability to attract high-quality teachers from

other districts (Hoxby, 1996; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010). In addition, Hoxby found this lack of competition gave teachers' unions exclusive access to higher-paying salaries offered by public schools (Hoxby, 1996). However, with the Supreme Court decision *Janus v. AFSCME* of 2018, this rent-seeking behavior was significantly reduced because public school teachers are no longer required to pay union dues (Brunner et al., 2020).

In a study from 2020, researchers examined how school financing reforms that began in the 1970s significantly increased the amount of funding that schools received from state and local governments; in particular, the authors were concerned with how districts reallocated these increased funds to different education inputs. Their analysis determined that teachers' union's efforts did indeed result in increased funding for districts; teachers' union's efforts also led to significant increases in salaries and compensation for teachers (Brunner et al., 2020). The author's deemed these efforts as rent-seeking behaviors; however, they concluded that this rent-seeking behavior had a net positive effect on reducing inequalities found in schools and increasing student achievement, which were the primary goals of these financing reforms efforts.

In a 2019 study, researchers studied the long-term implications of collective bargaining contracts on students by examining their effects on males ten years after high school. Their research provided evidence of long-term negative effects, whereas former students made \$2,134 or %3.93 less per year overall. As noted by the researchers, the effects on former white and Asian male students were "modest," but effects on former black and Hispanic students drove the declines; researchers estimated reduced incomes by \$3,264, or %9.43 (Lovenheim & Willén, 2019). Specifically, the researchers attributed this reduction in earning potential to

“declines in quality rather than the quality of education,” for example, the amount of time the teachers spend in classrooms interacting with students (Lovenheim & Willén, 2019). As a result, these researchers determined that teachers’ union’s actions were consistent with rent-seeking theory.

In summary, the literature generally agrees with the rent-seeking hypothesis because of the efforts by teachers’ unions to increase the salary and compensation paid to their members and increase the number of teachers a district employs. For example, in the 2015 study, researchers Cowen and Strunk reviewed over 30 years of literature related to the impact of teacher unions on educational inputs (Cowen & Strunk, 2015). As evidence of rent-seeking, these researchers referred to teachers’ union's political power and their ability to negotiate contracts that heavily influence the organization and functions of a school; in other words, teachers’ union’s contract often determines district priorities. In addition, as discussed earlier, the teachers’ union's ability to influence the composition of local school boards through their candidate endorsement process and their ability to motivate its members to participate in local elections as a voter. These actions improve the composition of school board members that share similar priorities with the teachers’ union (Anzia, 2011; Moe, 2011; Strunk & Grissom, 2010).

District productivity has been referenced quite a few times throughout this literature review. Because district productivity and educational outputs did not increase proportionately with teacher salaries and compensation, much of the extant literature identified teachers’ unions as rent-seeking agents. There is agreement amongst the literature that teachers’ union’s rent-seeking behavior has negative effects on district productivity that ranges from slight to

significant (Cook et al., 2021; Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Hoxby, 1996; Lovenheim & Willén, 2019; Marianno et al., 2021; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010).

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Summary of the Literature

The intent of this literature review was to explore a few narrowly focused themes related to public education and teacher unionism. Over the past two years, the author of this review changed the scope of this literature review multiple times. The reason for these multiple changes is a result of the intensity of the politicization of public education and the policies that were implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic; the author sought objective, less controversial topics related to teacher unionism and its impacts on public education. It was not the author's intention to determine if teachers' union's actions are good or bad for public education. The themes explored in this literature review enabled the author to structure a literature review that presented a well-rounded summary of the key document utilized by both teachers' unions and public education to manage school functions, the collective bargaining agreement.

In answering the only guiding question, *Do collective bargaining agreements affect school productivity and student outcomes*, it is the opinion of the author of this literature review that teachers' unions, and their collective bargaining agreements, have a tremendous influence on school funding and productivity, but almost no effect on student outcomes. The guiding question presented in this literature review led to several significant studies for which the effects of teachers' union's efforts on schools were explored. The author will summarize his findings in the following sections.

This review found that teachers' union's efforts are positively associated with increased school funding and the allocations of those funds. Teacher's unions utilize multiple avenues to

accomplish these funding increases. Perhaps one of the more interesting means related to increased funding can be attributed to teachers' union's roles in local school board elections and, importantly, the composition of the school board. For example, the high occurrences of union-endorsed, union-supported candidates seated on local school boards. With union-friendly school board members, teachers' unions have a more receptive negotiating partner (Cowen & Strunk, 2015). There is agreement amongst the literature that a significant portion of these school funding increases is directed to three educational inputs: teacher salary/compensation and the reduction of classroom student-to-teacher ratios.

School productivity was a commonly referenced function impacted by the teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements. In summary, the literature suggests that these contracts often contain a restrictive provision that limits the administrator's flexibility to make day-to-day decisions. Specific examples of reductions in flexibility include limitations on the frequency of staff meetings, rigid teacher transfer policies, and general rules related to the number and length of class periods (DeMitchell, 2020; Moe, 2011). The author found a consensus within the literature that these contracts negatively impact school flexibility, in particular, during times of financial or social duress or a schools' response to a major health crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Professionalism job A notable educator, writer, and researcher attributed restrictive provisions to a model of industrial unionism adopted by teachers' unions that are generally more associated with traditional blue-collar unions where employees' jobs are heavily itemized (DeMitchell, 2020). However, DeMitchell argues that teaching requires a vast amount of job autonomy to teach effectively. Standardizing a teacher's job function is a relic of the Industrial union model's influence on the modern teachers' unions;

a model that is longer suitable because it reduces autonomy, flexibility, and the productivity of the school and its outputs (DeMitchell, 2020).

The most intriguing and concerning finding from this literature review was the teachers' union's collective bargain agreement's minimal effect on student achievement. In this literature review, the author provides evidence to determine that collective bargaining agreements have a minimal effect on increasing or decreasing the academic potential of students (Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Hoxby, 1996; Moe, 2011; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010; Strunk, 2011; Strunk & McEachin, 2011). In summary, the literature agrees that there is a strong relationship between the size and strength of a teachers' union and the size and restrictiveness of its collective bargaining agreement. However, the literature is mixed as to why strong unions, with restrictive contracts, are commonly found in large, urban communities. Do large school districts attract strong teachers' unions because they are so poorly managed, whereas the teachers' unions, via their collective bargaining agreement, bring order to chaos, or are teachers' unions attracted to these districts because they provide because they can maximize the benefits to their members? As suggested by Strunk, stronger unions may be associated with large districts as a reaction to poor working conditions (Hoxby, 1996; Strunk, 2011).

Lastly, exploring the concept of rent-seeking is necessary because it relates to teachers' union efforts within public education. Again, there is agreement amongst the literature that union efforts are consistent with rent-seeking theory. Although teachers' unions are often the most visible and effective advocates for school and student needs, the reviewed literature provides evidence that teachers' unions engage in rent-seeking. Teachers' unions often seek to enhance benefits to themselves, via salary and compensation, without commensurate benefit

back to the district in the form of increased educational productivity or outputs. In summary, there is agreement amongst the literature that teachers' unions engage in behaviors consistent with that of rent-seeking (Cook et al., 2021; Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Hoxby, 1996; Lovenheim & Willén, 2019; Marianno et al., 2021; Rose & Sonstelie, 2010).

Limitations of the Research

Considering that no two teachers' unions, school districts, or states are the same, uniformity of data creates challenges in determining the actual effect of teachers' unions' collective bargaining agreements. Although there have been attempts in public education to standardized student achievement, with efforts like *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top*, it appears that these efforts have faded away and left us with evaluation options. This literature review found that researchers accessed data from many different sources, and often this required considerable filtering to qualify the data. With a lack of consistent use of data, comparisons between various literature can be difficult. With the increased use of technology in public education, one would assume that data would be easier to standardize, gather, access, and analyze; however, it appears that data sources are becoming less uniform and consistent.

Implications for Future Research

As related to the effects of collective bargaining agreements, the literature agrees that post-Janus data may provide new opportunities to explore the relationships between teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements and educational outputs. States like Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin provide opportunities to study the effects of less-restrictive collective bargaining agreements. Because of the significances of the changes to teacher unionization brought by reforms efforts, a notable change should be glaring observable to

support or discount the reforms introduced. Considering the influence of teachers' union's collective bargaining agreements on educational inputs and outputs, consistent evaluation should ensure their contracts align with that of the school district's goals.

Implications for Professional Applications

A collective bargaining agreement is the "how-to" of public education organization; it is arguably the most important document in public education because it outlines the many functions of a school and its staff. Despite the importance of this contract, far too few teachers understand its breadth and significance of this contract. This paper explored three educational outputs that are affected by collective bargaining agreements. This review provided examples of the positions that go beyond teachers' salaries and working conditions; therefore, it is essential for those involved in public education to analyze collective bargaining agreements for any unintended consequences that may arise. At the same time, it is unreasonable to expect that there shall be no provisions within a negotiated collective bargaining agreement that places the needs of school staff over the needs of its students. However, when any provision that potentially harms students or school outcomes must be identified and supported with appropriate rationale.

Given the significant role teachers' unions play in public education, a deeper understanding of the functions of teachers' unions is necessary. A novice teacher's first exposure to the teachers' unions should not occur at a district's teacher orientation event before the start of the school year. Instead, introducing teachers' union's functions and roles should be embedded into teacher preparation programs should be considered. Understanding

the historical context behind teacher unionism in public education can enable new teachers to better support the needs of their students, school, and their union.

The author needs to reconnect to his personal narrative included in Chapter 1. In becoming an educator, he did not understand the importance of his local teachers' union, its collective bargaining agreement, and its role in attaining and maintaining his position. For example, he never expected to be released from his contract every spring as required by his local collective bargaining agreement seniority-based bidding process. Apart from the relatively low starting wage for new teachers, the lack of job security is troubling and may be a pivotal contributor to the high rates of teacher attrition in the first five years of their careers. Furthermore, this is an excellent opportunity for teacher preparation programs to provide future teachers with additional knowledge that may benefit them in their first contract negotiation with a school district.

As with many aspects of our society, our public education system is not immune to an increased sense of politicization. Specifically, regarding teachers' unions, the author encourages teachers' unions to be more receptive to a diversity of thought; efforts to overcome the challenges facing public education will fail if we continue to evaluate ideas based on the political association of the originator. Seeking new sources for feedback is especially necessary for *Education Minnesota*, Minnesota's largest teachers' union, because it influences local teachers' unions throughout the state of Minnesota. Therefore, it cannot embrace a "one size fits all" approach to teacher unionism. The needs of students and teachers in St. Cloud may differ from those in St. Paul, which may differ from those in Worthington. Additionally, similar to how Education Minnesota advocates for increased teacher autonomy in their classrooms,

Education Minnesota can do more to support local teachers' union's demonstrations of autonomous decision making.

Lastly, as introduced in his personal narrative, the author worked in manufacturing for 19 years for an industry-leading, results-driven, customer-focused company. The phrase, "Is this value-added to the customer," was a frequent utterance at every company meeting, grounding every discussion by considering the impact of a decision on the customer. At this company, a "value-added" mindset was woven into the entire organization's culture. We embraced productivity and the minimization of all forms of waste, such as wasted time, motion, over-production, and excessive inventory. We were committed to continuous improvement; everyone participated in this commitment to the customer. The author desires this same commitment to educational outcomes from all parties associated with public education; every school-related meeting agenda must have the words "Student Needs" printed in bold-type text as the top-line item.

Conclusion

Given the influence that teachers' unions have on a district's organization and the management of its resources, is it acceptable that teachers' union's efforts have virtually zero effect on student outcomes? Given that collective bargaining agreements are a de facto rule book for how school districts function, are we satisfied with our educational outputs? In the author's opinion, much more research is needed to answer this question correctly. Fortunately, there appears to be a steady increase in the literature related to teachers' union's role in public education policymaking.

COVID-19 presented several challenges to public education; most notable was the implementation of distance learning, where students accessed their classrooms remotely from their homes. With all the growing pains associated with its implementation, students, parents, teachers, and staff adapted to make the best of a difficult situation. For some, the viability of a true distance learning model has been proven possible as a result of our experiences with COVID-19 closures, such that many school districts across the country are investing in online alternative learning options for their students and families. As the physical appearances of public schools change, so must teacher unionism. National and state-level teachers' unions commit considerable resources to preserve the current public education system. In contrast, they openly oppose the expansion of charter schools, educational savings accounts, and school vouchers. However, it is in the opinion of the author that the gradual shift toward online learning options, from both within and outside the sphere of public education, that maximizes the benefits of technology and the development of artificial intelligence capabilities may have more long-term implications for teachers' unions.

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