

3-3-2006

Deprofessionalization of curriculum decision-making

Martha M. Barantovich
Florida International University

DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI14050426

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Barantovich, Martha M., "Deprofessionalization of curriculum decision-making" (2006). *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 1394.
<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/1394>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the University Graduate School at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

DEPROFESSIONALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

by

Martha M. Barantovich

2006

To: Dean Linda Blanton
College of Education

This dissertation, written by Martha M. Barantovich, and entitled Deprofessionalization of Curriculum Decision-Making, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Mohammed Farouk

Robert V. Farrell

Rebecca M. Salokar

Stephen M. Fain, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 3, 2006

The dissertation of Martha M. Barantovich is approved.

Dean Linda Blanton
College of Education

Interim Dean Stephan L. Mintz
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2006

DEDICATION

To my wonderful, supportive husband, Joe, for putting up with all of my craziness.

To my parents, Mary Jo and Larry for their insistence that I finish college and pursue my dreams.

To my sister, Margaret, and my brother, Eric, for listening to me rant and helping me focus on what's really important.

To me. I worked really, really hard for this.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first and foremost like to thank my committee, Dr. Stephen Fain, more for you later, Dr. Mohammed Farouk, who stepped in at the last minute, Dr. Robert Farrell, who always brought humor to the table, and Dr. Rebecca Salokar for her knowledge and guidance about the political sciences. Their constant support and encouragement through the writing of this dissertation helped me over some minor and major bumps.

Dr. Stephen M. Fain is by far the most outstanding mentor I have ever had in my entire educational career. Thank you for bringing me into the fold, providing me guidance, questioning my intent, and pushing me to find a “grounded” response to the questions I was considering. Your support, guidance, and friendship have changed who I am as a person and a scholar. I am forever grateful for your knowledge and your insight and that you have forced me to evaluate my positions, not once, but on a regular basis. My role as grasshopper to yours as master has allowed me to grow in countless ways.

This dissertation could not have been completed without the help of my formal editing committee made up of my mother, father, and sister. Without them, my participles would still be dangling and my sentences unclear. Your help and support has been an amazing example of the people you truly are. Thank you also to my brother for our weekly intense discussions over eggs with cheese as we hammered out all of the questions of the universe.

Thanks, especially, goes to my husband, Joe. I could list forever the reasons that you deserve my thanks and love, but just know that it is because you love me the way that you do that I am the person I am.

I cannot possibly forget my academic buddies as I traveled on this journey. Michelle and MaryAnne, our endless conversations have helped me focus on what it really was that I wanted to say. Michelle, our travels have been wonderful and I look forward to many future conversations and debates about the evils of society and the mores of educational reform. We'll change the world, eventually. To David, thank you for becoming both a friend and a supporter.

Finally, to my five year old Goddaughter, Choochie. When you asked, "Who did you fix?" upon completion of my defense, I didn't have an answer. But, one day, I will, and I'll share it with you.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
DEPROFESSIONALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

by

Martha M. Barantovich

Florida International University, 2006

Miami, Florida

Professor Stephen M. Fain, Major Professor

The purpose of this study was to analyze the evolution of Florida state level policy efforts and to assess the responding educational policy development and implementation at the local school district level. The focus of this study was the secondary language arts curriculum in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Data was collected using document analysis as a source of meaning making out of the language sets proffered by agencies at each level. A matrix was created based on Klein's levels of curriculum decision-making and Functional Process Theory categories of policy formation. The matrix allowed the researcher to code and classify specific information in terms accountability/high-stakes testing; authority; outside influences; and operational/structural organization.

Federal policy documents provided a background and impetus for much of what originated at the State level. The State then produced policy directives which were accepted by the District and specific policy directives and guidelines for practice. No evidence was found indicating the involvement of any other agencies in the development, transmission or implementation of the State level initiated policies.

After analyzing the evolutionary process, it became clear that state policy directives were never challenged or discussed. Rather, they were accepted as standards to be met and as such, school districts complied. Policy implementation is shown to be a top-down phenomenon. No evidence was found indicating a dialogue between state and local systems, rather the state, as the source of authority, issued specifically worded policy directives and the district complied. Finally, this study recognizes that outside influences play an important role in shaping the education reform policy in the state of Florida. The federal government, through *NCLB* and other initiatives created a climate which led almost naturally to the creation of the *Florida A+ Plan*. Similarly, the concern of the business community, always interested in the production of competent workers, continued to support efforts at raising the minimum skill level of Florida high school graduates.

Suggestions are made for future research including the examination of local school sites in order to assess the overall nature of the school experience rather than rely upon performance indicators mandated by state policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EDUCATION REFORM POLICY IN FLORIDA	1
Purpose.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Rationale	3
Assumptions.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	5
Background	10
Delimitations of the Study	14
Overview of the Study	14
II. CURRICULUM REFORM FROM POLICY	15
Educational Indicators within the Reform Movement.....	18
Accountability/High-stakes Testing and Authority	18
Outside Influences on Education Reform	22
Education Reform and the Operational /Structural Organization of Schools.....	26
Summary	32
III. STAGES OF POLICY FORMATION	34
Theoretical Framework.....	34
Lasswell’s Functional Process Theory.....	34
Klein’s Levels of Curriculum Decision-Making	37
Awareness and Federal Education Policy.....	40
State Policy Determination	42
Local Implementation	46
Data Analysis	47
Policy Analysis Matrix	48
Summary	51
IV. POLICY ANALYSIS MATRIX	52
Presentation of the Matrix.....	52
State Policy and Curriculum Decision-Making	53
Miami-Dade County Public Schools Policy and Curriculum Decision-Making	57
Changing Policies in Language Arts.....	59
Findings.....	67
Summary	70
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	71
Synthesis of Findings.....	72
Conclusions.....	74
Suggestions for Future Research	77

REFERENCES	79
VITA.....	87

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION REFORM POLICY IN FLORIDA

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan commissioned the Department of Education to examine the state of American secondary education. Upon its release, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* set into motion a series of events (political, educational, and economic) that would lead to the present state of reform in education. The report began a wave of federal education accountability requirements for individual states. The push for change was moving along at a slow pace, with individual states implementing standards and assessment measures to ensure that public schools were producing citizens who could participate in the work force. Members of business communities, as in the past, became involved with education by complaining about the quality of workers being produced by the public school systems. In 2001, Congress, at the urging of President George W. Bush, passed the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. Upon signing the “*No Child Left Behind*” (*NCLB*) legislation as it is more commonly referred to, President Bush continued the legacy of federalization of public education, a job that up until this reauthorization, was solely the responsibility of individual states. By tying federal dollars to programs that address basic academic skill development of the neediest children, the federal government started holding states accountable for the quality of the students they produced. States were suddenly required to address measurable standards in order to continue to qualify for federal support of educational programs.

Florida was ahead of the *NCLB* legislation. In 1998, Governor J. Bush signed into law, *Florida's A+ Plan for Education*. The legislation has been the cornerstone for

setting the standards by which all public school children will be judged. Among the many implications of the policy is the resulting backlash that has attacked the public school system within the state of Florida. These implications include a complaint from educators that the age of high-stakes testing is negatively affecting students. The negative affects consist of too much emphasis on performance, too much external control is driving educational decisions, and a reversion to an emphasis on basic skill acquisition (Blum, 2000). As Paris (1994) commented in his article on economics and school's responsibilities, schools do not impart specific skills that make individuals more productive; rather individuals (should) develop generic abilities to acquire skills on the job that in turn enhance productivity.

Education reform efforts have played a major role in shaping education policies and practices over the last quarter of a century. Serious educators are interested in the effects of these efforts on the development of the policies that ultimately affect the curriculum encountered by teachers and students. This study is designed to reveal how education reform efforts have resulted in policy modifications and curriculum changes.

Contemporary educators and legislators are interested in the success of ongoing accountability efforts intended to close the achievement gap separating students across the nation. The intent of this research was to study the development of educational policies in the state of Florida that represent a direct response to the national policy mandate for reform presented in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The main focus of this study was *Florida's A+ Plan for Education* and subsequent policy development efforts at the state and district levels. How that policy shaped Florida Department of

Education guidelines and mandates as well as curriculum decisions made at the district level completed the analysis for this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to analyze the evolution of state level policy efforts and to examine the effectiveness of responding educational policy development and implementation in school systems.

Research Questions

The driving research question in this study was: How has the evolution of the current Florida education reform policy influenced policy decisions at the district level regarding secondary language arts curriculum in Florida? In order to understand how policy and curriculum decision-making interact, the following research questions were addressed:

1. During each phase of the policy process, which publics are engaged in policy development?
2. During each phase of the policy process, how are publics engaged in policy development?

Rationale

The parameters of this study were rooted in policy process analysis and curriculum-decision making. Grounding the document analysis on the functional process theory of policy analysis (Anderson, 1979; de Leon, 1999; Dye, 1975; Jones, 1970), and Klein's (1991) curriculum framework for decision making, this research examined the relation of interpretations of state legislation to implementation of policy at the district level. This study focused on the effects of accountability policies, of which *No Child Left*

Behind (NCLB) has become a major guiding policy document in Florida, on secondary language arts in all secondary schools in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Public school accountability is aimed at increasing student performance by improving the way schools function (O'Day, 2002). An assumption in the accountability movement is that accountability factors have a positive impact on student learning and more effective classroom instruction (Lashway, 2001). "Under *NCLB*'s strong accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including disadvantaged students, achieve academic proficiency" (U.S. Department of Education Press Release, 2003). Florida has responded to the accountability movement with the creation of *Florida's A+ Plan for Education*. This plan has resulted in the creation of state legislation directing educational standards, accountability measurements, rewards and sanctions for school performance, and, it is assumed that it has had significant effects as to what goes on in schools. This analysis represents an effort to ensure that the focus of this study, policy decisions and implementation, is analyzed, as opposed to a reflex response to a mandated change.

Assumptions

Underlying this research were some basic assumptions regarding state education policy and district education policy. Education policies implemented at the district level are aligned with those developed at state level. However, as educational policies are implemented, it is assumed that a dialogue exists between the district and the state for the purpose of achieving the intentions of the policy. This study began with the assumption that evidence would be found demonstrating two-way rather than one-way communication.

The study of policy formation and secondary language arts curriculum decision-making is assumed to be representative of policy development related to all levels and content areas of the curriculum. Therefore it is assumed that the findings of this study are generalizable beyond language arts.

Theoretical Framework

One of the purposes of policy is to guide future decisions regarding education reform (Mann, 1975). Deciding whether the policy is relevant to society as a whole or to particular groups of individuals is one of the roles of a policy analyst. Clemons and McBeth (2001) observe that it is the analyst's view of who holds the power and how policy decisions affect the stakeholders involved. Because of the analyst's view of power, the method of evaluating a policy can vary between analysts. The authors also imply that there is often a conflict of values and interests between the policy makers and interested parties at each stage of policy formation. The authors review three stages of policy formation. Stage I is an *Awareness* stage that contains an event or series of events that focuses attention on the event. These events are called *triggering events*. They refer to events that trigger some action at the agenda setting stage and to subsequent attempts to control the scope of the policy process (Clemons & McBeth, 2001; Waste, 1989). Triggering events, "convert a routine problem into a widely shared, negative public response" (Waste, 1989, p. 38). Negative responses to routine problems allows for the creation of policy to alleviate the problem. It is noted that the event may or may not require political action (Clemons & McBeth, 2001; Ostrom, 1999). It is during this stage that the definition of the problem occurs in "the context of values, interest, and political power" (p. 6). However, defining the problem may not necessarily occur in the context

of overall public interest. Stage II is the *Policy Determination* stage. It is in this stage where the power structure and the stakeholders become more readily defined on a political level, but not necessarily a societal level. Stage III is the *Policy Implementation* stage. Here the forces that determined the importance of an event enact legislative policy or law to ensure that the issues surrounding the triggering event do not manifest themselves in additional ways that could negatively affect the constituents of the elected policy makers (p. 6-7).

When analyzing the systemic formation of policy, it is necessary to recognize some of the organizational structure that allows certain policies to come to fruition. “The institutional arrangements of American government have proven remarkably well-suited for pursuing different policies toward contradictory goals simultaneously” (Dye, 1975, p. 174). Campbell, Cunningham, McPhee, and Nystand (1970) underscore that educational policy is rooted in the ideology that schools in America are expected to solve problems that may be more relegated to society at large. In regards to national educational policy, the authors state,

perhaps [these federal] relationships to education will have more meaning for us if we recognize that policy grows out of the basic socioeconomic forces in our society which generate movements antecedent to policy, that these movements encourage political action, and that finally these activities lead to formalization of policy by governmental agencies (p. 39).

In other words, educational policy may be the result of the perception of the policy maker listening to the noise of those individuals who think there is a problem.

Understanding the basic forces that generate movements requires examining the social, economic, political, and technological forces that are usually national and worldwide in scope. Antecedent movements relate in educational terms to those

triggering events that identify perceived educational issues. Political actions, according to the authors, occur by organizations that are usually interrelated at local, state, and national levels. An example of this type of organization would be the AFL-CIO or the NEA. These organizations have chapters of organized members at all levels of representation and can coordinate a position of authority surrounding a certain area of concern. The formal enactment of the policy can occur at the local, state, and national level and is usually administered through legislative, judicial, and executive agencies.

Dye (1975) warns that there must be a distinction drawn between policy output and policy impact. Policy output can be very narrowly defined as the amount of resources that support a legislated policy. In educational terms, this could be viewed as per pupil expenditures as the result of an approved state budget. Comparison of these numbers on a state by state level does not constitute the impact of the policy, but the output. Policy impact, on the other hand, is a measure of the effect a policy has as it affects real-world conditions. It is a comparison of the intended and unintended consequences. Policy impact includes the impact on a target situation or group; the impact on institutions or groups other than the target (“spillover effects”); the impact on future as well as immediate conditions; the direct cost, in terms of resources devoted to the program; and the indirect costs, including loss of opportunities to do other things.

Within the realm of examining policy, one of the limits that is often overlooked is that societal problems may have multiple causes and a specific policy may not be able to eradicate the problem. This is what Clemons and McBeth (2001) refer to as *value conflict theory* (p. 5). There are empirical facts and interpretations of those facts that are subjective to the views of the individuals in the various stages of policy formation. As a

result, the policies of a government may tell us more about the aspirations of a society and its leadership than about actual conditions. “Thinking of policy as a process permits the researcher to detect fluctuations in interests, changes in actors, and the evolution of policy alternatives over time” (Foreman, 2003, p. 35).

The question being asked by critics of the education reform effort, is: What are the right educational standards? A contradictory culture begins to emerge within classrooms as individual teacher’s philosophical beliefs are in conflict with the intention of reform. It is a daunting task to ask education to prepare students to meet a set of standards that are at best vague, as the children of poor and minority families are continually “left behind” in the wave of reform. Educational reform is designed to solve the current perceived problems of society. Systems of education have become, not about the betterment of individuals, but about placing blame on teachers and schools for the lack of skills students have when they enter the workforce. As Apple (1996) suggested, the reform movement is changing the soul of education. “If ideology that propels a society is itself created rather than received...it can be recreated” (Schubert, 1997, p. 319). Reforming education is supposed to provide society with better prepared individuals. “It would be seemingly naïve to believe that a single act...would be powerful enough to have much of an impact on the education of students” (Klein, 1991, p. 38).

Schools meet the needs of education and this should not be confused with the needs that are met through other social agencies (Tyler, 1969). Education needs to provide students with different perspectives on events and teach them how to critically examine these events, rather than to read texts and accept the viewpoint of the author

(deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). There is more of an emphasis on consumer rights than on citizen rights in society today. The United States has moved away from a public-provided system of state education toward individual schools competing for clients in the marketplace (Whitty, 1998). Education then becomes an instrument of "...perpetuation unchanged in the existing industrial order of society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation" (Dewey, 1944, p. 316).

Following *The Eight Year Study*, the use of tests to assess students was examined as a means and an ends. "No test could be sufficiently sensitive to an individual's context. Knowledge of context was needed before an individual's acts of adjustment (defined as behavior) could be assessed" (Kahne, 1996, p. 132). However, "educationally useful evaluation takes time, it's labor intensive and complex, and it's subtle, particularly if evaluation is used not simply to score children or adults, but to provide information to improve the process of teaching and learning" (Eisner, 2001, p. 371).

Education is an active process...it is essential to see that education provides opportunities for the student to enter actively into and to deal whole heartedly with, the things which interest him, and in which he is deeply involved, and to learn particularly how to carry on such activities effectively (Tyler, 1969, p. 11).

According to Dewey (1944), the aim of education must always represent a freeing of activities that allows the student to experience the education.

At the core of education are curricula and curricular decisions. Rhetoric surrounding the accountability issue in public education focuses on end result products that federal and state governments have placed into practice. Within educational practices, curriculum can be seen as the set of decisions that are evaluated through

student performance. These decisions are increasingly being driven from the top-down and overwhelmingly affect the very nature and purpose of schools. The research discussed in this section was only representative of some of the issues involving policy and curriculum. By allowing external forces to control the decisions made about curriculum and the process of learning, education becomes responsible to the outside forces. “Education would then become an instrument of perpetuating unchanged the existing industrial order of society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation” (Dewey, 1944, p. 316).

Throughout history there have been varying philosophical, psychological and sociological forces at play in shaping curricular and instructional responses of the institution of education. Contained within these responses are decisions regarding types of schools, debates over subjects that ought to be taught, and the role of the child in shaping the curriculum. As developments in the various forces have been made, the responses have changed the nature of schooling and the involvement of individuals in the decision-making process of curriculum. According to Oliva’s (2001) sixth axiom, “curriculum development is basically a decision-making process” (p. 37). As curriculum is planned and developed, the choices to be made revolve around disciplines (content), viewpoints, emphases, instructional methodology, and organization of experiences.

Background

Public schools in Florida are directed by Florida legislation pursuant to Florida State Statute 1008.22 to assess student performance annually in grades three thru 10 by administering the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The legislation that initiated the assessment requirements is aimed at, “...providing information needed to

improve the public schools by enhancing the learning gains of all students and to inform parents of the educational progress of their public school children” (2004 Florida Statutes, Title XLVIII, Chapter 1008). The annual assessment is given in the areas of Reading and Mathematics. Students in grades four, eight and 10 are additionally assessed in the area of writing. Students receive an achievement score in each of these areas that are distributed by levels ranging from one to five, with five being the highest possible score. Each level of scoring is labeled to correspond to the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* as follows: Level 1: Below Basic, Level 2: Basic, Level 3-4: Proficient, Level 5: Advanced (Florida *NCLB* Accountability Workbook, p. 10). In order for a student to pass the Reading portion of the FCAT exam he/she must earn a score of at least 300. According to the FCAT Reading Achievement Levels, a score of 300 is considered a Level 2 score. For the purposes of national accountability, in order for a school to be deemed to be making adequate yearly progress (AYP), a student must earn a passing score on the FCAT on the Proficient Level, Level 3, and above. It would seem from the onset that the state requirements for achievement and the national educational requirements for adequate yearly progress are not aligned.

The scores from the student assessments are used to evaluate the overall performance of the school. Schools receive an annual grade based upon the sum of scores delineated from the following formula:

1. Schools earn one point for each percent of students who score in achievement levels 3, 4, or 5 in reading and one point for each percent of students who score 3, 4, or 5 in math.
2. The writing exam is scored by at least two readers on a scale of 1 to 6. The percent of students scoring “3” and above is averaged with the percent scoring

“3.5” and above to yield the percent meeting minimum and higher standards. Schools earn one point for each percent of students on the combined measure.

3. Schools earn one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in reading and one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in math.

4. Special attention is given to the reading gains of students in the lowest 25% in levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school. Schools earn one point for each percent of the lowest performing readers who make learning gains from the previous year. It takes at least 50% to make “adequate progress” for this group (Florida NCLB Consolidated Application, Grading Florida Public Schools 2001-2002, p.103).

Once the scores have been calculated, a school is awarded a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or

F. One of the theories regarding the school grade is that it is an incentive for schools to become more competitive by increasing the academic performance as measured by the FCAT. Schools, according to this theory, will strive to improve their school grade as a result of this increase in competition.

The FCAT reading test includes three kinds of test items: multiple-choice items (MC), short-response performance tasks (SR), and extended-response performance tasks (ER). The short- and extended-response tasks are called “Read, Think, and Explain” performance tasks. (READING, Grades 9-10 Test Item and Performance Task Specifications, 2001, p. 12). The reading portion of the FCAT is 70% informational passages, or science and social studies related, and 30% literary passages (READING, Grades 9-10 Test Item and Performance Task Specifications, 2001). According to the Test Item and Performance Task Specifications (2001),

Literary text allows a focus on the text as a work of art with language as its medium. It provides entertainment or inspiration and includes fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Passages representing literary text should address a variety of themes appropriate for and interesting to students at the designated grade level.

Informational text is subject-matter centered, wherein language is used to solve problems, raise questions, provide information, and present new ideas. Another form of informational text includes material that is encountered in everyday life outside the classroom.

Informational passages should represent different points of view and include issues and problems that persist across time. They should have readily identifiable key concepts and relevant supporting details (p. 7).

According to this description, the responsibility the classroom teacher in preparing students for the FCAT may go beyond the sole content area of language arts. The overall goal of the exam is to assess a student's ability to gather information from different types of texts and analyze and present answers in multiple formats.

In response to the number of students who are performing below proficient on the Reading portion of the FCAT exam, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has required that all of those students are to be placed in a remedial reading course at the secondary level. According to M-DCPS Division of Language Arts, the intent of this requirement is to improve the reading skills of those students who have been labeled low-performing.

M-DCPS system has created reading plans under the Division of Language Arts in order to improve reading scores. In the area of educational accountability, one of the pressing issues guiding policy decisions is the preparedness of high school graduates for employment. Businesses have complained about the lack of basic skills in the graduating work force. They have influenced education in the area of preparing learners for work. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) was an indicator of one of the outside influences on education. When the efficiency movement became an integral part of

industrialization in the North, NAM saw to it that the idea of efficiency was present in classrooms in order to sufficiently prepare students for the workforce (Rippa, 1997).

Delimitations of the Study

This study investigated *Florida's A+ Plan for Education*, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools' district responses to specific education policies in Florida regarding language arts curricula. The documents obtained were from the state of Florida legislation, Florida Department of Education, and M-DCPS.

Overview of the Study

A review of literature in Chapter Two focuses on the issue of curriculum reform as a result of policy decisions as it relates to of accountability/high-stakes testing and authority, outside influences on education reform, and operational/structural organization of schools and policy and education in relation to curriculum reform from policy. The methodology used to conduct the research, including the policies analyzed, how data were collected, and how data were analyzed is explained in Chapter Three. Included in Chapter Three is the policy analysis matrix complete with explanations regarding the data in the cells of the matrix. In Chapter Four, the findings of the research are discussed with regard to changing policies in language arts in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Chapter Five contains a synthesis of findings, conclusions from the analysis, recommendations regarding educational policy and curriculum for Miami-Dade County, as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

CURRICULUM REFORM FROM POLICY

Schooling in America has constantly undergone changes as the rhetoric for reform changes with political parties, American values, ideas of what is best for children to know, and how they should learn. The pedagogical practices that direct the American educational experience swing on a pendulum as the groups of individuals in power control the changes in disposition. If the educational system is to meet its task of preparing youth for existence in a democratic society of the future, then there needs to be a symbiotic relationship linking education and political reform. In order to enact changes within school buildings and systems, structural changes that are individualized by schools must be allowed to exist and to be practiced. "Education changes the way we experience our being in the world...it makes it possible for us to struggle and grow" (Carlson, 1998, p. 197).

Education is being challenged by the wave of tests and the performance standards that are to be met. "The reform movement in education can be distinguished in terms of the intensity with which individuals have been attracted to it and the scope of the issues that have been raised by the large and extensive reforms (Mitchell, 1996, p.1). The central role that high-stakes testing currently occupies has been overwhelmingly shaped by the rhetoric of our political leaders (Kornhaber & Orfield, 2001). The current rhetoric of high-stakes testing is placing an undue stress upon educators to correct the wrongs of society by requiring that educational settings shoulder the responsibility of businesses and industries that do not want to invest in human capital. "We are working on matters

of assessment without a clear view of whether better educational performances have the economic significance attributed to them” (Paris, 1994, p.10).

The reform movement, with its emphasis on accountability and minimum standards forces education to examine student learning without any regard to contextual learning or social barriers. Placing standards upon the educational system is meant to alleviate society from its responsibility of providing better opportunities for minority groups. Educational reform does not typically take into account the other sources of information such as alternative forms of assessment, increasing attendance, socio-economic status, when objectives for learning are being created.

According to Beadie (2004), student accountability has more to do with educational systems than with education. Noting that there is a contradiction between the reformers and the politicians, the author defines two types of standards that have historically been a part of educational systems: selective achievement standards and universal minimum competencies. Selective achievement standards are those that were traditionally available to only certain groups of individuals who had the ability to earn them. The author noted that there was a time when high school diplomas would have fallen into this category, as not all individuals attended nor completed a high school education. Universal minimum competencies are accessible within education to all who attend (Beadie, 2004, p. 40-41). As a result, the reformers want to “increase academic standards and establish new achievement incentives by implementing performance based standards and state assessments that set benchmarks of grade-level achievement. This latter combination is used by politicians to set minimum achievement incentives” (p. 41).

Individual schools have a distinct responsibility according to Tyler (1969).

“...There are many situations in which a total reconstruction of the curriculum is not contemplated and yet this rationale can be appropriately applied in a systemic attack on a part of the program” (p. 126). Ideally, schools bear the responsibility of deciding whether to undertake an entire school reform or to reform certain aspects of a curriculum such as a grade or subject area. Given the reform movement’s emphasis on mathematics and reading test scores, it follows that in high school language arts curricula, decisions about reading cannot be made within this subject area alone. Reading is a tool with which success in all subjects can be monitored and controlled. The individual aspects of subject matter must be taken into consideration when questions regarding accountability compliance are asked. Who should shoulder the responsibility of maintaining the rise in test scores? In order to improve reading test scores, one question to be asked is should reading be a school-wide, subject specific, or individual teacher responsibility? Regarding curriculum decisions, Tyler (1969) suggests that individual curriculum decisions take place within individual schools because student needs vary from location to location.

Apple (1996) questions the authority by which the decisions concerning education and curriculum are being made. He asserts that, “proposals for “choice” are forging draconian measures on local school districts; teacher and student competencies control education; assaults on school curriculum are on-going; and the needs of business and individuals control the goals of education” (p. 98-99).

Educational Indicators within the Reform Movement

In order to understand the evolution of education reform within public schooling, literature was examined and classified into themes: *Accountability/High-stakes Testing and Authority*, *Outside Influences on Education Reform*, and *Education Reform and the Operational /Structural Organization of Schools*. Much of the literature can be easily placed in one or more themes, as issues in public school reform are not applicable to just one area of education.

Accountability/High-stakes Testing and Authority

Individual schools should have the opportunity to examine their policies and practices in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their institution. Schools in Florida, in the name of educational reform, are asked to assess student learning, record datum and input information for accountability purposes. Significant attention is being given to those students who represent the lowest achieving test takers. According to Eisner (2001), reform, as it stands today, purports a claim that there is a lag in what changes might be coming in the globalization of the world and as a result, focusing on minimum standards places the United States in jeopardy.

Cuban (2004) observes that the accountability reform movement is creating a system of education that is marred by losses within the educational institution. These losses can be classified into four areas: a) a “narrowness of the goals” of education that support test results rather than a comprehensive educational experience; b) a narrow, one dimensional definition of a good school; c) a reliance upon the theory driving test-based accountability that educational performance (as indicated by test scores) can be improved but the schools, teachers, and students do not have the desire or will to improve; d) test-

based accountability ignores other valid assessment devices that provide useful data and information for the schools, teachers, parents, and public (p. 30-31).

As the nation's public schools are being called upon to address more definitive measures of performance through high-stakes examinations, the definition of educational success is undergoing a direct change. Kornhaber and Orfield (2001), speak directly to some of the assumptions by law-makers regarding the purported positive impact high-stakes tests should have on the overall public school institution, and as a result, the nation. The authors' analysis of the platform of high-stakes proponents is that testing will, "enhance economic productivity, motivate students, and improve teaching and learning" (pp. 5-12). Additionally noted is that the theory regarding testing and motivation negates the sociological and psychological responses of students to success. With regards to improving teaching and learning, the authors remark that conceptual learning may be undermined rather than developed as there continues to be a narrowing of focus of instruction, study, and learning directly related to test preparation rather than life long skills for continual learning. Prior indicators of school success were often calculated by examining high school graduation rates and retention rates of students who repeat grades. These numbers are now being affected as negative consequences in the arena of educational reform.

The current wave of reform and its ensuing fallout does not allow for the educational growth of lower-achieving groups of students who are not passing onto the next grade level. It requires and forces them into a box of lower standards in which they will never find a way out. Schools and teachers have created a system of education in which "textbooks [and instruction] are homogenized with a resulting homogeneous

educational system that does not take into account the contextual relations of society” (Carlson & Apple, 1998, p. 21).

Minimum competence and remediation forces others out of the mainstream (Brooks, 1991). As students pass through the system of education, they begin to fall into a trap of low-expectations as a result of their low-performance on high-stakes examinations. Teachers and students alike treat low-tracked students as inferior in ability and their status within the school is maintained as a microcosm of the society at large. A child’s environment has a profound effect upon his or her development. The child’s background sets up expectations for their behavior and also influences how others will react to them (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). “...In order to penetrate the swirl of acrimonious debate about tracking, it is necessary to understand that tracking practices reflect fundamental tensions and polarities within the American culture” (Page, 1996, p. 21).

Research is beginning to show that the overall effect of high-stakes testing is not closing the achievement gap, but rather reclassifying it in order to maintain discrepancies between those students that have been deemed intellectually able, and those who are not (Oakes, 2000; van Geel, 1976). The shift toward common rigorous standards that are occurring alongside segregated and uncoordinated programs is a recipe for increased failure of students of ethnic-cultural and economic diversity (Weinstein, 1996). In an interview with *The Miami Herald* (Nazareno, 2000), Samuel Yarger, Dean of the University Miami School of Education said, “While the test [FCAT] is an improvement on traditional multiple-choice tests, it isn't good enough to use as the sole basis for so many decisions” (p. 2B).

Assuring that every student is ready for further schooling or training is crucial for all students and especially so for those at risk of dropping out of the system altogether. These tasks are what the schools are most likely to be able to do, what can be most clearly observed and measured, and what is widely agreed they ought to do better (Paris, 1994, p.13).

Part of the problem of past educational reform has been that school districts, especially large urban districts, have pursued new solutions to problems in a start and stop fashion. There has been a historical lack of commitment to a multi-faceted, integrated approach to reform. The stakeholders within educational systems—students, parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials, and community members—have individual incentives in protecting their own interests. Difficulties arise when there is inability to derive consensus regarding policies that will require change in the status quo (Marschall & Shah, 2005). Setting clear policy agendas so that there is an avoidance of distracters in urban schools requires that school districts use their civic capacity to connect problems and solutions regarding educational reform.

Part of the platform of the educational reform movement is the issue of choice for parents in choosing the schools for their children. This idea of choice is one that is fueled by the desirability to create a market-based educational system. There are three empirical questions that arise from the concept market-based education: a) whether parents respond to school quality as opposed to outside issues (race, religion), b) whether markets will ignite widespread school improvement, and c) whether there will be an out performance by charter and private schools over traditional schools. Market theory in the policy community suggests that poor school performance prompts families to exit public school systems in favor of private schools (Englund, 1997; Hess & Leal, 2001). Competition for students is based on a perceived sensitivity to quality (or educational performance) and

service, by the consumer (parents and students). Research in this area is beginning to suggest that school choice options for private schooling is more closely related to religious and race factors than to public school performance (Englund, 1997; Hess & Leal, 2001; Whitty, 1998).

Regarding the issue of authority and educational regulation, Sunderman and Kim (2005) examined the expansion of federal power by focusing on the federal-state relationship during the first year of implementation of *NCLB*. The intent of the authors was to examine the role of federalism in educational reform. Comparing *NCLB* to the changes from the 1994 *Improve America Schools Act (IASA)*, it was noted that *NCLB* affects the politics of education and raises fundamental issues about who controls education. *NCLB*'s market principle of education lends itself to the argument that competition will create incentives for under-performing schools to improve. Factors affecting successful education reform, as instituted by the top-down approach of the federal government, include lack of coordination and cooperation across the levels of government and a limited effort by the federal administration to obtain the cooperation of the professional who must implement the law. According to the authors, "reliance on regulations and aggressive enforcement of the law are often ineffective and sometimes counterproductive in working towards the goals of *NCLB*" (p. 15).

Outside Influences on Education Reform

When analyzing the relationship of the argument for educational reform to improving the economy of the United States, Paris (1994) noted that much of the "rhetoric concerning the problems of public education has focused on the role of education in enhancing economic competitiveness" (p.10). However, it may seem to be a

contradiction as to the purpose of schooling and is unclear whether or how schools can or should have an important role in improving the economy (Apple, 1996; Englund, 1997).

More common and more prospective argument suggests a growing gap between the skills demanded by the American economy and the “supply” of skills students have as they emerge from the schools. According to Paris (1994) a current or future gap in skills is likely more a function of changes in demands of the changing nature of work rather than a change in the skills students gain while in school.

“Existing evidence on the demands of work is not adequate for formulating policies on education and training” (Paris, 1994, p. 22), because training for the workplace is not generic, rather it is context-driven. To illustrate his point, the author points to the SCANS report from the Department of Labor (DOL) written in 1991. The report made recommendations for skills that need to be included in education in order for graduating high school students to be prepared to work. There is an assumption that school work and job tasks call upon the same set of generic “critical thinking” skills. Schools do not impart specific skills that make individuals more productive in the workplace. Rather individuals should develop generic abilities from their educational experience to acquire skills on the job that will in turn enhance productivity. Problem-solvers and people who have learned how to learn can deal with the shifting workplace and be a continually productive worker.

Paris goes on to point out that, on-the-job training is likely to produce twice as much productivity as those gains attributable to formal education. Businesses provide training for only a third of the workplace and the vast majority of that training is concentrated in the professional and managerial ranks. Regarding the use of critical

thinking skills, he further notes that businesses are not designed or organized to give their employees an opportunity to adjust to changes on the job by making decisions and solving problems independently. They are required to do so within ranks and with others. The structure of business decision-making does not allow employees the opportunity to use their critical thinking skills. Changes in management of and training in businesses must accompany school reform if schools are expected to prepare learners for the work force (Paris, 1994).

Within industry, business, government, or education, the evaluative method takes back seat to the outcomes of the policy analyst's idea of effectiveness. In the case of educational reform, governing bodies are implementing reforms and holding schools accountable. In this vein, it is difficult to ascertain who the responsible party is for the actions of students. Does the governing body get held accountable for the initiation of the process or the schools and teachers for the implementation of decisions outside their immediate realm of control? Ultimately, the schools, with all of their devices to educate children, are being held accountable to standards through a narrowly defined evaluation of a test that is set to measure the standardization of education.

Assessing how the current federal educational policy affects America's schools is a daunting task. Individual states have each been charged with the responsibility of creating a set of standards that students must meet (*ESEA*, 2001). Issues in the evaluation of reform are vast, and include, but are not limited to, an examination in areas such as student-performance on high stakes tests, success of minority groups of students in school, and perceptions of individuals at all levels of the policy implementation. A narrowness of scope is required of researchers in order to examine education policy

issues. The purpose of this section is to review literature on policy, in order to gain perspectives on how policy is shaping the face of schooling.

The current system of education breeds successful test takers, hence, a “pro-test” system (Kornhaber & Orfield, 2001). For almost two decades, all the national leaders of both parties have embraced the theory that our schools have deteriorated and that they can be saved by high-stakes tests. The fact that major politicians have been in agreement about a theory for so long surely means they think that it has electoral advantages. However, that does not mean that the theory holds true.

In an essay regarding educational reform in England, Whitty (1997) comments on the issue of creating a market-education system. A market- education system is one that is driven by competition between schools for students. Parental choice has become an operative of this system and allows for more control over educational decisions to rest with the parents of students in publicly funded schools. This system is the direct result of England’s policy directives that pushed for national standards and assessments. Since England has previously undergone this transformation to national educational standards prior to the United States’ move to do the same, the insight he provides into the potential side effects is particularly useful. The issue of parental voice and schools choice, as a result of increasing competition in education, has resulted in negative effects within the structure of society. As a result, Whitty (1997) observed that rather than creating an overall improved educational system, the decisions involving school choice have resulted in different types of schools that, “...may have responded to the complex patterns of political, economic, and cultural differentiation in contemporary [English] society” (p. 201). This differentiation in types of schools has just replaced the traditional class

divisions that existed prior to the enactment of the national policy. It is important to note that current educational policy in England is looking to undo the disparities in class structure by school that are a direct result of the national standards movement.

Education Reform and the Operational /Structural Organization of Schools

One of the pressures schools face today in the issue of policy and education accountability is that student performance on state exams is beginning to affect the retention rates of teachers in schools that are labeled low performing. Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Diaz (2004) examined the difficulties that schools faced in retaining teachers as a result of consistently being labeled low-performing as dictated by state mandated tests. The authors worked under the assumption that inconsistency in teacher retention affects a school's ability to implement reform efforts aimed at increasing student performance.

The authors employed a labor-market approach to examine the issue of teacher retention and school performance. The labor market model is used by economists to evaluate how worker's choice of workplace is influenced by monetary compensation and workplace amenities. In relationship to teaching, use of this model implies that teachers decide where to teach and whether to teach at a particular location based upon expected earnings and working conditions at a school versus the same factors at another site. The authors considered the fact that transfer of teachers among schools is a factor in the labor market model. The researchers sought to examine how a school based accountability system is likely to affect the desirability of one type of school relative to another. Economically speaking, the authors examined the supply responses of teachers and the demand responses of school administrators.

Clotfelter et al. (2004) examined two cohorts of teachers in low performing elementary schools in North Carolina. They collected data on teachers who were working in a) low performing schools two years prior to the implementation of the standards and b) labeled low performing schools as a result of the implementation of the standards.

Working on the hypothesis that the percentage of teachers remaining in low-performing schools decreases over time, the authors found that once the state policy of labeling a school was enacted, the percentages of teachers remaining in their schools fell faster for the group of teachers who were working in labeled low-performing schools. Clotfelter et al. (2004) found that publicly labeled schools had a higher attrition rate than those schools that would have been considered low-performing on performance standards, but had met their growth standard.

Of greatest interest was that males had a higher departure probability than females and that teachers in schools with higher proportions of non-white students had a higher probability of departure than teachers in schools with a lower proportion of non-white students. The researchers also compared departure rates of teachers with 10 years experience versus teachers with one year experience and found that the probability of departure from a publicly labeled school for 10 year experienced teachers was 20%, while for a new teacher it was 40%. The researchers concluded that North Carolina's accountability system increased the problems that low-performing schools faced in retention of teachers, imposing costs on those schools that affected students, parents, and community members and could not be measured in monetary losses.

DeBard and Kubow (2002) discussed in their research the human elements associated with a state testing policy, based on the premise that educational policy intended to result in educational reform must "...nurture commitment rather than simply gain compliance from the constituencies affected by it" (p. 388). A survey was given to 203 teachers, 33 support and administrative staff, 1,167 secondary school students, and 884 elementary school students in an upper-middle-class district in Ohio, chosen because it had been among the highest achieving on proficiency tests in the state. The research was constructed in response to legislative policy that mandates proficiency testing in order to explore whether, "...external pressure and comparative demonstration results [of test scores for schools] results in modified behavior on the part of teachers and learners that leads to better learning outcomes" (p. 394).

Surveying teachers and administrators, DeBard and Kubow (2002) found that with regard to the issue of mandated proficiency testing policy, the researchers found the following: 96.2% of teachers and 93.8% of staff agreed that the proficiency testing policy impacted the professional job environment because it was imposed upon the district. Ninety-two point nine percent of teachers and 93.9% of staff agreed that the policy impacted community relations because it increased competition among schools. The authors noted extensively throughout the article that publishing test results to motivate schools to improve was ineffectual as a practice –as noted by psychological data and business data. Ninety-four per cent of teachers and 96.9% of staff agreed that the policy impacted positively the alignment of curriculum with proficiencies, but this also meant teaching to the test as indicated by an 89.9% agreement of teachers and a 78.8% agreement of staff.

According to the researchers, student impression of mandatory testing is most important in order to “foster commitment toward proficiency testing” (p. 397). Overall, younger students had more positive perceptions toward testing than older students. Only 45.2 % of secondary school students agreed that the test motivates them to study and 56.3% agreed that the test allowed them to know how much they were learning. The students maintained that there was too much emphasis on a single test, it created too much stress, and disagreed that proficiency testing gets their teachers to teach better. All the stakeholders need to be brought into the dialogue surrounding policy decisions. The authors offered that the dialogue could improve by, “...encouraging each district to conduct its own reassessment of the intentions of assessment” (p. 399).

The purpose of qualitative research conducted by Kauffman, Johnson, Dardos, Lui, and Peske (2002) was to understand how new teachers experienced the curriculum and assessments they encountered. The researchers conducted 50 interviews with 1st and 2nd year teachers in Massachusetts during the 1999-2000 school year, and centered on three questions: a) “What curricular expectations and materials do they find in their schools?” b) “What ways do they feel supported by the curriculum and materials they encounter and in what way do they feel constrained?” and c) “How do state-mandated assessments affect their experiences?” (p. 1). It is important to note here that the authors defined the term curriculum as, “.... [a document] that specifies content, skills, or topics for teachers to cover; suggests a timeline; and incorporates a particular approach or offers instructional materials” (p. 2).

The authors developed three distinct themes regarding curriculum and their beginning teachers: a) curriculum void, b) impact of the state standards and

accountability movement on the new teachers' experiences with curriculum and assessment, and c) implications for retaining new teachers. Most teachers interviewed reported having difficulty in determining the curriculum to be used or were given a curriculum that included only topics and skills. There was often mis-alignment between textbook objectives, state standards and district standards, so the direction of the subject matter was very obscure. Most often the teachers found that the standards of the state required the teaching of far too much content, primarily in social studies and science at all grade levels. Twenty per cent of the teachers reported having no curriculum at all, most commonly with secondary teachers and elementary level science and social studies. While some teachers were glad for the autonomy, most found it overwhelming. Fifty percent of the teachers reported having a curriculum that specified topics or skills, but they had no material or guidance about addressing them. Often times the materials existed within the schools, but the teachers had no idea how to access them or which details to emphasize (a question of scope and sequence). A few teachers reported having scripted, highly specified materials that left no decision making up to the individual.

Smith and Larimer (2004) investigated the relationship between school performance, as indicated by state testing data, and bureaucratic levels of education. Working with conflicting theories on this relationship: a) school bureaucracies have increased because of poor performance and b) increasing school bureaucracies caused poor performance; the authors hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between these two indicators.

The authors noted that much of the empirical research examined showed school performance as a one-dimensional indicator of success. As a result, they examined the

issue of school performance as multidimensional and used an economies of scope perspective. Economies of scope refers to the fact that if an organization wants to produce more than one output, it has to accept producing less of another, no matter the parameters of acceptable performance. In relationship to schools, this means, for example, that if a goal of the public school system is to retain more students, then programs to keep certain groups of students in school may result in more levels of bureaucracies, a better attendance rate, but a lower overall performance on state-wide assessments. Specifically, the authors examined the hypothesis that if schools experienced economies of scope, then different levels of bureaucratic roles in addressing student-based impediments (higher attendance and lower drop-out rates), would relate negatively to test scores. The data from the findings indicated that while the amount and level of bureaucracy was negatively associated with school performance, it ultimately had a positive statistical relationship with those outputs that were intended to improve overall school performance.

In an examination of state and local policy making, Spillane (1999) researched how standards-based reform in Michigan affected nine school districts with regard to math and science instructional reform following the Michigan Department of Education's implementation of educational standards. The author sought to find a relationship between the implementation of standards and local instructional policy making decisions with regard to these standards.

In an effort to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of policy, Spillane interviewed 165 state and local policy makers, as well as math and science specialists. These districts additionally contained a Local Educational Agency

(LEA) representative who was known for instructional innovation reform. State documents relating to standards implementation and district documents pertaining to curriculum and instruction as well as professional development workshop listings were reviewed and analyzed.

Spillane found that the state standards “jump started the local will to make policy or revise existing policies about instruction” (p. 568) in math and science. Alignment of standards and policies in the LEA was not as successful. The author noted three factors that limited the local policy makers’ “attention to the more substantive content and pedagogical changes” (p.569): a) state standards documents were not effective in helping local policy makers develop understandings of the reform ideas, b) richer representations of reform ideas in policy involves more than providing thicker descriptions of the ideas, and c) tension between state policy instruments undermined the “efficacy of state standards on the LEA policy making” (p. 569).

Summary

Examining issues directly related to education reform, or a result of education reform provided insight into how the intended and unintended consequences of education policy are shaping our nation’s schools. There is ample evidence at the national, state and local levels that suggested that school reform results cannot be analyzed in one overall general statement as being positive or negative. Many aspects of school reform in the present state of accountability have effects that reach beyond the stated intent of the policy. After reviewing the literature on education reform, it was noted that there was an absence of literature at the secondary level in regards to language arts curriculum and the changing nature of the dialogue regarding how the policy of assessing reading is affecting

the structure of secondary language arts. In the following chapter, the nature of the policy analysis and analysis of curriculum decision-making is discussed in regards to federal, state, and local policy initiatives.

CHAPTER III

STAGES OF POLICY FORMATION

This study of policy formation employed a methodological approach to analyzing how implementation of certain structures, laws, or policies has been enacted. Approaches to policy study are grounded in evaluation of programs and effectiveness, creating a quagmire of paper trails that eventually lead to decisions regarding continuance, maintenance, change, or termination. The parameters of this study were rooted in policy process analysis and curriculum-decision making. Grounding the document analysis on the Functional Process Theory of policy analysis (Anderson, 1979; Dye, 1975; Jones, 1970), and Klein's (1991) curriculum framework for decision-making, this research examined relevant literature and policy records at the national, state, and local school district levels. The analysis sought to understand how federal and state legislation is interpreted and implemented at the district level.

Theoretical Framework

Examining documents and policy for the operational intent and impact led the researcher to employ a Functional Process Theory Approach. Using the guiding work of Lasswell and Jones to examine the stages of policy formation provided one of the two lenses for identifying the dialogue that influences education reform. The other lens employed was Klein's curriculum framework for decision-making. An explanation of the stages of policy development and the levels of decision-making follow.

Lasswell's Functional Process Theory

In an attempt to understand the "how" of policy formation, in 1951, Lasswell (Anderson, 1979) created a series of categories aligned with questions as to what goes

into the formation of policies. His Functional Process Theory examined the who, what, where, when and why of policy formation and his categories were the result of the dialogue that questions policy. The theory consists of seven categories in which questions regarding policy are answered:

1. *Intelligence*. How is the information on the policy matters that comes to the attention of policy-makers gathered and processed?
2. *Recommendation*. How are the recommendations (or alternatives) for dealing with a given issue made and promoted?
3. *Prescription*. How are the general rules adopted or enacted, and by whom?
4. *Invocation*. Who determines whether given behavior contravenes rules or laws and demands application of rules or laws thereto?
5. *Application*. How are laws or rules actually applied or enforced?
6. *Appraisal*. How is the operation of policies, their success or failure, appraised?
7. *Termination*. How are the original rules or laws terminated or continued in modified or changed from? (Anderson, 1979; deLeon, 1999; Wolman, 1995).

Jones' Application of Lasswell

Jones (1979) took the categories created by Lasswell and created more specific classifications that, "...identify the principal activities in the overall policy process" (Jones, 1979, p. 11). The categories of the policy process as they relate to functional activities include: a) *Problem Identification* b) *Formulation* c) *Legitimation* d) *Application* e) *Evaluation*. Jones' (1979) definition of the system and the output (response by policy makers) are as follows:

1. *Problem Identification*. A demand for action to resolve a problem.

2. *Formulation.* A course of action to resolve a problem.
3. *Legitimation.* The creation of policy and consensus building that the problem can be solved by the creation of the policy.
4. *Application.* Application of the policy.
5. *Evaluation.* Recommendation to adjust (p. 12).

Lasswell	Jones	Policy Analysis Matrix
Intelligence	Problem Identification	Problem Identification
Recommendation		Alternative Identification
Prescription	Formulation	Political Action
Invocation	Legitimation	Policy Invocation

Figure 1. Policy formulation categories

Jones (1979) provides a more readable explanation of the formulation categories and his categories are used in conjunction with Lasswell's in the Policy Analysis Matrix. These categories allow the researcher to examine the forces involved in the policy process. A comparison table of the categories is provided in Figure 1.

Curriculum Decision-Making

Curriculum development requires an acknowledgement of the various stakeholders within the realm of public schooling. There are significant contributors to the field of curriculum development who created models for the curriculum writer to use when creating curriculum documents. Central to the models is the understanding that the stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, administrators, community leaders) involved in

public education are to be included in the conversations regarding curriculum decisions. Dialogue must occur between all parties in order to try to ensure the viability of the curriculum. Regarding the involvement of persons in the curriculum planning Frymier and Hawn (1970) state,

People who are affected must be involved. Involvement is a principle fundamental to democracy and to learning theory. Devising ways of involving people in decision making is a difficult and time-consuming chore, but unless decisions are made democratically they will be less than the best....Significant and lasting change can only come about by such involvement. All who are affected by curriculum development and change must have a genuine opportunity to participate in the process.(p. 28-29)

It is from this issue of involvement that the second part of the theoretical framework for analysis completed the lens for analysis.

Klein's Levels of Curriculum Decision-Making

Klein (1991) discussed the centralization versus the decentralization of curriculum decision-making. An effort was made to develop a conceptual framework that encompasses the domains where curriculum decisions are made. "Persons and groups outside the family and beyond schools believe it their responsibility necessary to this institution [education]" (Goodlad, 1991, p. 14). The conceptual framework included seven levels and is ordered by "the degree of remoteness or closeness to the student" (Klein, 1991, p.25). The levels in Klein's framework and their definitions are as follows:

1. *Academic level.* The most remote level of decision-making, it is characterized by those scholars at colleges and universities in the disciplines that make recommendations about pedagogical approaches, content, subjects and structure of the curriculum

2. *Societal level.* This level includes “lay communities and organized groups” (p. 27) that are not directly involved in the day to day education of the students. Examples of communities and organized groups include parent groups, government agencies, businesses, industry, and political and civic groups.
3. *Formal level.* This level of decision-making is still beyond the school level. It is composed of individuals and groups who have, “...direct responsibility for curriculum but are not located at specific schools” (p. 28) and include federal, state, and county LEAs (Local Education Agencies), textbook publishers, education organizations, and unions.
4. *Institutional level.* This level is located at specific school sites and includes those participants (school administrators, faculty, and staff) who have a contextual relationship with the on-going education of students.
5. *Instructional level.* This level of decision-making is composed of classroom teachers who make decisions in curriculum planning.
6. *Operational level.* This level of curriculum decision-making involves the curriculum decisions in the classroom as a “result of engagement of teacher and students with content” (p. 29).
7. *Experiential level.* This level is composed of students.

Klein suggests that the framework used to evaluate curriculum decisions is not a value free framework. Using the framework to analyze curriculum decisions assumes that “decisions regarding curriculum are made by individuals other than students and

teachers in classrooms” (p. 37). The analysis is descriptive in nature. It is an analysis of interactive elements: the “what” of curriculum (content choices) and the “how” (teaching strategies). Decisions regarding content and strategies can be made at any level of the framework. The framework allows for identification of gaps and duplications in curriculum decision-making. Using this framework as part of this analysis provided an opportunity to examine state, and district decisions regarding language arts curriculum.

Data Sources

Federal documents related to education were examined in order to analyze their impact on state education policy. These documents include: *America 2000: An education strategy*, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (2001), *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, and *What work requires of schools: A SCANS Report*. State and district policy documents including: Florida State educational Statutes (2002, 2004, 2005), also referred to as *Florida’ A+ Plan for Education*, Goal 3 Standards, Florida Department of Education Administrative Rules, Miami-Dade County Public School Board Rules, and Division of Language Arts curriculum documents were examined. The formation of Florida educational state policy in relation to accountability of public school performance was analyzed in order to establish a framework for district decisions. Miami-Dade County Public School’s (M-DCPS) response to the Florida education accountability policy required examining district language arts curriculum documents and frameworks and examining individual high school language arts curriculum frameworks. This analysis represents an effort to ensure that the focus of this study, policy decisions and implementation, is examined, as opposed to a reflex response to a mandated change.

In order to understand the importance of legislative policy as it relates to curriculum decision-making, it was necessary to trace some of the history of educational policy at the federal level. Federal education policy has become a guiding influence in state and district policy since the re-authorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* by Congress in 2001. This legislation is more commonly referred to as the *No Child Left Behind Act* or *NCLB*. Prior to that particular legislation, there are other guiding documents that have been distributed on a national level as sources of educational useful suggestions aligned to national policy. The issue of accountability of public schools at a federal level has its impetus in the call for national educational standards. Hence, it was necessary to examine some of the documents that were the forerunners of the *NCLB* policy.

The state of Florida and M-DCPS created policy and curriculum guidelines prior to the issue of national education policy. However, since its creation, the state of Florida and M-DCPS have responded by implementing individual policies relating to the specific area of accountability and public school performance. Curriculum decisions in language arts regarding adherence to these policies has resulted in conflicting implementation guidelines surrounding *Florida's A+ Plan for Education* and the *NCLB* policy. The following section describes the policies that were examined with their stated intent in order to provide a framework for discussion in Chapter Four.

Awareness and Federal Education Policy

In 1991, George H. W. Bush wanted to implement six national education goals. His proposal, known as *America 2000: An education strategy*, set into motion the movement of national education standards as they relate to state alignment with national

education goals. Part B, Section 211 (2) and (5)(A)(B) of the act states that the purpose of the act is to, “certify state content standards and state student performance standards...[as well as to] certify state assessments if the assessments were aligned with and support state content standards and were valid, reliable and consistent with relevant, nationally recognized, professional and technical standards for assessment when used for their intended purpose.”

In response to *America 2000*, the U.S. Department of Labor reported in 1991, “What Work Requires of Schools,” A SCANS Report for America 2000. The report states that the part of education it is concerned with is that which, “...involves how schools prepare young people for work” (p. i). In an open letter to parents, employers, and educators, William Brock, the co-chairman of the commission, discusses how the demands of the workplace and the capability of young people to meet the demands related to employment are not in sync. Schools, according to the report, need to become places where work-related skills can be identified, learned, and measured in order to meet the changing needs of places of employment.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton continued with the establishment of national educational goals when he signed the *Goals 2000 Educate America Act*. Building upon the standards for education that were established with *America 2000*, two additional goals were added calling for the staff development of teachers and increasing parental involvement in the education process. The intent of the legislation was to provide federal support to states as they developed state standards to improve local education.

Finally, the researcher examined the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001 which reauthorized the components of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*

(*ESEA*). The original authorization of the *ESEA* occurred in 1965. President Johnson signed the original act as part of a greater war on poverty. The act was the first federal legislation that provided funding support to K-12 public schooling in America. The reauthorization of the act states as its title, “an act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (*ESEA*, Section 1, Short Title). According to *Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged*, the purpose of this section of the act is to, “ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state accountability achievement standards and state accountability assessments” (*ESEA*, Section 1001, Statement of Purpose). Subsection (8) of Title I addresses the provision of enriched and accelerated learning programs in public schools. This act and the legislation of Florida that is aligned to it, is at the core of this research.

State Policy Determination

A majority of the state documents that were examined relate directly to the *NCLB* legislation. They are the guiding policies within the issue of the public education accountability movement. In the state of Florida, the following legislative and Department of Education (FLDOE) documents were examined: Sunshine State Standards; Florida’s Applied Technology Goal 3 Standards; Florida State Statute 1008 (2002, 2004, 2005); Florida State Board of Education Administrative and Board Rules; and the Florida *NCLB* Accountability Workbook. These documents provide insight into the expectations the state has of the district and the federal Department of Education has of the State. It was necessary to examine documents regarding various aspects of

accountability to determine overlaps and gaps regarding policy directives and curriculum decisions.

The main guiding document of the Florida legislation regarding education is Florida State Statute (F.S.), Title XLVIII, Chapter 1008. This document can be referred to as the K-20 Education Code as well as *Florida's A+ Plan for Education*. The *A+ Plan* is a direct result of recommendations from the Florida Educational Reform and Accountability Commission's reports in 1995 and 1996. In this policy document, the general principles of education accountability in Florida are designated as state statutes. The policy has established guidelines for shaping district policy for public school accountability. F.S. (2005) Chapter 1008, Assessment and Accountability, section 22(1) states its purposes as, "...providing information needed to improve the public schools by enhancing the learning gains of all students and to inform parents of the educational progress of their public school children" (p. 1). The framework for accountability includes student progression, and standards for evaluation of student academic performance. The statute has undergone annual revisions since its original issuance and includes references to national accountability policy as legislated by the *NCLB* Act of 2001. It was the enactment of this legislation that requires students in grades three through 10 to take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) annually. The Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook was written and approved in 2003 and has since undergone two revisions. It addressed the required elements for state accountability systems in order to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals. Within this document are the guidelines and policies established that are the, "...critical elements required for approval of their state accountability systems" (p. 1).

Florida State Statute Chapter 1008 section 25(4) (2004, 2005) of the K-20 Education Code is titled, Assessment and Remediation. This section of the state education policy is intended to address those students who may need additional instruction in areas in which they have been designated to be deficient. In the 2003 policy, the guidelines for remediation and promotion were ambiguous in the nature of requirements and were designated to school districts, “Specific levels of performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, including the levels of performance on statewide assessments below which a student must receive remediation, or be retained within an intensive program that is different from the previous year's program and that takes into account the student's learning style” (F.S. 1008.25 (2)(b), 2003). In the subsequent two years the statute became more specific in nature as to what remediation would be required and what devices should be used. The 2004 statute states specifically, “the school in which the student is enrolled must develop, in consultation with the student’s parent, and must implement an academic improvement plan (AIP) designed to assist the student in meeting state and district expectations for proficiency” (F.S. 1008.25(4)(b), 2004). The statute further defines how, “remedial instruction provided during high school may not be in lieu of English and mathematics credits required for graduation” (F.S. 1008.25(4)(b), 2004). Any student, then, that is below the Proficient Level, Level 3, must have an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) that must address their performance deficiencies and must receive some remediation in reading.

Florida’s Department of Education established the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) for grades pre-K-12 in the following subject areas: Language Arts; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; Foreign Languages; The Arts; and Health Education and

Physical Education. The standards are grouped by grade levels as follows: pre-K-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12. Within the subject area of Language Arts, the standards are written to apply to all grade levels within a particular grouping. The standards for grades 9-12 are not broken down into individual grade levels. The subject area of Language Arts is broken down into five strands: a) Reading; b) Writing; c) Listening, Viewing, and Speaking; d) Language; and e) Literature. Each strand contains a standards statement and benchmarks that educators can use to develop curriculum, unit plans and lesson plans. Each reading standard is a general statement of expected student achievement within a strand. The standards are the same for all grade levels. Benchmarks are specific statements of expected student achievement under each standard. Test items for the FCAT exam are written to assess the benchmarks. In some cases, two or more related benchmarks are grouped together because the assessment of one benchmark necessarily addresses another benchmark.

In addition to the Sunshine State Standards, this research included the Goal 3 Standards of Florida's Applied Technology-Preparing all Learners for Tomorrow's Work Force. This is one of the guiding documents written so that educators may use it for integrating work-related skills into classroom practices. It has been incorporated into curriculum documents and guidelines within M-DCPS.

Florida's Department of Education (FLDOE) Administrative Rule 6A-1.09422, outlines the administration of the FCAT exam, describes who shall be tested, and designates the achievement levels regarding test scores in Reading and Mathematics. In addition to this particular Administrative Rule, other rules were examined for their relationship to the implementation of the accountability policy initiated by the state

legislature. These rules included Chapter 6A-1.0998 and 6A-1.09981. Both of these administrative rules specifically outline the expectations the FLDOE has in regards to how the implementation of the assessment system is to be undertaken, as a direct result of legislative mandates. Throughout the document, the Specific Authority cited following each rule is a Florida Statute, its implementation date, its authorization date and a revision date where applicable.

Local Implementation

Documents available from M-DCPS School Board were examined for their guidelines in implementing state legislation regarding assessment and accountability as well as for their insight into curriculum decision-making directives or suggestions. The documents and policies cover a spectrum of issues related to the education of public school students in Miami-Dade County and are not all directly related to the subject area of Language Arts or high school students in particular. The documents or policies examined were: Strategies and Expected Outcomes by Department/Functions: Curriculum, Instruction, and School Improvement; Competency Based Curriculum Frameworks (CBC); and the Student Progression Requirements and Procedures for K-12 and Adult Education Students, Appendix A: Promotion, Placement, and Graduation—Grades K-12 and Adult. Each of these documents or policies provided an opportunity to examine decisions that are legislated versus decisions that are made at the district level regarding curriculum.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Language Arts created the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) for all grades and courses available at individual schools. This has been used in schools as the guiding curriculum document for language

arts as well as other subject areas. The CBC consists of individual components, objectives for each component, and competencies related to each objective for each subject area. The CBC for secondary English courses now includes an addition of the SSS benchmarks, denoted by letters and numbers, which are aligned to the objectives and competencies of the individual components.

As a result of the state legislation regarding assessment and remediation, M-DCPS has implemented reading courses in secondary schools to address the issue of low-performing students. The decisions as to the students placed within these courses are defined by FCAT test scores. Any student who scores at a Level 1 or Level 2 on the reading portion of the FCAT exam is placed into reading courses to address the deficiencies they demonstrated on the exam. Each of these students must also have an AIP that addresses the specific instructional areas that are to be remediated for improvement of student performance.

Data Analysis

Documents were reviewed for their legislative intent in improving public schooling by examining the language used in the policy. The language used in the policies identifies the intent or purpose of the legislation. Two examples of legislative language and intent are: a) “providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program” (*ESEA*, 2001, p.1), that indicates that all children should have access to advanced academic experiences; and b) “Student performance data shall be used in developing objectives of the school improvement plan” (F.S. 1008.25, 2004, p.4), that addresses the importance of individual school decision-making in addressing the needs of their students. Following the identification of the intent, an examination of running

records and episodic records for both the state and district education policies was conducted in order to classify the data in terms of the following areas: a) accountability/high-stakes testing, b) authority, c) outside influences, and d) operational/structural organization. This was done in order to properly place the policies in the appropriate cell of a matrix designed to reflect the relationship of Klein's levels of curriculum decision-making and the Functional Policy Theory categories of policy formation.

Policy Analysis Matrix

For the purpose of this research, four hierarchical categories that combined Lasswell's and Jones' categories from Functional Process Theory regarding policy were examined. The four categories used were: *Problem Identification*, *Alternative Identification*, *Political Action*, and *Policy Invocation* (See Figure 1). The four categories provided an opportunity to examine the policy at both the state and district levels. Neither Lasswell's nor Jones' last three categories of the theory were used because the policy is currently still in effect and these categories would be used to examine a policy from its inception to its demise. The evolution of Florida's education accountability policy was examined and coded as to Lasswell's/Jones' Functional Process Theory using the following categories: a) *Problem Identification* (e.g. poor student performance), b) *Alternative Identification* (e.g. educational, legislative, community issue?), c) *Political Action* (e.g. creation of education accountability policy), and d) *Policy Invocation* (e.g. implementation of education accountability policy).

Because the school board of Miami-Dade County Public Schools is obligated to comply with the education legislation and directives of the Florida Department of

Education (FLDOE), the *Problem Identification* stage of policy formation is not considered because of the structural limitations preventing local *Problem Identification*. As a result, the *Problem Identification* category as it relates to M-DCPS policy is a direct result of the *Policy Invocation* category of the state policy. The evolution of policy making at the state level was categorized on the Policy Analysis Matrix by examining relative documents and identifying publics involved in the process. Next, the evolution and implementation of policy at the district level for Miami-Dade County Public Schools using the Functional Process Theory categories was examined. The state of Florida legislative *Policy Invocation* category led to a policy point for the district school board to make decisions regarding schools and curriculum. From that point the categories of *Problem Identification*, *Alternative Identification*, *Political Action*, and *Policy Invocation* were then revisited for M-DCPS policy directives and decisions. The conceptualization of the policy analysis matrix is presented at the end of this chapter.

The policy and curricular responses of the state of Florida and M-DCPS were further examined through analysis using Klein's (1991) levels of curriculum decision-making. Only the first three levels of Klein's levels were used: a) *Academic*, b) *Societal*, and c) *Formal*, as this research did not examine individual school's or classroom teacher's participation in making curriculum decisions. The three levels used for examination of the decision-making process were: The descriptive origins that were used upon examination of the policies and curriculum decisions were: accountability/high-stakes testing (Achs); authority (Au); outside influences (Oi); and operational/structural organization (Os). These origins relate to concepts that are directly related to the subject of education reform, as indicated by the review of literature. The cells of the matrix were

completed by asking who and what has influenced the educational policies in Florida and Miami-Dade County, and asking at what level of the decision-making process are publics involved in determining both curricular and policy outcomes? A more detailed explanation follows in Chapter Three (Figure 3).

Functional Process Theory Categories		Klein's Levels	Academic	Societal	Formal
STATE		Problem Identification	*		
		Alternative Identification			
		Political Action			
		Policy Invocation			
M-DCPS		Problem Identification			
		Alternative Identification			
		Political Action			
		Policy Invocation			

Figure 2. Policy analysis matrix

*Descriptive origins: (Abbreviations below placed in cells as appropriate)

Achs = accountability/high-stakes testing

Oi = outside influences

Au = authority

Os = operational/structural organization

Summary

By examining federal, state, and district educational policies, the research sought to explain how the evolution of policy formation and curricular decisions takes place. A matrix was created and completed after examining the documents relative to this research. The documents were examined for their legislative intent and curricular guidance in Florida and M-DCPS.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY ANALYSIS MATRIX

As indicated in Chapter Three, the method for examining the evolution of policy at the state and local levels was theoretically framed by using the Functional Process Theory and Klein's levels of curriculum decision-making. The categories used when examining policy decisions were: a) *Problem Identification*, b) *Alternative Identification*, c) *Political Action*, and d) *Policy Invocation*. Klein's levels of curriculum decision-making used in the analysis were: a) *Academic*, b) *Societal*, and c) *Formal*. After examining the state and district education policies and district curriculum documents, the matrix was completed with the content analysis of descriptive origins.

Using the intent of the legislation as a framework for additional analysis allowed the researcher insight into how additional policies at the district level might be affected. Since state legislation is being driven by federal education policy, reference to requirements of federal education policy was included in both state and district policy responses. The combination of the expectations by the federal government and state government in regards to district requirements left little room for many decisions for M-DCPS regarding further policy implementation. What was important to note is how the curricular decisions regarding secondary language arts have been inhibited or enhanced by the effort of the district to comply with state and federal requirements.

Presentation of the Matrix

What follows in this chapter is a discussion of the Policy Analysis Matrix (Figure 3) with the descriptive origins placed in the appropriate cells as they are connected to policy formation and curriculum decision-making. Each category and level is discussed

as to the impact issues in education reform have had on decisions regarding language arts curriculum in Miami-Dade County.

State Policy and Curriculum Decision-Making

In answering the question of *Problem Identification* on the Policy Analysis Matrix regarding state policy formation, information regarding Florida state educational policy is attributable to the public school accountability movement, with the federal government providing an opportunity for states to gain greater authority over individual school districts. *Problem Identification* is evidenced by accountability and authority issues as they apply to curriculum decision-making at the *Academic, Societal* and *Formal* levels. There is every indication that *Florida's A+ Plan for Education* was influenced by the national standards movement begun in the 1990's. Using legislation to control public schools and create a system of accountability designed to measure student performance through a system of high-stakes standardized exams is a direct result of the state government's involvement in public school educational settings. The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has responded to state policy directives by acting as the administrative body to the legislation. The FLDOE has not provided specific curriculum guidelines for individual subject areas, but rather has produced a guiding set of standards that are expected to be met and evaluated through the state accountability exam. The guiding standards were established as a result of the federal government's push for a set of national education goals, as described in *America 2000* and *Goals 2000*. This is reflected in Figure 2 as an *Academic, Societal, and Formal* accountability directive at the state level.

As with the *Problem Identification* category of policy formation, the *Alternative Identification* category was addressed by answering questions of accountability and authority. The recommendations for the educational policy of Florida are found throughout the F.S. Chapter 1008 (2004, 2005) and within FLDOE administrative rules. There is little to no room for any other measure of school performance that has been recommended by the state. Since *NCLB*'s inception, the issue of accountability has played a greater role in mandating that state education policies are directly related to academic accountability and improvement. The *AYP* provisions of *NCLB* give additional credence to the idea that individual public schools must answer the question of student performance or risk the loss of federal funding for programs. Florida's accountability plan aligns itself with the goals of *AYP* through the issuance of school grades that are direct results of student FCAT performance.

Included in the *Alternative Identification* category of state policy formation is the issue of outside influences at the *Formal* level. Tracing the policy formation back to the federal governmental level is the issue of preparing students for the world of work. This is evidenced by the report from the U.S. Department of Labor and the references to the expectations of having students who are prepared for tomorrow's work place. Both federal education plans that were enacted prior to *NCLB* made direct references to the expectations businesses have of schools in preparing an educated workforce.

Within the area of curriculum decision-making, these indicators of accountability, authority, and outside influence are guiding principles at the *Societal* and *Formal* levels. State policy recommendations derived from federal education policy initiatives directly influence the administration of public schools by the FLDOE. The decisions regarding

implementation of the assessment system have been directly legislated by F.S. 1008 and leave little to the creation of policy by the FLDOE.

Within the Policy Analysis Matrix, the *Political Action* category and *Policy Invocation* category of policy formation are a direct result of authority of the Florida State Legislature. The Florida K-20 Education Code directs the Commissioner of the FLDOE as to expectations of assessment of student performance, pupil progression, remediation, parental notification, and district requirements for compliance. The Commissioner of Education then has produced reports and documents as to the expectations of compliance of school districts with the law and compliance with the assessment device. Thus, decisions regarding curriculum, when looking at the state level are addressed at the *Societal* and *Formal* levels. The government made the decisions regarding expectations (Societal) and there is some indication that textbook companies are responding by providing texts for subject areas that are directly aligned to FCAT measured standards (*Formal*) (M-DCPS, Division of Language Arts, Houghton-Mifflin support).

State control over individual school expectations has become more restrictive in nature as the *Florida A+ Plan for Education* has undergone revisions within the past four years. This was evidenced in section 1008.25 (4), Assessment and Remediation, as the language changed from an overall statement of improving individual student performance to include those students that are to be remediated according to their individual levels of FCAT performance. The language in the policy concerning the expectations of the schools and districts is specific as to the types of remediation to be used and how parental notifications of student deficiencies are to be undertaken. Strengthening the grip on

school expectations has relegated more control to the state in respects to school accountability. The accountability expectations, as stated in F.S. (2005) 1008.22 are to, “improve the public schools by enhancing the learning gains of all students and to inform parents of the educational progress of their public school children” (p. 1). There appears to be a direct conflict between the state policy of intent and the consequences of poor performance of students on the FCAT. If the intent is to enhance the learning gains (F.S. 1008.22, 2005) and provide enriched and accelerated educational programs (*ESEA*, 2001, Section 1001(8)), then the issue of remediation through additional reading courses is a conflict of implementation.

Regarding pupil progression, remedial instruction, and reporting requirements, F.S. (2004, 2005) 1008.25 (7)(7)(c) speaks directly to the type of curriculum that must be used when dealing with the issue of retention of students in the third grade. While this is not an issue of secondary language arts, it speaks to the narrowness of curriculum decisions that can be made at the district or individual school level. The READ (Reading Enhancement and Acceleration Development) Initiative shall, “provide a state-identified reading curriculum that has been reviewed by the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University” (p. 5). The state now has direct control over what the reading curriculum is to be implemented in elementary schools.

Missing from the policy dialogue at the state level is any indication of the *Academic Level* being consulted regarding education reform, with the exception of the state-identified reading curriculum for grade three students and the Florida Educational Reform and Accountability Commission. According to F.S. (2004, 2005) section 1008.25 (3) Statewide Assessment Program (d), the policy directs the commissioner of

education to, “conduct ongoing research to develop improved methods of assessing student performance” (p. 4). According to F.S. (2004, 2005) section 1008.385 (1)(b), Educational Planning and Information systems, “[Each district’s] major emphasis shall be upon locally determined goals and objectives, the state plan for education, and the Sunshine State Standards developed by the Department of Education and adopted by the State Board of Education” (p. 1). These sections of the policy indicated that there is an expectation that there is to be a local voice in planning curriculum and instruction for individual districts and may include such input from those individuals in the community who have a vested interest in the education of the local public school children. The analysis shows no evidence of this occurring at the state level.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Policy and Curriculum Decision-Making

Within the Policy Analysis Matrix at the District level, the *Problem Identification* category for policy decision making is a direct result of compliance with the state K-20 Education code. Decisions regarding assessment of state standards are a direct result of issues in accountability/high-stakes testing and authority of the state. There is little room for creation of policy outside the realm of the accountability policy, as districts are accountable to the state for individual student and school performance. The state assessment is given on specified days, as deemed by the FLDOE, and the district is responsible for returning all testing materials to the FLDOE for evaluation. The FLDOE then evaluates student performance (or has student performance evaluated by an outside source) and mandates that the district report the scores to the schools, students and parents. The public reporting of assessment scores is an issue that is directed by the state K-20 Education Code. F.S. (2002, 2004, 2005) section 1008.25 (8)(b), Annual Report,

states that, “each district school board must annually publish in the local newspaper, and report in writing to the State Board of Education...” all information that relates to student FCAT assessment by grade and percentage of students as it relates to state performance levels, retention, and promotion. Thus, the public notification of performance of a school, as measured by the FCAT, with its resulting school grade is a requirement of the district by the state legislation. Within the *Problem Identification* category, the intersection of the *Societal* and *Formal* levels of Klein’s curriculum decision-making framework would indicate that the state legislation and the FLDOE are ultimately in control of district decision. Once again, this important level of process is absent and nothing is reported on the matrix.

The policy formation categories of *Alternative Identification*, *Political Action* and *Policy Invocation*, the major contributing factor at the district level is an issue of compliance with state policy and FLDOE directives regarding the FCAT assessment. The issues of accountability/high-stakes testing and authority are prevalent in the policy decisions that are made at the district level in the area of secondary language arts.

Included in the policy formation and curriculum decision-making matrix is the issue of operational/structural organization as it relates to school’s implementation of state and district policies. With respect to curriculum decision-making, operational structural organization of a school would directly relate to the *Formal* level of the matrix within the *Policy Invocation* category. It is the district’s responsibility to ensure that the policies initiated to cover a broad spectrum of learners and communities and can be implemented at each individual school site. The more restrictive the policy is in expectations, the less likely the policy’s effectiveness in initiating successful reform. M-

DCPS' Comprehensive Reading Plan addresses all schools as if they were identical in structure, students, and staff.

As with state policy, the influence of the *Academic* level of curriculum decision-making is missing from district policy formation. This level seems to have been removed and replaced at the district level by the guiding decisions provided by the FLDOE.

Consultation with the local universities and experts in the field would provide essential knowledge as to what academic decisions are needed regarding the creation of curriculum that addresses the particular needs of Miami-Dade County. Having access to two large and three small universities within the county could provide an on-going conversation to formulate better decisions for individual schools. Therefore, no evidence is presented indicating that members of the academic community are a part of the conversation of district policy.

Curriculum decision-making demonstrated in the *Societal* and *Formal* levels, is aligned to the issues of accountability/high-stakes testing and authority as evidenced in the documents that were produced that are generally focused on FCAT performance measurements. Choices regarding course offerings at the secondary level are determined by student performance on the FCAT exam. Students who require an AIP, as designated by the state statute, are required at the secondary level to take be enrolled in their grade level English course in addition to an intensive reading block (or course) to improve their FCAT performance.

Changing Policies in Language Arts

Language arts curriculum is not directly evaluated on the FCAT exam. What is evaluated is a student's ability to read a passage, comprehend the reading, and answer the

questions in relationship to the passage. In the framework of *Florida's A+ Plan for Education*, it is expected that entire schools will respond to the needs of their students, as a result of their performance on the state exam. The response by the district in regards to educational performance has been a direct focus on the FCAT exam versus a focus on, "providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program" (ESEA, 2001, Section 1001 (8), p. 1). This is not reflected in the matrix even though the researcher knows this occurs because it is not part of the policy process.

At the high school level, English teachers have been given the responsibility to prepare their students for the FCAT exam. The response of M-DCPS to state legislation has been one of compliance with the laws and directives issued by the state and the FLDOE. The curriculum documents and guidelines available from M-DCPS indicated that there is a missing link between the expectations of the state regarding success on the FCAT exam and the curriculum frameworks for secondary language arts. The FLDOE has provided a document that lists the topics of questions on the reading portion of the FCAT for grades nine and 10. The list includes overarching subject areas and topics within the subject area. The topics are divided into subtopics and are further divided into specific subject matter within the subject area. The list of subject areas, the number of topics, the number of subtopics, and the number of subject matter items are as follows: Social Studies (4, 11, 55); Science (0, 22, 55); The Arts (4, 19, 19); Health/Physical Education (2, 12, 20); Foreign Language (0, 4, 11); and Literature (0, 4, 0) (Appendix A, FCAT Topics, Sunshine State Standards, Grades 9-10, p. 1-A-5-A). This list of topics is important to understand because it provided an insight into the various subject areas that

are included on the FCAT exam that are not a distinct part of the high school English curriculum. This important dimension of schooling occurs in an arena beyond policy.

Under the guidelines of *ESEA* (2001), Section 1001 (7) states that to accomplish the purpose of improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, schools will be provided with, “greater decision making and flexibility in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance” (p. 1). Using this as a guiding principle for developing curriculum documents for students allows individual schools and teachers the opportunity to create learning experiences that are unique to their given set of students. It is unclear as to whether individual schools have been given the opportunity to make decisions for their individual student body while they are busy creating learning environments that are in compliance with state and district policies. Within the framework of analysis of Klein’s levels of decision-making, this would fall into the decision-making levels of *Institutional, Instructional, Operational and Experiential* which was outside the scope of this research and therefore is not reflected in the matrix, because they directly relate to the decision-making that takes place within schools and classrooms.

Examining the performance of students on the reading portions of the FCAT provided some insight into some of the consequences of policy formation and curriculum-decision making. Looking at the percentage of students who would have or have required an academic improvement plan (AIP), as a result of compliance with F.S. (2005) 1008.25 (4), there seems to be a downward trend in percentage of students requiring an AIP (See Figure 3). This would indicate that those students in the ninth and tenth grades were gradually beginning to perform better on the FCAT. The total number

of students who would receive (or should have received) an AIP for a given academic year has grown, with the exception of the 2005 academic school year for the ninth grade. For those students who should receive an AIP in the tenth grade, based on achievement level on the Reading portion of the FCAT exam, two interesting items should be noted for Miami-Dade County, a) the number of students tested in the ninth grade does not match the number of students tested in the subsequent tenth grade year and b) the total number of students who would receive (or have received) an AIP has steadily increased (with the exception of the 2003-2004 school year), while the percentage of students on achievement levels one and two has fluctuated both upwards and downwards. If the assumption is that an AIP for reading will enhance student performance on the FCAT and raise the achievement levels of the tested students, the evidence does not seem to be available to support this assumption. The state requirement that each student at a particular grade level have an AIP within the area of reading focuses on FCAT performance versus overall academic performance within a school or school system. The important issue to understand that this is a result of social pressure, and there is no evidence that there is a bottom-up conversation between classroom teachers and policy makers. Therefore, this influence is not reported on the matrix.

Additionally, the percentage of students in grade 10 who are passing the FCAT at a Level three or higher, and as a result are eligible for a high school diploma, has seen a decline over the past five years. This would directly influence the grade that each school is assigned based on student performance, as discussed in Chapter One. Thus, the policy of including an Academic Improvement Plan in the education of students who are

underperforming on the state assessment test does not seem to have a direct positive influence on the performance of students at the secondary level in the area of reading.

Table1

Percentage of Students Scoring Achievement Level 1 and Level 2 on the FCAT Reading Portion, Grades 9 and 10

Number Tested	Year	Level		AIP Percentage*	Total*
		1	2		
Grade 9 Reading					
31334	2002	56	24	80	25067
32148	2003	55	24	79	25386
32828	2004	52	26	78	25605
30615	2005	46	26	72	22042
Grade 10 Reading					
22649	2001	46	29	75	16987
24289	2002	47	30	77	18702
25962	2003	45	30	75	19471
23664	2004	46	28	74	17511
26519	2005	50	27	77	20419

Source: Florida Department of Education, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, Dade District Report:

<http://fcats.fldoe.org>

*Columns added and calculated by researcher.

Looking at this data provides some insight into the effectiveness of AIP's in improving reading scores at the secondary level. A more intense examination of school by school learning gains would perhaps be more productive in providing feedback to the state and district policy makers.

Florida's education accountability policy is meant to be used as a guiding policy to make decisions regarding student performance as it relates to mandated assessment performance. Throughout the policy, references are made that direct the commissioner of education for the state of Florida to implement the guidelines of the statutes. The FLDOE administrative rules are designed to guide individual school districts in the implementation of the state assessment exams. The administrative rules provide no further insight into the creation of curriculum or advancement of student knowledge other than to make distinct reference to the state statutes that require the FLDOE to administer the exam. These two guiding policies support each other in their intention, direction, and administration. M-DCPS is obligated to comply with the education policies mandated by the state. M-DCPS must administer guidance with regard to curriculum and instruction for all subject areas to all schools. This is evidenced in the relationship between the state (*Societal*) and the DOE (*Formal*) on the matrix in the *Problem Identification* category.

M-DCPS Division of Language Arts has produced the *Just Read, Florida! 2005-06 K-12 Comprehensive Reading Research-Based Reading Plan (CRRBRP)*, that addresses issues surrounding a school-wide reading plan for all schools. The district plan outlines the expectations of the district personnel, principal, and reading coach at each school level. Within the area of secondary schools, the following issues have been addressed in the CRRBRP: supplemental reading programs, intervention materials, communicating assessment across grade levels, independent reading, and reading and writing across the curriculum. Within the CRRBRP, the high school reading program is outlined as follows:

High School Reading Program: Components of the Reading Instructional Block

The components of the intensive reading class are aligned to the key essentials of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These components should be completed each day and may be adjusted for time and scheduling (p. 51).

Utilizing assessment data, students will be prioritized for support through the provision of an intensive reading class. The intent of the intensive reading class is to assist the student in overcoming their deficits and close the achievement gap. The school site will monitor student progress and adjust intervention services as needed (p. 52).

Level 1 and 2 students in need of decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction=minimum of 90 minutes daily

Level 1 and 2 students in need of vocabulary and comprehension instruction=Minimum of 55 minutes daily (p. 53)

The district's plan is specific about what materials can be used within the high school intensive reading course. The state adopted textbooks are *Read XL*, and *Reading and Writing Sourcebook*, with another non-state adopted textbook allowable for supplemental instruction: *Soar to Success*. Schools must implement one of two approved computer assisted instruction: *Read 180* or *Academy of Reading* when addressing the remediation of the students. This indicates that the decision-making responsibilities are outside the arena of the classroom teachers and are prescriptive in nature as outlined by the District.

Since both of these levels are directly related to governing bodies over education, the decisions that are made regarding curriculum for secondary language arts in Miami-Dade County Public Schools are a direct result of ensuring that the district and schools are in direct compliance with the legislative mandates of F.S. 1008.25 (8) as it applies to the expectations of school districts and elementary school students. It is not clear in the

district policies or the state policies how the formations of reading courses are required by law. In the *Student Progression Requirements and Procedures for K-12 and Adult Education Students*, the only reference made to a need to improve academic performance for secondary school students, with regards to Language Arts instruction is, “an academic preparation course may be required for students entering grade 10 who have not demonstrated the potential to pass the FCAT on the first attempt as grade 10 students” (p. 69). This directive from the School Board seems to be a far cry from the intensive reading course that is required by M-DCPS policy regarding students whose assessment scores are a Level 1 or a Level 2. An analysis of the documents reveals a conflict between the state and local policy. Where this is evidence is where the state uses “must” and the School Board of M-DCPS uses “may”. This appears to be an anomaly with a complying School Board and a prescribing state.

The School Board of M-DCPS and district personnel interpret state legislation in the form of curriculum decisions for all of its schools. This research also examined the first four levels of Klein’s framework regarding curriculum decision-making. The understanding assumed by this researcher was that while individual schools and classroom teachers have autonomy in curriculum decisions, the implementation of the educational accountability policy in Florida and at the national level has removed some of these individual freedoms.

M-DCPS Board Rule 6Gx13-6A1.11 (sic), regarding Instruction-Elementary and Secondary, Curriculum for Senior High School (1998) states, “A good senior high school program provides the best possible educational opportunities for all of its students. Offerings include strong college preparatory courses as well as applied technology (pre-

vocational and vocational courses). A well-planned program is developed under the leadership of the principal through group guidance and through individual counseling”. Given this statement, it would seem that the school board would encourage the creation of innovative and unique curriculum that would fit the needs of an individual school site’s students. What occurs in reality, though, is that schools have become inundated with requirements from the state and district as to what constitutes an effective learning environment. The state is mandating regulations that must be followed for compliance with policy regarding public education. The district, then, is mandating regulations that must be followed for compliance to the state. As a result, the district, rather than individual schools, is making decisions that appear to be micro-managing schools sites.

According to M-DCPS Board Rule 6Gx13-6A-1.36 (sic), “Each school faculty in cooperation with the principal is responsible for planning a curriculum to meet the particular needs of the community and students concerned, within an overall framework agreed upon for the District and in concert with school improvement priorities.” In other words, schools need to take into consideration the nature and needs of its students when making curricular decisions on a school-wide basis. This would include the idea of educating students in a standards-based market place.

Findings

Using the matrix as an analytical tool, the following explains the findings have been identified. The State, and its primary educational agent, the Department of Education, operate in support of one another. Together they formulate policy and policy directives which are uncontested by the lower levels of the state’s educational system. This is seen in the close relationship between these levels in the *Problem Identification*

category. Further, this relationship is shown in its operational form with *Alternative Identification* and *Policy Invocation* left to the formal (DOE) and the *Political Action* left to the *Societal* (the state legislature). Of interest is the presence of the *Academic* level in both the *Problem Identification* and *Alternative Identification* categories only.

Professionals in education and other interested parties might well wonder why the academic level is omitted from all other aspects of the policy matrix.

Additional information is gleaned from the second tier of the matrix which reflects the fact that the Miami-Dade County Public Schools initially appears to be both a source of authority and accountability at the *Societal* and *Formal* levels. However, upon closer examination, the system is placed in a compliance mode and therefore the district is forced to demand compliance of its subordinates while lacking any significant power to do anything to influence the shaping of policies at either the *Societal* or *Formal* level.

Of even greater interest is that which is not shown on the matrix. The absence of a local (district) voice in the policy development and implementation processes is contrary to the spirit and intent of the *NCLB* and State (F.S. 1008, 2005) legislation. Again, the district is provided little if any room for local curriculum policy development outside of direct response to minimal standards and form state accountability standards. The absence of interactions between the academic and any category of policy formation at the district level reveals an absence of potentially beneficial linkage in achieving the goals articulated by the State Legislature and the Federal Government regarding the improvement of educational performance of local youth. And finally, it is noteworthy that the expectations held by those who teach in a particular discipline (in this particular

case Language Arts) have no agency in the development of curriculum goals and objectives at the local level.

Functional Process Theory Categories		Klein's Levels	Academic	Societal	Formal
STATE		Problem Identification	Au	Achs/Au	Achs/Au
		Alternative Identification	Au		Oi
		Political Action		Au	
		Policy Invocation			Au
M-DCPS		Problem Identification		Achs/Au	
		Alternative Identification		Achs/Au	Achs/Au
		Political Action		Achs/Au	Achs/Au
		Policy Invocation		Achs/Au	Achs/Au Os

Figure 3. Policy analysis matrix

Descriptive Origins:

Achs = accountability/high-stakes testing

Au = authority

Oi = outside influences

Os = operational/structural organization

As a result of these unreported policy voids, capable and interested students will be deprived of the best education they could receive, that teachers who care about their subjects and their students are prevented from developing specifically tailored instruction towards the interests and needs of students at all levels, and, most importantly, the local citizenry is deprived of their historical right to direct local schools in meeting the goals and expectations of the community.

Summary

As evidenced by the many layers of policy formation and the levels of curriculum decision-making, there are many aspects to both the planning and development of educational policy that is structured around school improvement. As the nature of school accountability continues to grow more structured and restrictive, the decisions made at district level will continue to be of compliance with state mandates, versus creation of policy that is indicative of the composition of the district. As a result of the state restrictions in policy on the district, the district follows with restrictive implementation of policy at the school site level. Following this line of policy restriction, the question to be raised should be what purpose does the district serve in a system of education that is increasingly being held accountable to decision makers that are moving farther away from the schools and the students?

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to examine the evolution of state and local educational policy as it exists within the framework of the accountability reform movement in the state of Florida. Specifically, this research was designed to understand how education accountability policy in Florida is affecting the school district of Miami-Dade County, particularly within the confines of curriculum decisions regarding high school language arts. The research questions were drawn on specific issues relating to educational reform: accountability and high stakes testing; authority; operational/structural organization and outside influences. As an issue of policy, the research focused on how state policy is formed and how M-DCPS responded to mandated legislation. As an issue of curriculum decision-making, the research focused on levels of the decision making process in relationship to the remoteness of the decision to the student in the public school classroom.

The methodology used for this research was grounded in policy analysis and curriculum decision-making. Educational policy documents and policy records at the national, state, and local school district level, as well as relevant literature on educational reform were examined. The policy documents and records were studied for their legislative intent and their ability to establish guidelines for curriculum decisions at district levels. The data from the documents was coded and presented in a matrix designed to establish an intersection between the decisions made at the policy level and the curriculum decision-making levels. The codes for the data were categorized from the review of the relevant literature.

Synthesis of Findings

One of the premises of this study was that the public school accountability movement has intended to create an opportunity for parents and schools to have a voice as a stakeholder in the education of children. Increasing the performance of students and as a result the performance of a school, will enable educators to make informed decisions regarding improvement of instruction and assessment. Another premise of this study was that policy is designed to guide the decision-makers involved in the education of public school students. Teachers, principals, and staff at schools have a daily opportunity to observe and design learning opportunities for students. The on-going conversation regarding classroom performance should lead to overall improvement of schools as they are assessed annually in compliance with Florida legislation. Parents have an opportunity and obligation, as part of the learning community, to be aware of their individual child's performance, as well as the performance of the school in accordance with state statutes. As a result, decisions regarding educational opportunities should be more readily available to parents so that they may provide for the best academic experience for their child. District officials should be providing guidance to schools in order for them to provide opportunities to learn for all students. Coordination at the district and school levels regarding curriculum decisions helps to facilitate the conversation of academic standards and improvement.

Prior to the analysis of the findings, the researcher had the expectation that the policies written by the state legislators and the state board of education would provide guidance at the very minimum to district coordinators of curriculum in the subject area of language arts. Another expectation was that the intent of the policy was for the

conversation to be reciprocal in nature. That is to say that the feedback received by the schools on the performance of their students would provide opportunities for decisions to be made at the local school level. Feedback on performance would also provide for opportunities for community or parental involvement in the nature of the educational experience. “Feedback is found in all successfully persisting operations, because the first direction or policy set almost inevitably needs revision over time; feedback is essential to wise revision” (Wynne, 1972, p. 5).

The responsibility for the transformation [of schools] must be assumed by all sectors of society, including employers (Paris, 1994). As policymakers at the state level continue to increase the restrictions of the Florida K-20 Education Code, there needs to be an opportunity for feedback from the district and school level as to how the nature of the state exam is beginning to control the facets of education in Miami-Dade County. No longer is the focus on improving performance as it relates to high academic standards, but the focus is in improving performance as it relates to the FCAT. Before the A+ Plan for education and its high-stakes consequences dominated the curriculum in Florida's classrooms, many educators viewed FCAT as an improvement in standardized testing. In reports from *The Miami Herald* (2001, 2004), two additional areas of concern have been raised surrounding legal questions about teaching to a test and funding supplements for high performing schools. Educators have been told [by district personnel] that they need to start documenting how they prepare high school students for the FCAT for fear that failing students will begin filing lawsuits if they don't pass the exam, and as a result, don't graduate (2001). Lesson plans should indicate which skills are being addressed with concern for the FCAT tested skills. Additionally, with regards to rewards and

sanctions, those schools that earn a passing grade get an extra \$100 per student as a reward and which failing schools stand to see students receive tax-funded vouchers to attend private school (2004).

As a counterpoint to these expectations, the research completed indicated that the conversations regarding school accountability are top-down in nature. The issue of compliance with strict legislation maintains a priority over incorporating pedagogical and instructional practices that are proven to positively influence overall student performance. There is a discrepancy between the espoused theory and the theories in use. In policy terms the intended consequences far under-weigh the unintended consequences (Dye, 1975). It is the very nature of these unintended consequences that will be presented next.

Conclusions

An important idea to note is that within the issue of authority under the guidelines of *NCLB* is that conflict is greater when state or local officials are asked to carry out reform efforts that may differ from self-initiated reform. When federal or state policies reinforce local priorities, cooperation in implementation is greater (Sunderman & Kim 2005). The issue of control of education can be applied to federal, state, or district policies in addition to the federal government's role in education.

“If the interaction between teachers and students is the most important aspect of effective schooling, then reducing inequality in learning has to rely on policies that provide equal access to competent, well-supported teachers” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 283). Missing from the conversation, in terms of the language of the legislation, is the idea of responsive dialogue. Responsive dialogue would address the issue of feedback from the constituents that are directly involved in the assessment of students. Merely an

observance of how many individuals are taking advantage of school choice programs is not an indicator of success of an accountability program.

Cross-curricular decision making is a school by school, teacher by teacher necessity. The division of Language Arts for M-DCPS has not, to date recreated curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of the test. Rather it has focused on taking existing curriculum documents and massaged them to fit the expectations of the state policy. Compliance to legislation has overtaken the importance of providing the best educational experience for all students. It appears that there is little room for planning a curriculum that is geared towards the particular needs of the community and students concerned because of the overwhelming nature of compliance to state and district policies regarding FCAT performance.

So the question then becomes who should be responsible for teaching reading skills? Should the content area teachers only be required to assess the areas of content? Should language arts teachers focus more on practical reading skills and less on literature? How much responsibility does the individual classroom teacher have in creating curriculum that addresses these questions?

Educational decisions, as they are far removed from educators, place an inordinate amount of pressure on the implementers. In order to implement change that will enable schools to improve the social order of America, there needs to be a realization by the members of society that the intellectual dimensions of teaching are ignored and undervalued (Griffin, 1991). As a critical and necessary first step in building cooperative bridges, the perceptions and opinions of everyone involved with the education of children need to be heard, so that there can be mutual support between home and school.

This study was driven by an interest in determining how the evolution of the current Florida education reform policy influenced policy decisions regarding language arts at the local level. After analyzing the evolutionary process, it became clear to this researcher that state policy directives were never challenged or discussed. Rather, they were accepted as standards to be met and as such, school districts complied. Evidence in this compliance is seen in the documents produced by the school system which directed local schools to make the necessary adjustments in their curriculum to be in compliance.

After scrutinizing documents generated at both the state and district levels, it is interesting to note that no evidence is available suggesting necessary changes in the organizational/structural organization of schools. This finding suggests that compliance, in form only, describes local districts' response to state mandated policies. This researcher had anticipated that since curriculum is always a dynamic process at the school level that some evidence would be available suggesting that the structure of schools might adjust to current challenges.

When investigating the question of authority in relation to the process of policy implementation, it was shown that policy implementation is a top-down phenomena. That is to say no evidence was found indicating a dialogue between state and local systems, rather the state, as the source of authority, issued specifically worded policy directives and the district complied. Some may find this finding troubling given the contemporary rhetoric suggesting school reform is obliged to respond to local needs.

As the study evolved, it became clear that accountability/high-stakes testing represented the most important element in the current program of state reform of public school education. No evidence can be found to suggest that policy makers at the highest

level were in any way concerned with issues of student developmental potential and nurturing traditional values such as thinking, reasoning, and valuing. Rather, test scores themselves became the benchmark of the effectiveness not only of the policy, but of the schools that implemented them.

Finally, this study recognizes that outside influences play an important role in shaping the education reform policy in the state of Florida. The federal government, through *NCLB* and other initiatives created a climate which led almost naturally to the creation of the *Florida A+ Plan*. Similarly, the interest of the business community, always interested in the production of competent workers, continued to support efforts at raising the minimum skill level of Florida high school graduates. Although no evidence exists of direct intervention of outside sources in the shaping of Florida's policy directives, subtle linkages always appear to under gird policy initiatives.

Suggestions for Future Research

Researchers interested in the area of policy and curriculum have many opportunities to examine relevant topics regarding the present state of public school accountability. Within the context of Florida and Miami-Dade County Public Schools additional research is needed concerning reform as it applies to high school education. As the nation's fourth largest school district, M-DCPS presents a unique opportunity for researchers to examine questions of equity in reform, individual school programs, as well as comprehensive district-wide reform efforts. One suggestion for further research regarding the state accountability policy and M-DCPS would be to examine individual high school performance records as an indicator of what these schools are doing in order to ensure that all students are provided with enhanced academic opportunities as

delineated by *NCLB*. A determination of which schools are not focused on test results as an indicator of success would offer an additional aspect to the conversation of accountability. Schools are responding to legislation and mandates and are losing their individuality in creating learning environments tailored to the needs of their students. Research that indicates how schools are implementing successful reform efforts that are not mandated would be useful in the examination of policy and curriculum responses.

A further suggestion for research would be to analyze what the district is doing at a district level to incorporate standards based reform as an integrated part of all subject area curricula. If the state reading examination incorporates reading passages from various subject areas, how is the district examining curricular documents to combine reading strategies within the individual subject areas. To date, teachers in M-DCPS have an opportunity to gain insight into these strategies through professional development. What is being done at the district level to ensure that the professional developmental opportunities are being incorporated within individual teacher classrooms? Since the reading portion of the FCAT exam consists of 70% literary text, research into the area of cross curricular planning at the district level would be beneficial for both the district and classroom practitioners. If educational policy is meant to address the area of raising standards of performance, all aspects of the educational system should be addressed in curriculum planning. The experiences a student may have at a school that is integrated in regards to curriculum may prove to be more influential than subject-centered schools. Answers to these areas of concern would provide useful data in helping policy makers create educational policy that is indicative of the issues of a state.

REFERENCES

- Apple, M. W. (1996). *Cultural politics and education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- America 2000: An education strategy* (1991). U.S. Department of Education.
- Anderson, J. E. (1979). *Public policy making*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Beadie, N. (2004). Moral errors and strategic mistakes: Lessons from the history of student accountability. In K.A. Sirotnik (Ed.), *Holding accountability accountable: What ought to matter in public education* (pp. 35-50). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Blum, R. E. (2000). Standards-Based reform: Can it make a difference for students? *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(4), 90-113.
- Brooks, M. G. (1991). Centralized curriculum: Effects on the local school level. In M. F. Klein (Ed.), *The politics of curriculum decision making* (pp. 151-166). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Campbell, R. F., Cunningham, L. L., McPhee, R. F., & Nystrand, R. O. (1970). *The organization and control of American schools*, Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Carlson, D. (1998). Respondent: Self education-Identity, self, and the new politics of education. In D. Carlson & M. W. Apple (Eds.), *Power/knowledge/pedagogy: The meaning of democratic education in unsettling times* (pp. 191-202). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Carlson, D. & Apple, M.W. (1998). Introduction: Critical educational theory in unsettling times. In D. Carlson & M.W. Apple (Eds.), *Power/knowledge/pedagogy: The meaning of democratic education in unsettling times* (pp.1-38). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Clemons, R. S. & McBeth, M. K. (2001). *Public policy praxis*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., Vigdor, J. L., & Diaz, R. A. (2004). Do school accountability systems make it more difficult for low-performing schools to attract and retain high-quality teachers? [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 23(2), 251-271.

- Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, State of Florida, (2003). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. Retrieved June 18, 2005 from <http://www.fldoe.org/NCLB/finalNCLB1.pdf>
- Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, State of Florida (2005). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.fldoe.org/NCLB/finalNCLB1.pdf>
- Cuban, L. (2004). Looking through the rearview mirror at school accountability. In K. A. Sirotnik (Ed.), *Holding accountability accountable* (pp. 18-34). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). New standards and old inequalities: School reform and the education of African American students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 69(4), 263-287.
- DeBard, R., & Kubow, P. K. (2002). From compliance to commitment: The need for constituent discourse in implementing testing policy [Electronic Version]. *Educational Policy* 16(3), 387-405.
- deLeon, P. (1999). The stages approach to the policy process: What has it done? Where is it going? In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 19-34). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- deMarrais, K. B. & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *The way schools work: A sociological analysis of education* (3rd ed). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dye, T.R. (1975). *Understanding public policy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Eisner, E. W. (2001). What does it mean to say a school is doing well? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(5), 367-372.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2001, Title I—Improving The Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged*, Short title, *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* Retrieved August 28, 2004, from <http://www.ed.gov/print/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965, Title I—Improving The Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged*, Retrieved August 28, 2004, from <http://www.ed.gov/print/elsec/leg/esea0/pg1.html>
- Englund, T. (1997). Educational discourses and creating a democratic public: A critical pragmatic view. In R.F. Farnen & H. Sunker (Eds.), *The politics, sociology and economics of education: Interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives* (pp. 211-227). New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.
- Florida's Applied Technology—Preparing All earners for Tomorrow's Work Force. Chapter 2: Goal 3 Standards as Common Processes and Abilities for the Content Areas [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.firn.edu/bin00051/pdf/ch2.pdf>
- Florida's Applied Technology—Preparing All earners for Tomorrow's Work Force. Chapter 3: Applied Technology Strands, Standards, and Benchmarks [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.firn.edu/bin00051/pdf/ch3.pdf>
- Florida Board of Education Administrative Rules [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.dadeschools.net/ehandbook/students/03/Florida%20Board%20of%20Education%20Administrative%20Rules>.
- Florida Department of Education. (2001). *READING, Grades 9-10, Test item and performance task specifications* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/pdf/fcrs90a1.pdf>
- Florida Department of Education. State Board of Education, Administrative Rules, Chapter 6A-1.09422, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Requirements [Electronic Version]. <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6a-1-11.htm#6A-1.0998>.
- Florida Department of Education. State Board of Education, Administrative Rules, Chapter 6A-1.0998, Standards for Indicating Progress Toward the State education Goals [Electronic Version]. <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6a-1-11.htm#6A-1.0998>.
- Florida Department of Education. State Board of Education, Administrative Rules, Chapter 6A-1.09981, Implementation of Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability [Electronic Version]. <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6a-1-11.htm#6A-1.0998>.
- Florida Department of Education. Sunshine State Standards Grades 9-12 [Electronic Version] Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.firn.edu/doe/curic/prek12/pdf/langart9.pdf>

- Florida State Statute, Title XLVIII, K-20 Education Code, Chapter 1008 (2002)
[Electronic Version] Retrieved, December 23, 2005 from
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index>.
- Florida State Statute, Title XLVIII, K-20 Education Code, Chapter 1008 (2003)
[Electronic Version] Retrieved, December 23, 2005 from
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index>.
- Florida State Statute, Title XLVIII, K-20 Education Code, Chapter 1008 (2004)
[Electronic Version] Retrieved, December 23, 2005 from
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index>.
- Florida State Statute, Title XLVIII, K-20 Education Code, Chapter 1008 (2005)
[Electronic Version] Retrieved, December 23, 2005 from
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index>.
- Foreman, S. D. (2003). *The politics of professional sports facility subsidies in Florida*.
Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida International University.
- Frymier, J. R. & Hawn, H. C. (1970). *Curriculum improvement for better schools*.
Worthington, OH: Charles A. Jones.
- Gaziel, H. H. (1997). The impact of school culture on effectiveness of secondary schools
with disadvantaged students. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 90. Retrieved
June 11, 2005 from <http://www.questia.com>.
- Goals 2000: Reforming education to improve student achievement (1998). [Electronic
Version] Retrieved on December 23, 2005 from
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/G2KReforming/index.html>.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1991). Curriculum making as a sociopolitical process. In M. F. Klein
(Ed.), *The politics of curriculum decision-making* (pp. 9-23). Albany, NY: State
University of New York Press.
- Griffin, G. A. (1991). Teacher education and curriculum decision making: The issue of
teacher professionalism. In M. F. Klein (Eds.), *The politics of curriculum decision
making* (pp. 121-150). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hess, F. M. & Leal, D. L. (2001). Quality, race, and the urban education market place.
Urban Affairs Review, 37(2), 249-66.
- Jones, C. O. (1970). *Introduction to the study of public policy*. Belmont, CA: Duxbury
Press.

- Kahne, J. (1996). *Reframing educational policy: Democracy, community and the individual*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kauffman, D., Johnson, S. M., Dardos, S. M., Liu, E., & Peske, H. G. (2002). Lost at sea: New teachers' experiences with curriculum and assessment [Electronic Version]. *Teachers College Record*, 104(2), 273-300.
- Klein, M. F. (1991). A conceptual framework for curriculum decision making. In M. F. Klein (Ed.), *The politics of curriculum decision-making* (pp. 24-41). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Kornhaber, M. L. & Orfield, G. (2001). High-stakes testing policies: Examining their assumptions and consequences. In G. Orfield & M. L. Kornhaber (Eds.), *Raising standards or raising barriers? Inequality and high-stakes testing in public education* (pp. 1-18). New York: The Century Foundation Press.
- Lashway, L (2001). Educational indicators. *Eric Digest*, 150, Retrieved January 2, 2006, from: <http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest150.html>.
- Malen, B., & King Rice, J. (2004). A framework for assessing the impact of education reforms on school capacity: Insights from studies of high-stakes accountability initiatives [Electronic Version]. *Educational Policy*, 18(5), 631-660.
- Mann, D. (1975). *Policy decision- making in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Marschall, M. & Shah, P. (2005). Keeping policy churn off the agenda: Urban education and civic capacity. *Policy Studies Journal*, 33(2), 161-81.
- Mitchell, S. (1996). *Tidal waves of school reform: Types of reforms, government controls, and community advocates*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Moll, L. C. (1991). Social and instructional issues in literacy instruction for "disadvantaged" students. In M. Knapp & P. Shields (Eds.), *Better schooling for the children of poverty* (pp.68-102). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Company.
- Nazareno, A. (February 14, 2000). Some educators say FCAT isn't the best answer. *The Miami Herald*, p. 2B.
- Oakes, J. (2000). *Keeping track, Part 1: The policy and practice of curriculum inequality*. Eisenhower National Clearinghouse, The Laboratory in School and Community Education, Graduate School of Education of California, Los Angeles, CA.

- O'Day, J.A. (2002). Complexity, accountability, and school improvement. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), Retrieved January 3, 2006, from: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hepg/oday.html>.
- Oliva, P. F. (2001). *Developing the curriculum*. New York: Longman.
- Ostrom, E. (1999). Institutional rational choice: An assessment of the institutional analysis and development framework. In Paul A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 35-71). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Page, R.N. (1996). Tracking and American culture. In Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood (Ed.), *Tracking: Conflict and resolutions* (pp. 21-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Paige approves Florida state accountability plan under No Child Left Behind (2003, April). ED.GOV, Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/04/04292003.html>.
- Paris, D .C. (1994). Schools, scapegoats, and skills: Educational reform and the economy. *Policy Studies Journal*, 22 (1), 10-25.
- Rippa, S. A. (1997). *Education in a free society: An American history*. New York: Longman.
- Schubert, W. H. (1997). *Curriculum: Perspective, paradigm, and possibility*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,
<http://www2.dadeschools.net/schoolboard/rules/Chapter 6/6A-1.11.pdf>.
- The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,
<http://www2.dadeschools.net/schoolboard/rules/Chapter 6/6A-1.36.pdf>.
- Smith, K. B., & Larimer, C. W. (2004). A mixed relationship: Bureaucracy and school performance [Electronic Version]. *Public Administration Review*, 64(6), 728-736.
- Spillane, J. P. (1999). State and local government relations in the era of standards-based reform: Standards, state policy instruments, and local instructional policy making. *Educational Policy*, 13(4), 546-572.
- Strategies and expected outcomes by department/functions*: Curriculum, instruction, and school improvement (2005). Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

- Student progression requirements and procedures for K-12 and adult education students.* (2003). [Electronic Version] Retrieved January 2, 2006 from <http://www.dadeschools.net/ehandbook/student03.pdf>.
- Sunderman, G. L. & Kim, J. S. (2005). The expansion of federal power and the politics of implementing the No Child Left Behind Act. *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved on December 4, 2005 from <http://www.tcrecord.org>.
- The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office. [Electronic Version] Retrieved on February 10, 2002 from <http://ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>.
- Tyler, R. W. (1969). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- U.S. Department of Education (2005). *State of Florida Consolidated state application accountability workbook* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from <http://www.firn.doe.edu/nclbworkbook.pdf>
- Van Geel, T. (1976). *Authority to control the school program*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Waste, R. J. (1989). *The ecology of city policymaking*. New York: Oxford Press.
- Weinstein, R. S. (1996). High standards in a tracked system of schooling: For which students and with what educational supports? *Educational Researcher*, 25(87), 16-19.
- What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000* (1991). The secretary's commission on achieving necessary skills, U.S. Department of Labor [Electronic Version] Retrieved on June 18, 2005 from <http://edr.doeleta.gov/SCANS/whatwork/whatwork.pdf>
- Whitty, G. (1998). Citizens or consumers? Continuity and change in contemporary education policy. In D. Carlson & M.W. Apple (Eds.), *Power/Knowledge/Pedagogy: The meaning of democratic education in unsettling times* (pp. 92-109). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Whitty, G. (1997). Recent education reform: Is it a postmodern phenomena? In R.F. Farnen & H. Sunker (Eds.), *The politics, sociology and economics of education: Interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives* (pp. 199-210). New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

- Wolman, H. (1995). Local government institutions and democratic governance. In D. Judge, G. Stoker, & H. Wolman (Eds.), *Theories of Urban Politics* (pp. 135-159). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Wynne, E. (1972). *The politics of school accountability*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

VITA

MARTHA M. BARANTOVICH

1991	Bachelors of Business Administration, Management Florida International University Miami, Florida
1994	Masters of Science, Special Education, Varying Exceptionalities
1994-2004	Teacher Miami-Dade County Public Schools
2004-2006	Graduate Teaching Assistant in Education Florida International University Miami, Florida