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UNIVERSAL VERSUS LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AS SEEN THROUGH TEACHERS' EYES

By

Catherine M. Feala Neuhoff

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

UNIVERSAL VERSUS LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AS SEEN THROUGH TEACHERS' EYES

By

Catherine M. Feala Neuhoff

The passage into law of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 gave the federal government and state agencies unprecedented presence and authority over the daily operations of public schools. A by-product of a long evolution of educational policy spanning over 90 years (Cross, 2004; McDonnell, 2005), one thesis explored in this study is that NCLB's logic sets both the law and public schools up for failure. With noble intentions of improving the human condition for all, the policy employs schools as a mechanism for change. To accomplish this, policymakers – informed by business leaders -- draft a plan saturated with scientific reasoning and market theory where social efficiency happens because of the creation of objectively measured, quality standards; responsible parties are held accountable and sanctioned for when standards are not met; school improvement is prompted by competition where parents have the power to choose a more effective school and are given the fiscal resources to do so without concerns for deeply embedded cultural norms of educational stakeholders (Hursh, 2007; Mickelson & Southworth, 2005). In fact, this disrespect for the manner in which school people interact with students and their community in school spaces is intentional; NCLB aims to purge the educational system of irrationalities and past myths in favor of a more objective and

rational approach. This conflict – between the situated, local knowledge of practitioners and community members and the universal, technical knowledge employed by the federal government through NCLB – is at the heart of why the policy might – in the end – fail to achieve its goal of student proficiency for all.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- AAC -- Accreditation Advisory Committee
- AMO Annual Measurable Objectives
- AYP Adequate Yearly Progress
- BA Bachelor's of Arts
- CEPI Center for Educational Performance and Information
- CP College Preparatory
- CSEM -- Conditional Standard Errors of Measurement
- ED Economically Disadvantaged
- ELA English Language Arts
- ELL English Language Learner
- ESEA Elementary and Secondary School Act

FAY – Full Academic Year

G – General

- HSPT High School Proficiency Test
- IEP Individual Education Plan

MA – Masters' of Arts

- MDE Michigan Department of Education
- MEGS Michigan Electronic Grants System
- MME Michigan Merit Exam MSRC – Michigan School Report Card

NCLB – No Child Left Behind

- NCTAF -- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
- OEAA Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability
- PLC Professional Learning Community
- SASI Schools Administrative Student Information
- SBOE State Board of Education
- SEM Standard Error of Measurement
- SRSD Single Record Student Data-base
- REP -- Registration of Educational Personnel
- TC Teacher Consultant
- UIC Unique Identification Code
- USDOE United States Department of Education
- WCS Whanton Consolidated Schools
- WMHS Whanton Moore High School
- WWC "What Works Clearninghouse"

CHAPTER 1

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

NOBLE INTENTIONS STILL UNMET

Introduction

The passage into law of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 gave the federal government and state agencies unprecedented presence and authority over the daily operations of public schools. A by-product of a long evolution of educational policy spanning over 90 years (Cross, 2004; McDonnell, 2005), one thesis explored in this study is that NCLB's logic sets both the law and public schools up for failure. With noble intentions of improving the human condition for all, the policy employs schools as a mechanism for change. To accomplish this, policymakers - informed by business leaders -- draft a plan saturated with the rhetoric of scientific reasoning and market theory where social efficiency happens because of the creation of objectively measured, quality standards; responsible parties are held accountable and sanctioned for when standards are not met; school improvement is prompted by competition where parents have the power to choose a more effective school and are given the fiscal resources to do so without concerns for deeply embedded cultural norms of educational stakeholders (Hursh, 2007; Mickelson & Southworth, 2005). In fact, this disregard the manner in which school people interact with students and their community in school spaces is intentional; NCLB aims to purge the educational system of irrationalities and past myths in favor of a more objective and rational approach. This conflict – between the situated, local knowledge of practitioners and community members and the universal, technical knowledge employed

by the federal government through NCLB – is at the heart of why the policy might – in the end – fail to achieve its goal of student proficiency for all.

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the influence of NCLB on the school culture of a large, chronically failing, increasingly diverse, comprehensive high school located in an urban-fringe city seven years after the law passed. In this study, the definition of culture was narrowed down to knowledge forms: technical and local knowledge structures (Geertz, 1983; Scott, 1998). Clear conflicts exist between the policy's intentions to change school culture relative to student achievement, parent engagement, and quality teaching on the one hand, and school realities around these elements on the other. To better understand the cause of these conflicts and offer a plausible explanation, this study has the following research goals:

- Thoroughly describe, explain, and interpret NCLB as a policy. In doing this,
 I ask what does the policy intend to accomplish beyond holding public school districts, school, administrators, and teachers accountable for student achievement? What informs this logic?
- Establish a conceptual framework based on Scott's (1998) social institutional theory of high modernism to describe and explain NCLB, its artifacts, and teachers' perceptions of standards and accountability, parent engagement, and quality teaching.
- 3. Use data collected in a single-site interview study to explain the cause of NCLB's failure to improve student achievement in that school and how deeply embedded, situated norms for social interaction in and around school spaces contributes to that failure.

In sum, I sought to better understand the power of culture -- as defined by knowledge structures -- in policy implementation.

The Effects of Accountability-Based Reform on Schools

The research community is flooded with studies concerning the effects, successes and failures of NCLB. (A Google Scholar search turned up 1.2 million results.) Here, I focus on the effects of accountability-based reform on public schools, as well as research that explore the probable causes of conflicts existing between the policy's aims and school realities.

Contemporary studies (Betts & Danenberg, 2003; Cawthon, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Jimmerson, 2005; Karp, 2004; Miller, 2004; Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, & Orfield, 2004; Wood, 2004; Wright, 2005) of the impact of NCLB on schools have identified several unintended consequences and flaws in the law's design. Some unfavorable outcomes include increased tendencies for schools to push-out high risk students to reduce subgroup sizes and improve scores; the flaws in the accountability design for students with disabilities and limited English (Cawthon, 2007;Wright, 2005); the pressure on low-performing schools to narrow their curriculum and limit instructional practices to test-preparation; the tendencies for states to use statistical games to inflate test performances; the limited ability of low-performing and rural schools to attract and maintain highly qualified teachers and administrators; failure of parents to take advantage of choice options; and the growing gap in resources between high-achieving and lowachieving schools. Each of these effects compromises the law's intention to serve highneeds students and their families. A brief description and explanation of each follows.

Push-outs, Drop-outs, and Cover-Ups

NCLB, with its heavy emphasis on "snap shot" high stakes testing as a means of school accountability to tax payers, is having perverse outcomes on students and schools. First, the legislation encourages low-performing schools to push out or hold back students who are not performing well in order to create the illusion of overall school improvement. Students who do poorly on tests – special needs, new English language learners, those with poor attendance, family problems or living in poverty -- are being excluded. These students and their parents are being counseled out of school, transferred, or expelled (Belfanz et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Hurst, 2007; Wood, 2004). Darling-Hammond (2004) provides a provocative example whereby King Middle School improved the percentage of students in attendance meeting standards from 66 to 88 percent without a single student actually improving his/her individual score (p. 19). Hurst (2007), in his analysis of how accountability strategies undermine educational attainment, describes another case of statistical gaming in Texas. Turning to the investigative work of Harvey (2000), Hurst points out contradictory evidence hidden within the proclaimed student achievement and graduation rate increases of Texas minorities as a result of high stakes accountability. Test scores were driven up by retaining students or excluding them from testing all together by placing them in special education (from where their scores are not included in the aggregate); and drop-out rates were covered up by the manner in which they were reported by school officials. As districts and schools struggle to meet accountability requirements, they turn to manipulating the data at the local level.

This research resonates with my own experience as an assistant principal in charge of testing in my school. There have been numerous conversations in which administrators have discussed the pros and cons of moving some students out of the school, and exiting them from English language learner (ELL) programs so as to keep subgroup sizes in historically low-performing groups below 30 to improve chances of making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in their schools.

Accountability Design Flaws for All Students, Limited English Proficient, and Special Education Students

Irrationality of 100% Proficiency. NCLB's goal of 100% proficiency by 2014 ignores the inevitable and natural variations among individuals, as well as the problems associated with assessing limited English proficient and students with disabilities (Cawthon, 2005; Karp, 2004; Rothstein, Jacobson, & Wilder, 2006; Welner, 2005; Wright, 2005). One researcher, Welner (2005), turns to NAEP data and schools' actual capacity to improve student achievement to frame his assertion that 100% proficiency for all by the year 2014 is improbable. NAEP data, Welner asserts, has increased 1% percent per year in mathematics for grades 4 and 8 and half of 1% for grade 12 between 1990 and 2000. Based on a straight line trajectory of improvement, it would take 57 years for grade 4 to reach 100%; 61 years for grade 8; and 166 years for grade 12 (p. 173). Citing those who minimize the roles that schools can play in improving student achievement (Armor, 1972; Hanushek, 1989; Hoxby; 2003; Walberg, 2004), Welner adds that family variables explain 19 times as much variation in educational attainment as school input variables (Welner citing Hoxby, 2003, p. 173). In addition to this, the amount of time students spend in school – assuming they attend regularly – is ill-proportional to the time

individuals spend with their families, immersed in popular culture, and interacting within street culture. With most Americans spending only 9% of their lives in schools between the ages of 5 and 18, it seems irrational to assume that schools alone can make that much difference (p. 173). Optimistically, studies show that schools can attribute no more than half the variation in student achievement – but most show no more than a quarter (Rothstein, 2002, p. 11). Given differences in individuals and the influence of external factors, asserting all schools achieve 100% proficiency for all students appears flawed.

Rothstein et al. (2006) build on Welner's claim about the impossibility of all students reaching 100% proficiency based on natural differences among people and how NCLB barely recognizes any human variability. Individuals in large populations perform and behave at different levels. These researchers give us several examples of the range of human achievement, beginning with average performance in 8th grade mathematics, the average susceptibility of influenza, average pace of running a mile, and average height and weight. Some people will naturally achieve above and below the mean in 8th grade mathematics; be more or less susceptible to influenza than the average person; run faster or slower than the average pace to run a mile; weigh more or less than the average person; and be taller or shorter than the average height. "Normal" distributions, in most cases, will appear as a bell curve when plotted – although Rothstein et al. are quick to point out that normal is certainly not the rule. NCLB barely notices any variations in human achievement; first, with the expectation that all students will achieve 100% proficiency and then permitting only the lowest 1% of the population to be held to a vague "alternative" standard of proficiency, and the next lowest 2% be held to a "modified" level of proficiency. This means that, under NCLB, a child with a minimum

I.Q. of 65 must achieve a standard proficiency in mathematics which is higher than that achieved by 60% of the students of Taiwan – the highest scoring country in the world in mathematics – and a standard proficiency in reading which is higher than 65% percent of students in Sweden, the highest scoring students in the world for that subject (Rothstein, et al., 2006, p. 19). These authors are not advocating for minimal standards – a point they make quite clear – as these would have to be considerably low for all students to achieve them given the range of achievement they have detailed in their argument. Instead, they suggest a return to norm-referenced assessments employing benchmarks "that are based on what the best in the industry is doing and is expected to do" (Rothstein, et al., 2006, p. 50). This argument contrasts sharply with the imprecise, intuitive estimates of what needs to be done that characterize current measures of academic productivity.

Serving special needs populations. Additional problems with accountabilitybased reforms surface when considering the difficulty of effectively measuring students with disabilities. Cawthorn (2005) points out how students with differing needs receive instruction with a host of accommodations that reflect their linguistic diversity. Using students who are deaf or hard of hearing as an example, Cawthorn (2005) finds a misalignment between state assessment policies and the realities of special needs schools serving hearing impaired students. Because these students do not often qualify for alternative assessments unless they have multiple disabilities, it is difficult to provide appropriate accommodations for hearing impaired students. This, according to Cawthorn, means schools and districts serving hearing impaired children have a higher probability that these students' scores counted towards the school's or the district's AYP benchmarks. While a positive benefit of NCLB is having all schools held accountable for

the achievement of all students, an unintended consequence is the limited accesses hearing impaired students have to content in those assessed domains.

A second problem arises when considering the inconsistency of AYP benchmarks and subgroup sizes across states, making it difficult to interpret the relative level of student achievement in schools and districts (Cawthorn, 2005; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). In situations where schools or districts identify small numbers of students within a subgroup – in this case, hearing impaired special needs – Cawthorn (2005) believes it is necessary to compare achievement across states. NCLB, by giving states flexibility in defining accountability measures, makes it impossible to make meaningful comparisons across states. Specifically, some states allow students' scores to count towards AYP who were permitted to use controversial accommodations while others do not. Determining the quality of a school, in this sense, becomes difficult.

Cawthorn (2005) notes a third challenge in using standardized assessments as the basis for high-stakes AYP decision-making. State standardized assessments were not designed to measure achievement of students without grade-level English literacy proficiency and academic preparation. Testing accommodations are helpful, but they do not level the playing field for students with disabilities or limited English without invalidating scores. In recognizing this discrepancy, Cawthorn supports pilot programs investigating growth models as a means of determining if students are making progress towards proficiency. In sum, while both Rothstein et al. (2006) and Cawthorn (2005) find the current system flawed for very different reasons, they both find a means to remedy the situation by designing systems that recognize contextual variations.

A fourth limitation of NCLB's accountability system is the fact that it requires English language learners (ELL) to take the state assessment, regardless of their English proficiency or the amount of time they have attended a U.S. school (Karp, 2004; Wright, 2005). The U. S. Department of Education (USDOE) requires schools assess these children in a "valid and reliable manner" using approved "reasonable accommodations" (Wright, 2005). Reasonable accommodations include minor modifications in the testing situation such as extended time or flexible scheduling, as well as providing the assessment in the language or form that would result in the most accurate information on how much a student knows and is able to do in each content area. After the first three years in the U.S., ELL students must take the state test in English.

Again, some researchers (e.g., Cawthorn, 2005; Karp, 2004; Wright, 2005) agree that a benefit of NCLB is that it has made it impossible for schools and districts to ignore special needs and LEP students and it holds them accountable for their English proficiency and academic achievement. In the case of ELL students, disaggregated achievement data provides unprecedented amounts of information (Wright, 2005).

These positive aspects become overshadowed, however, when considering unintended consequences associated with high-stakes accountability – some of which were mentioned earlier -- as schools and districts are pressured to show academic achievement in English for the ELL subgroup. As noted by Cawthorn (2005) relative to special needs students, flexibility in the law permits each state to develop different measures of English proficiency and establish different subgroup sizes, making it difficult to measure quality programs. Other psychometric issues surface when considering the development of worthy assessments for English language learners, according to Wright (2005). First, it is nearly impossible to insure test validity for students who take a test that is not in their native language. Non-English proficient students taking a test in English generate a measurement error that compromises validity. Additional measurement errors occur when reducing the measure of English proficiency to a binary system that determines whether or not a student is proficient; when the test does not consider the diversity of students' language background, their educational experience, amount of time in the U.S., or the nature of their language programs (Wright, 2005). Another factor affecting the validity of ELL student scores on state tests is the fact that they were designed for native English speakers without any norm referencing for students with limited English.

Wright (2005) makes one final point when considering the designation of students in the ELL subgroup and assumptions about their progress towards making 100% proficiency. The ELL subgroup is treated like all other subgroups when in fact it is distinctively different. Membership in the ELL subgroup is not static; few students who enter kindergarten as an ELL remain within the designation through 12th grade. In fact, the top students within the ELL group earn proficiency, changing their status to that of Former Limited English Proficient (FLEP). FLEPs are replaced with the most recent arrivals with the lowest levels of English proficiency. This makes it virtually impossible for schools to demonstrate improvement within this fluid subgroup, which can lead to a school eventually being labeled as failing.

Narrowed Curriculum

With emphasis in schools and districts shifting to making AYP and having students pass the multiple-choice, norm-reference tests, researchers have also found that students experience fewer opportunities to acquire critical thinking skills, research, writing, and production abilities, explore diverse ways of learning new information, and find their unique potential. Work in high priority schools serving high numbers of at-risk learners is increasingly becoming steeped in test-based instruction, a narrowed curriculum with limited access to real world, engaging, and practical instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Karp, 2004; Miller, 2008; Stecher et al., 2007). Teachers are increasingly, either by choice or administrative pressures, teaching to the test; their instruction modified to train students to respond to timed questions, follow scripted curriculum, cover expanses of curriculum with pacing guides, and memorize high frequency test words (CEP, 2006; Wood, 2004). Teachers race to cover that which may appear on the test at the expense of inquiry and exploration in their classrooms; they abandon what they perceive are effective practices, in favor of reaching the goal of improving test scores.

Wood (2004) provides several examples from various states whose teachers and parents report a drastic change in the nature of students' educational experiences as schools make changes to add more instructional time to prepare for state exams. In Alabama, parents report the district administration eliminated nap time for kindergarteners to make time for test preparation; in Florida, the shift to add more academic time threatens "elective" programs like art, music, and shop across numerous districts; and in Iowa, children in one elementary school improved its students' academic

achievement through "rote drills, one-on-one test talks and rigorous analyses of students' weaknesses" (Wood, 2004, p. 43). The Iowa school's success came at the expense of field trips where children explored nature, visited museums, and played outside for recess. In elementary and middle schools across the nation, students with disabilities or with limited English skills experience instruction that is neither individualized to their special needs nor tailored to embed English language acquisition within the content knowledge. Instead, these traditionally low-performing subgroups of students receive modified instruction steeped in test preparation in response to schools' efforts to improve test scores (Karp, 2004; Wright 2005).

A series of survey-based studies by the Center of Educational Policy (CEP) also found that elementary teachers reported spending less time on non-tested subjects and activities, including social studies, science, art, music, physical education, recess, and lunch. In some case study districts, CEP (2006) found that struggling students received double periods of mathematics or reading or both – sometimes missing certain subjects all together. Teachers working with identified students felt that the practice of catching students up shortchanged students' educations, squelched creativity, and diminished activities that traditionally kept children interested in school. These practices were most prevalent in schools that were identified for improvement: failing schools generally serving large numbers of high-needs populations. At least in this study, at-risk students for whom the policy was designed were receiving a compromised education as teachers and administrators altered instruction and curricula in response to pressures to meet accountability expectations.

Limited Access to HQ Teachers

Recognizing that many schools serving high populations of poor, minority students do so without the benefit of experienced and well prepared teachers, and that teachers have the single largest effect on student learning (Nye, Konstantopoulus, & Hedges, 2004; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Sanders, Saxton, & Horn, 1997), NCLB requires all schools to employ "highly qualified" teachers to ensure that all students have an "opportunity to learn" from quality teachers by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Despite NCLB's noble intentions, underperforming schools serving lowincome and minority students in large urban and small rural communities tend to have great difficulty recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and administrators (Betts & Danenberg, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Jimerson, 2005; Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, & Orfield, 2004). The threat of sanctions -- including job loss and reduction of funding to support services to high needs populations -- coupled with the challenge of serving at-risk students with low basic skills, inadequate parent support, student absenteeism and tardiness induce talented teachers to shy away from schools in low-performing urban communities (Stecher et al., 2007). Betts and Danenberg (2003) sought to test the assumption that low-performing schools had difficulty recruiting and retaining highly experienced and educated K-6 teachers. Their study provided strong evidence of a growing gap between the highest performing schools and the lower quartile of schools in attracting staff with adequate teacher education, experience, and credentials (p. 199), at least for the years between 1995 and 2001. Another study by Birman et al. (2007) builds on Betts and Danenberg's findings, finding that the highest percentage of teaching positions that are unfilled by highly qualified teachers are those serving students

in special education, limited English proficiency, and high poverty and high minority schools.

Small rural communities, where 30% of U.S. children go to school (many of whom live in poverty), face multiple challenges in recruiting and retaining highly qualified personnel as well (Jimerson, 2005). Conditions existing prior to the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA made it difficult for rural schools to attract excellent teachers and administrators, including the lack of consumer amenities, access to professional growth opportunities, inadequate facilities, challenging student populations, the need to assume additional responsibilities beyond teaching, and considerably lower pay. Requiring secondary teachers in core content areas to demonstrate proficiency for each course taught is also proving difficult for rural schools and districts, as they frequently assign staff to multiple content areas. Small districts find it impractical to hire separate teachers for courses with only one section scheduled (Jimerson, 2005).

Finally, NCLB's reliance on standardized tests to demonstrate teachers' content knowledge is also proving counterproductive, as the teachers most likely to be effective and stay in small rural communities inhabited by minority and limited English students are more often rural people who value local culture (Reeves, 2003) and do not share the values represented in NCLB (Kirby & Cusick, 2009). Jimerson (2005) builds on this, pointing out the unfortunate fact that people of low socioeconomic and minority status tend not to perform well on standardized tests, limiting the pool of willing teachers for small, poor rural communities.

In sum, then, in both large urban and small rural communities, then, researchers are finding that school districts are having a difficult time complying with the law and it appears the complex nature of both contexts are contributing to the problem.

Capacity Limits Parental Choice

NCLB relies on the power of school choice to improve schools. It assumes that parents are rational actors whose choices will force public schools to compete and improve (DeJarnatt, 2008). The parent empowerment component of NCLB gives parents of the lowest performing students the opportunity to choose a better educational environment outside of their local, community school. Various researchers (e.g., Bell, 2005; Sunderman, Kim & Orfield, 2005) have found that this provision has netted lackluster results for several reasons. While a small percentage of parents have taken advantage of the NCLB transfer option (3%), a larger percentage has not (Bell, 2005). Sunderman, Kim and Orfield (2005) found that, in six urban schools, districts selected a limited number of eligible schools to accept transfers. In most cases, higher achieving schools identified to receive NCLB transfers had limited numbers of seats available limiting parents' options. Other barriers restricting the ability of districts to accommodate transfer students included conflicts between state testing schedules (which lagged behind federally mandated implementation guidelines) and the timing of districts' notification of the list of schools required to offer choice; limits in the amount of time districts had to inform parents about their choice options before the start of the school year -- sometimes notification to districts occurred several months into the school year; the inability of local districts to coordinate pre-existing choice and open-enrollment programs with NCLB transfer options (compromising the amount of space available to

non-NCLB transfers); and the absence of any provision in NCLB requiring schools with selective admissions to accept NCLB transfers. For some communities serving high numbers of poor and minority children, these barriers left parents with restricted choices (Suderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005).

The manner in which parents from differing social classes make choices also differs (Bell, 2005). In her study of 48 parents from middle, working and poor classes, Bell sought to understand why parents left their children in failing schools. She found that, when given access to the same schools, poor and working class parents considered significantly different schools than their middle-class counterparts. For example, middle class choice sets (schools on parents' "radar") contained greater percentages of nonfailing, selective, and tuition-based schools than working class parents' choice sets. Just 16% of working class parents had at least 2 non-failing schools on their list (the mode was one), compared to 58% for middle-class parents (Bell, 2005, p. 19). Three contextual factors shaped parents' choice: social networks, customary attendance patterns, and children's academic success. The vast majority of schools in a parents' choice set were nominated by a parent's social network (Bell, 2005).

Another factor influencing parental choice in Bell's study was the selection of school that follows the natural attendance pattern of the first choice. Most middle-class parents (52%) and working class parents (56%) chose schools in the customary attendance pattern (p. 22). Bell (2005) found, however, that working class parents' customary attendance patterns provided limited access to non-failing, selective, and tuition-based schools. Evidence gathered from social networks and attendance patters convinced Bell that middle class parents have greater contact with people attending non-

failing, selective, and tuition-based schools than working class parents. The power of social networking provided parents in this study with information about the next school in the customary attendance pattern; having a sense of what to expect alleviates the discomfort associated with the unknown even when what is known is not all good (Bell, 2005).

Finally, Bell (2005) identified the parents' views of academic success as a third important factor. Parents make choices, according to Bell, based on how they believe their children will fare in various school settings. While all parents want their children to experience academic "success", they differ in what constitutes success. Decisions were made based on their child's current academic achievement, their child's capacities and personalities, and the potential they had on influencing their child's success in the next school. More middle class parents perceived their students more academically successful than working class parents. Their choices in schools reflected the assumptions about their individual students' abilities; more middle class parents chose selective or tuition-based schools, which they perceived as challenging. Working class parents viewed these schools as too hard or too competitive, and – as a rule – ruled them out.

Additional studies examine parents' choice patterns and find that there is a misconception that parents are rational actors in school selection (Bell, 2005; DeJarnatt, 2008). DeJarnatt (2008) identifies the influence of implicit racial bias in school selection, limits in parents' social networks which are bound to their locality, and access to information about schools which is at times restricted by parents' lack of literacy or English speaking skills. People, DeJarnatt (2008) asserts, make decisions based on the use of shortcuts, investigative strategies, and biases. Individuals may gather and weigh

evidence but their evaluations are based on how they select information and how they process that selected information. Information that is more readily available to them through memory or what they have heard, for example, is often used instead of that which is not as readily available. Availability of information depends on multiple variables, too, including literacy levels and research skills. DeJarnatt (2008) turns to social science disciplines to expand on the manner in which people choose, noting that there is considerable power in context: "causal attributions, motives, emotions, visceral factors, implicit attitudes, knowledge structures, affiliations and group memberships and behavior ...invisibly influence our more visible cognitions, attitudes, and actions" (p. 13). The assumption that smart (good) people make good choices is fundamentally inaccurate.

NCLB, DeJarnatt (2008) continues, assumes that by providing parents with information about test scores and school violence is sufficient for them to exercise choice options. What the policy fails to realize is that the race and class of the student body outweighs academic excellence as a decisive factor (DeJarnatt, 2008; Henig, 2004; Schneider & Buckley, 2002; Soporito, 2003). Parents of both white and black children choose schools where their children are not racially isolated. Henig (2004) found that there was a marked tendency for minority families to request transfers to schools in neighborhoods with lower incomes, more poverty, and higher proportions of minorities. Another study found that parents that used the Internet to reject schools serving a majority of black students before focusing on other quality indicators (Schneider and Buckley;2002). Other studies (DeJarnatt cites Saporito, 2003) document that both white and non-white parents preferred schools where their children's race constituted 70% majority and that wealthy parents avoided schools with high levels of poverty. In these

ways, choice policies that permit the free movement of children in and out of school actually contribute to economic and racial segregation of schools.

Insufficient Funding and Instructional Resources

A sixth issue concerns insufficient resources to meet the policy's demands. NCLB places increased pressures on individual schools, districts, and states to comply and produce student achievement gains (Abernathy, 2009), but there has only been a one percent increase in federal funding (Karp, 2004). Without support to deal with funding disparities, it is challenging for schools to find the resources necessary to close the existing fiscal gaps between schools serving rich and poor, and majority and minority children, leaving schools serving the poor most vulnerable under the law (Abernathy, 2009; Karp, 2004; Wood, 2004). Karp (2004) provides a stirring example of how even a small \$32 dollar per-pupil discrepancy in funding between schools places the least funded at a disadvantage relative to staffing and purchasing resources (p. 63). Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, and Orfield (2004) in a comparative study of schools identified for improvement and those making AYP provide further evidence of the differences in instructional and curriculum resources aligned to state standards; they found that teachers in underperforming settings serving high needs students did not have such resources. Diverse schools serving large numbers of English language learners, minority, special needs, and poor children are more likely to be labeled inadequate under the law and experience fiscal sanctions (Karp, 2004), further crippling their capacity to show improvement.

Proven Practices

Gersti-Pepin and Woodside-Jiran (2005) offer a compelling argument about the disconnect that NCLB creates between the lived culture of schools and inflexible mandates that focus exclusively on scientific research in their single-site study of a high poverty elementary school identified for improvement. Using narrative policy analysis, the researchers sought to expand their understanding of NCLB by incorporating stories that run counter to or are not included into dominant policy assumptions. Their study examined one of the poorest schools in the Northeast U.S. with 100% of its children receiving free and reduced lunch. The school underwent a substantial whole school reform process to address its failing scores. It is considered a state and national success story for increasing scores so dramatically.

The researchers remind us that NCLB presupposed that failing schools can be improved by applying instructional methods and reform models that are "scientificallybased." The development of the USDOE's "What Work's Clearinghouse" (WCC) established firm criteria to evaluate research studies that provide the best evidence for effectsStudies included in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) must be a "primarily well conducted randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity [study] and secondarily [a] quasi-experimental [study] of especially strong design" (Gersti-Pepin & Woodside-Jiran, 2005, p. 234). The reality is that "evidence-based" research advocated by NCLB requires that findings be context free (Maxwell, 2004). This narrow definition of what constitutes research minimizes the importance of teacher professional knowledge.

Conflicts between NCLB's heavy dependence on "scientifically-based" instructional practices and the power of the local knowledge of school personnel were apparent at Laurel Ridge, a school identified as failing in 1998, with only 44% of the student population meeting or exceeding state standards in reading. This problem allowed the principal to apply for grant funds to hire a literacy specialist and other resources. In 2000, the school was identified as one of the lowest performing schools in the state; by 2002, however, 83% of its population had met or exceeded state standards for reading (Gersti-Pepin & Woodside-Jiran, 2005, p. 234). The rise in test scores predated the more prescribed curriculum interventions permitted under NCLB.

Employing a school-centered approach, the principal and literacy specialist worked with school staff to create a caring school culture with teachers collaborating to design a reform model that fit the unique needs of their students. Developing a "love of learning" (Gersti-Pepin & Woodside-Jiran, 2005, p. 235) was at the heart of their model, as well as the importance of choosing a program that resolved classroom management issues and provided students with quality literacy instruction. Many Laurel Ridge teachers visited a successful school with similar demographics in New York, ultimately embracing the use of readers' workshop (Caulkins, 2004). Laurel Ridge teachers' reform strategy included embedding opportunities for their students to think critically, make choices about what to read with their children, find cohesiveness in subjects studied, and establish the predictability and structure their students needed.

In contrast, post-NCLB elementary schools that receive Reading First grants are limited to selecting programs approved as "scientifically-based" for beginning reading instruction, without consideration for particular contexts. In the case of Laurel Ridge,
this meant abandoning the reform model developed and implemented by the principal, literacy specialist, and staff because it did not meet WWC standards. In order to continue to receive much needed funding, Laurel Ridge had to abandon its program model and choose one from the approved, "scientifically-proven" list.

In sum, a common thread ties each shortcoming of NCLB together. In each case, researchers describe and explain situations where the law functioned to address the problem of chronically failing public schools and low student achievement – particularly for schools serving high numbers of poor, minority, special needs, and ELL students in urban and rural communities -- but it fell short, from the researchers' perspectives, because of local, contextual circumstances. This leads many researchers to offer recommendations for modifying NCLB that almost always include provisions that take into consideration natural variations existing among populations served within and across schools, districts, and states, as well as considering the value of local practitioner and administrator knowledge (e.g., Gersti-Pepin & Woodside-Jiran, 2005; Stecher et al., 2008; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005).

This study offers the research community an insider's view to the perceptions of teachers concerning the commonplaces of NCLB – high quality teachers, parental control, and accountability -- in a chronically failing, urban fringe high school. It builds on the work of Gersti-Pepin and Woodside-Jiran (2005) in that it examines the apparent conflict between the logic of NLCB and that of the school. Where Gersti-Pepin and Woodside-Jiran identify NCLB's dependence on "context-purged" research, this study digs deeper to identify the cause of the conflict by situating the discussion around the differences in the dominant knowledge forms representative of school culture and how

this functions in direct opposition of the objective, universal knowledge advocated by NCLB. In the end, the intention is to offer the research community another explanation through the use of social institutional theory to expose the policy's flaws.

Looking Ahead

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. In Chapter 2, I explain the methodology of the study; Chapter 3 briefly summarizes NCLB as a policy highlighting specific tenets that relate to the daily operations of school – standards and accountability, parent empowerment, proven practices, highly qualified teachers. The heavy emphasis of market ideology embedded in NCLB's structure leads me to turn to Hurn (1993) to explain the policy's implicit functionalist intentions. While functionalism partially explains NCLB, its methods of achieving student proficiency for all are left unanswered.

Scott's (1998) social institutional frame of high modernism found in Chapter 4 offers an explanation for the means by which NCLB attempts large scale social reform through public schools. Building upon Scott's historical examples of state interventions into social and natural spaces, this chapter makes a case that schools are complex social spaces that have deep seeded ways of knowing developed from solving specific sitebased problems. Teachers in this view operate as an informal guild with limited access bound not by technical knowledge grounded in systematic research, rather by that formed in individual classroom spaces. NCLB -- as a high modernist policy -- views local knowledge as flawed and sees it as the root of the problem of failing schools. With this in mind, it attempts to eliminate the local ways that teachers, students, and their parents interact -- and gain authoritarian control -- with objective, technical knowledge.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 summarize particular aspects of the policy and teachers' views as expressed in interviews. Chapter 5 begins with a "thick description" of the Michigan School Report Card (MSRC), first as a document and then teachers' understanding of the artifact. Scott's theory of high modernism is then used to explain the report card, its function relative to NCLB's aims, and teachers' responses to it. Chapter 6 examines NCLB's expectations for parents as consumers of education and again considers teachers' views of how parents in their community participate (or do not) in the education of their children at Whanton Moore High School. High modernism is used again to explain NCLB's intentions for parent empowerment and how this exists in opposition with the manner in which parents traditionally interact with their schools. Finally, Chapter 7 explores the highly qualified teacher provision of NCLB and then compares and contrasts it to teachers' views of quality teaching. Conflicts emerge here too, as NCLB's heavy dependence on objective measures of a quality teacher look different than WMHS teachers' subjective values of quality teaching. In closing, Chapter 8 summarizes the findings and offers recommendations for the future reauthorization, calling for a balance between technical and local knowledge structures.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND CONTEXT

Study Design

This study was designed as a single site interview study of a sample of teachers serving in a large, increasingly diverse, comprehensive high school located in an urban fringe city in the wake of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). As indicated in the previous chapter, I intend to describe and explain teachers' perceptions of their work and community framed around five overarching elements of the policy: standards and accountability, parent empowerment, highly qualified teachers, scientifically proven practices, and market ideology. The latter two components evolve in the study to become dominant forces of NCLB which I describe as a high modernist, functionalist policy aimed at improving the human condition (Hurn, 1993; Scott, 1998). The overt dependence on the logic of scientific reasoning and market ideology coupled with unrestrained authoritative control over subjects with limited capacity to respond runs contradictory to the manner in which school people and their clientele traditionally interact with school people and spaces. In this chapter I describe the study settings and methods for data collection and analysis, and conclude with limitations of the study.

Study Setting

WMHS is located on the south end of the city of Wanton¹. Its proximity to Detroit, Michigan has had considerable influence on the demographics of the school. In the five years prior to the study, student enrollment – spurred in part by WCS's open

¹ All names of individuals and places have been changed to pseudonyms for confidentiality.

enrollment policy and well publicized abandonment of residents from crumbling,

chronically failing inner-city schools - had increased 13% to nearly 1800 students. New

students and families choosing to attend WMHS came from differing familial,

educational, economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.² Table 2.1 illustrates what this

looks like from school data sources reported to the Michigan Department of Education,

Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (MDE, OEAA)(SASI 2004; 2005;

2006; 2007; 2008; 2009).

Table 2.1

Subgroup Analysis – Six Year Trend

YEAR	2003-04		2004-	0 <u>5</u>	2005	2005-06 2006-07 200		2007-	2007-08		2008-09*	
SUB-GROUP	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female	774	49	814	50	887	49	851	49	875	50	897	50
Male	791	51	821	50	905	51	884	51	883	50	894	50
American	6	0	11	1	13	1	12	1	16	1	10	1
Indian/												
Alaskan Native												
Asian/Pacific	69	4	82	5	81	5	82	5	92	5	109	1
Islander												
Black, Not	71	5	85	5	139	8	172	10	184	10	213	12
Hispanic												
Hispanic	8	0	11	1	13	1	11	1	14	1	16	1
White, Not	140	90	1438	88	1538	86	1553	84	1442	82	1427	80
Hispanic	5											
Multi-racial	6	0	8	0	8	0	5	0	1	0	16	1
Economically	398	25	456	28	611	34	689	40	755	43	860	47
Disadvantaged												
Students with	NA	N	122	7	135	8	126	7	136	8	149	9
Disabilities		A										
Limited	450	29	166	10	327	18	357	20	264	15	317	18
English	*	*	1									
Proficient												
Homeless	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5	1

As the population of WMHS grew, the percentage of Black children increased from 5% of the student body in 2003-04 to 12% in 2008-09; the percentage of White

² Chapter 5 describes both residential attendance and feeder populations in detail.

students decreased from 90% to 80% (12% decrease); students eligible for free or reduced lunch – an indicator of social economic status – increased from 25% to 47%; and the percentage of English language learners (ELL) increased from approximately 10% to 18% in the same time span. The impact on student achievement and the potential for this school to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with added achievement targets has been consistent with research patterns found in schools serving high numbers of minorities, poor, second language, and special needs students (Abernathy; 2007; Balfanz et el., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Karp, 2004; Meier, 2004; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005; Wood, 2004). WMHS continues to miss achievement targets for subgroups of students and all students.

In Michigan, any subgroup represented by 30 or more students is factored into the student achievement calculations on the Michigan School Report Card (MSRC). At WMHS, as the percentage of students attending in critical subgroups increased, the overall student achievement gains remain stagnant or fell for the all students in assessed content areas. WMHS has not met the AYP objective for either mathematics or English language arts (ELA). Wide achievement gaps exist between Black (32%), ELLs (33%), economically disadvantaged (ED) (22%), special education (40%) and White students in mathematics; and equally wide gaps in ELA. Increased numbers of students within these subgroups coupled with the overall poor academic achievement for all students for both mathematics and ELA has led the school to not make AYP based on federal criteria for four consecutive years at the time of the 2008-09 study. Table 2.2 illustrates this point. WMHS is a chronically failing high school.

Table 2.2

WMHS Three Year Academic Achievement by Subgroup

-	-	_	_		_	_	_								_	_	_				_	_
Social Studies	cient	01/08	%	80	74	73	75	71	1		74	59	•	75	1	57		20		24		1
	ent Profi	CO/90	%	83	62	75	76	74	1		67	58		LL	1	59		26		26		1
	Perc	05/06	%	62	75	65	99	63	1		71	49	1	99	1	50		6		6		1
	nt	07/08	%	52	51	53	57	48			44	25	1	56	1	32		2		14		1
ELA	proficie	06/07	%	56	46	43	48	43			35	31	1	46	•	23		0		39		
	Percent	05/06	%	52	58	51	54	49			57	30		53		35		0		18		•
	cient	01/08	%	57	51	51	53	50	1		39	21	-	55	-	26		5		19		1
Science	ent Profic	6/07	%	56	50	47	47	46	,		38	18	1	50	i,	27		3		20		1
Doug	Perc	05/06	0/0	52	46	41	44	37	•		43	11	-	44	-	26		0		21		1
	cient	07/08	%	46	42	45	47	43	•		37	15	,	47	1	25		7		14		•
Math	ent Profi	20/90	%	46	38	38	42	34			36	16	1	40	ı	24		10		18		1
	Perc	05/06	%	46	45	39	44	34			57	10	1	41	1	24		0		10		1
SUB-GROUP				State	District	WMHS	Female	Male	American	Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific ¹ Islander	Black, Not Hispanic	Hispanic	White, Not Hispanic	Multi-racial	Economically	Disadvantaged	Students with	Disabilities	Limited English	Proficient	Homeless

¹ Subgroups with less than 10 students are represented with a dash; data for American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic student subgroups represents less than 30 students tested and therefore does not influence WMHS AYP status.

Additional performance indicators include a 93% graduation rate and a 3.28% drop-out rate (CEPI, 2009); federal guidelines require at least an 80% graduation rate for AYP. In 2008-09 the transient rate – percentage of students newly arriving and leaving WMHS – was recorded at 30% with most students arriving after October leaving before the end of the school year and many new students coded as ELL refugees (SASI, 2009).

It is important to note that the policy landscape at the time of the study was cluttered; school personnel respond to multiple local, district, and state initiatives simultaneous to NCLB. At the local level, teachers juggle serving increasingly diverse students with more pressing needs within a constrained operating budget; they participate in numerous local school improvement initiatives and administrative edicts asking them to reach out to their student and parent community while motivating low achieving, chronically truant, and incorrigible students to produce as they kept the halls free and clear of lingering students. When not managing their own classrooms, hallways, and extending their influence to the broader WMHS community, teachers were asked to participate in central administration's Professional Learning Communities (PLC) (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002) directive where they meet once a week in department alike groups for 45 minutes to analyze and interpret data the district leadership assumed was coming from teacher-produced common assessments. In addition, a newly reorganized central office staff – the second reorganization in four years – began curriculum alignment efforts for mathematics and English to meet the new high school graduation requirements that stemmed from the Michigan governor's high school reform agenda that essential claimed to prepare every child for college. In addition to the new high school graduation requirements effecting students that were in grade 10 (class of 2011) at the

time of the study, teachers at WMHS teachers had to adjust to state policies that dismissed the Carnegie Unit (90 hours of seat time for each half of a high school credit) in favor of student proficiency and the potential of students to "test out" of subjects for credit. The latter two changes in policy directly impacted teachers' work in the classroom where many felt they had lost control of time and attendance. NCLB while intrusive, paled in comparison to more pressing local, district, and state initiatives altering teacher work.

In 2008-09, the year of this research study, WMHS had 90 instructional staff, three assistant principals, one principal, and a police liaison on staff. Instructional staff included teachers of academic core and elective subjects, five guidance counselors, five special education teachers who both co-teach and served students in resource room settings, and five itinerant staff that incorporated a school social worker, a speech pathologist, a part-time school psychologist, and two teacher consultants (TCs).³ More female instructional staff were employed (52) than male (38). Their average years of service were 9.61 calculated by adding the total number of service years and dividing that number by 90. Only seven staff members have served more than fifteen years; 73% of staff (65) has taught between 4 and 14 years; 20% (18) are non-tenure. Eighty staff members hold a minimum of a MA; ten only have BAs. All general and special education staff had teaching certificates; while all general education staff are highly qualified, at the time of the study all five special education staff serving in co-teaching or

³ Teacher consultants are special education staff whose primary instructional purpose is support for students identified as learning disabled but capable of cognitively functioning in mainstream classrooms. Students Individual Education Plans detail the nature and amount of TC support special education students need for success.

resource room settings were not highly qualified to teach academic core subjects at the high school level.

With the exception of co-taught special education courses and TC support, students received instruction in traditional self-contained classrooms with contractual class sizes ranging from 24 for science lab and at-risk classes (ELL and investigative⁴) to 31 for general (G) and college preparatory (CP) courses. Teachers with classes exceeding contractual loads receive overage stipends. It is common for teachers at WMHS to have courses that surpass contractual limits as budget-saving staff reductions continue to reduce instructional staff. In the year of the study for example, WMHS lost seven teachers despite gaining over 50 additional students.

Participants

Sampling for this study proceeded using criterion-based selection of teachers. The criteria included selecting teachers with varying years of teaching experience, who instructed students in differing content areas, with a balanced gender representation. Participation was voluntary. Table 2.3 provides an overview of selected staff members.

Table 2.3 WMHS Study Sample

Teacher	Service Years	Instructional Content	Qualifications	Professional Preparation	HQ
JA	19	Biology I, 2, 3	Bachelor	MSU	Secondary
	10/09/90		Science/Busines		Professional
	(district		s Minor		Biology;
	seniority		MS –	CMU	Administrative
	115)		Administration		Certificate;
			PHD	Walden	DX, GH; HX;
				University	VA 6-12

⁴ Investigative courses are geared for at-risk learners embedding reading and writing strategies as well as instructional accommodations to facilitate mainstream instruction for special education students and limited English speaking students.

Table 2.3 Cont.

-

SB	4	Economics	BS – Social	Concordia, CH	Social Studies
	long term	Business Law	Studies/Psychol		Secondary
	sub	Int. Tech I	ogy	U of Detroit	Provisional
		Current Issues	Certification	Mercy	
	- -		MS – School	U of Detroit	
			Adm.	Mercy	
			*MS LD/EI	U of Detroit	
				Mercy	
LB	8	Biology 1	BS – Medical	MSU	Secondary
	8/27/01	Chemistry 1	Technology		Professional
	(504)		Certification	OU	DA Bio
			MA – Education	Marygrove	DC Chem
JB	14	Geometry	BS –	Purdue	Secondary
	8/25/97	Algebra II Trig	Mathematics		Professional
	(DS)	AP Calc		WSU	CC History
	220	Pre-Calculus	MA - Education		DE Physics
					EX Math
КВ	12	World Lit/Brit Lit	AA	St. Petersburg	Secondary
	10/02/97	English 12 G/CP	BS – English	JC	Professional
	(259)	English 11 G/CP	Edu	U of S. Florida	BA English
		Power Reading	MS –	Saginaw	BX Language
			Educational	Valley	Arts
			Leadership		
			*MS – Public	CMU	
			Admin		
RC	8	Chemistry 1	BS Sci Edu	WSU	Secondary
	1/03/01	AP Chemistry	MAT	Marvgrove	Professional
	468		MS – Public	U of M Flint	DC Chem
			Adm		DX Sci
CC	15	Intro to	BA Journalism	WSU	Secondary
	8/27/01	Journalism	MAT	Saginaw	Professional
	(DS)	Creative Writing		Valley	BA Eng
	489	English 10	Post grad	,	BD Speech
		Newspaper	Ũ	Marygrove	*
PC	9	Spanish 1	BS –	WSU	Secondary
	8/28/00	English 11 G	English/Foreign		Professional
	439	U	Language		BA English
			(minor)	Marvgrove	FF Spanish
			MA Education	,	F
JC	8	American	BS Social	CMU	Secondary
-	8/27/01	Government	Science	WSU	Professional
	511	AP Government	MAT		CC History
1		World History			RX Social
					Studies
1. I					

Table 2.3 Cont.

PCh	18	Business Law	BBA	Walsh College	Secondary
	8/30/99	Current Issues	MAT	WSU	Professional
	377	Economics	MS – Edu	CMU	Occupational
	2	Integrated Tech I	Leadership		Education
			Post Masters -	CMU	CX Social
			special edu		Science
					GI Secretarial
					Science
					GX Business
					Edu
					VB Business
					Edu
KC	12	Forensics	BS – Science	MSU	Secondary
	8/27/97		Certification	U of Detroit	Professional
	237		MAT	Mercy	DA Bio
				Marygrove	DC Chemistry
					DX Science
TD	45	Studio Art	BA – Art	EMU	Secondary
	11/21/68	(22 sections)	Education	WSU	Permanent
	(DS)	Art History-studio	MA – Fine Arts		LX Art
	9	connections	Post Graduate		
EF	4	3-D	BFA	CCS	Secondary
	12/05/07	Art Foundations	MAT	WSU	Provisional
	875				LX Art
JF	17	AP	BA – Language	EMU	Secondary
	8/30/99	Lang/Composition	Arts	CMU	Professional
	361	Eng 11 CP	MA-		BX Language
		Eng 11	Humanities		Arts
		Art History 1			CE Psych
AH	11	English 9	BA – French	MSU	Secondary
	8/29/05		MA -	Walden	Professional
	794		Curr/Asse/Inst	University	BA English
			Post grad (PHD		FA French
			program)	Walden	
	7	Constant	MA+30	University	Casardama
LG	8/20/05	Geometry	BS Computer	U of Detroit	Desfessional
	8/29/03	ELL/Comprel	MAE	wiercy	FIDIESSIDIIAI
	809	ELL/General	IVIAL	Maryarove	EA Mathematics
				wiai ygi uve	NR Computer
					Sci
					RY Social
					Studies
KG	9.5	English 10	BA	U of M	Secondary
	8/25/97	Yearbook 1 – 4	MAE	Marygrove	Professional
	233		MA –	CMU	BA English
			Counseling		DA Biology
			*Yr1		



Table 2.3 Cont.

RH	9	English 10 G/CP	BA	WSU	Secondary
	8/28/00		English/Social		Professional
	427		Studies		BA English
					RX Social
					Studies
MH	6	Alg II	BS	MSU	Secondary
	8/25/03	Alg II Trig ACC	Econ/Mathemati		Provisional
	609		cs	MSU	CA Econ
			MA Curr/Inst		EX
					Mathematics
JK	1.5	US History	BS	WMU	Secondary
	9/06/07	Dem/Citz	Secondary Edu		Provisional
	864	World History	History/Social		CC History
		ELL	Studies		RX Social
					Studies
GK	9	World History	BA	wsu	Secondary
	8/28/00	American	History/Social		Professional
	440	Government	Studies	Marygrove	CC History
		(taught Auto 2	MA Education		KX Social
TV	11	yrs)	DC	WOU	Studies
IK	11	Trig/Analytical	BS Math/DE	w 50	Secondary Drefessional
	3/03/96	BraCala		SVII	FIDIESSIDIIAI
	271	FleCalc	Educational	300	EA Mathematics
		Geometry	Leadership		MD Drusical
			Leadership		Education
10	5	US History	BA	CMU	Secondary
•••	8/30/04		Social	00	Provisional
	685		Studies/History	CMU	CC History
			MA Humanities		RX Social
					Studies
MO	4	Spanish 2,3,4	BA	EMU	Secondary
	8/29/05	•	Spanish/Math		Provisional
	732		MA	EMU	EX
			Educational		Mathematics
			Leadership		FF Spanish
LR	29	ELL English 9	BS	CMU	Secondary
		Democracy/	English/German		Professional
		Citizenship	MA	WSU	BA English
			Linguistics/Rea		
			ding		
СТ	5	Biology	BS	CMU	Secondary
	8/30/04	Chemistry	Business/Bio		Professional
	681	Physics	Certification	WSU	DA Biology
			MAT	WSU	DX Science
					GX Business
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ALL. K-8

Of teachers interviewed, 17 are male, 15 female; 29 of 32 have earned a minimum of a MA, nine have earned a second MA or higher. Most teachers interviewed have less than ten years of service (18/32), 12 staff members have 11 years or more years. Nine teachers majored in English, six in social studies/history, four in mathematics, five in science, two in business, three world languages, two majored in art, two are vocationally certified, one is a physical educational teacher and one is a special education teacher of those interviewed. Three of the 32 teachers completed their undergraduate professional preparation outside of the state of Michigan: KB, JB, and SB. Only one teacher does not meet the NCLB standards for highly qualified, JW.

Consent. After receiving permission from the MSU's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, I sought permission from the superintendent of schools, the teachers' union, and the school principal. From there, I generated a list of instructional staff from WMHS sorting them based on the established criteria. Each teacher selected who agreed to participate signed a consent form granting me permission to tape and transcribe their interviews. Every teacher approached was willing to participate in the study; time was the only limitation as the interview process had to stop to prepare for the Michigan Merit Exam.

Data Collection

The original research question of the study sought to discover the influence NCLB had on the culture of a large, chronically failing, diverse, comprehensive high school and the staff's interpretation and implementation of the policy. For the sake of this study, culture was narrowed down to knowledge forms: technical and practical knowledge structures (Geertz, 1983; Scott, 1998). Discovering evidence of either knowledge forms in participants, the policy, and its artifacts dictated a field study. Three research approaches were used: participant observation, quantitative document and artifact analysis, and interviewing. While the analyses presented in the dissertation draw heavily on document/artifact analysis and teacher interviews, I describe the full set of data collection efforts below.

Participant Observation

At the time of the study I was beginning my third year as an assistant principal at the school. I knew many of the staff and administrators from previous work as a curriculum director for the same district. My new role altered my relationship with instructional staff members to that of their line administrator.

As a line administrator, I had to win rapport by being supportive. For these teachers, being "supportive" means tending to disciplinary referrals and parent complaints in a timely and effective manner; being visible in the halls and in their classrooms, and at school events; being knowledgeable about subject matter, policy, and the way schools work; and being capable of getting resources each needs to facilitate instruction. The latter relates to providing them access to appropriate training and adequate instructional materials. I worked diligently at gaining their trust, establishing rapport, and listening carefully to the staff's concerns before and during the study. There are times, however, when my position as an administrator potentially interfered with my aims as a researcher; I am their supervisor and they my subordinates.

Gaining access and gradually taking on the perspectives of the participants, as well as sharing of their lives in school spaces to better understand their world as they understood it are essential components of the participant observer (Cusick, 1983; Jorgensen, 1989). My position within the building afforded me natural access to staff, their classrooms, the various teacher lounges, staff meetings, PLC groups, classrooms, students, and parents. My presence was/is taken for granted and expected; I share(d)

their school lives and at times, their personal lives -- attending baby and wedding showers, weddings, and funerals. Invitations to professional and personal events demonstrated levels of trust and rapport with groups of teachers. The interview process and the dialogue that followed opened up additional opportunities as well.

As an administrator I led – and continue to lead – them through operational matters specific to NCLB: collaboratively establishing their Professional Learning Community (PLC) calendar for the school year; organizing school improvement initiatives with their input; orchestrating numerous federally required testing sessions; demonstrating how to use assessment data for the purposes of curriculum alignment; helping them navigate through procedural matters for certificate renewal; establishing positive parent communication and community outreach activities; and pointing them to purposeful professional development. My duties as an assistant principal provide me additional access to school databases, policy guidance documents distributed through local, county-wide, and state administrator meetings, administrative log-ins to the OEAA secure sites, report card, and assessment reports all of which were particularly useful for this study.

As a participant observer, my field notes reflected on how much of my time as an administrator was overtaken by the pressures of standards and accountability in the form of being WMHS's test supervisor – often at the expense of being an instructional leader. Additional observation notes were derivative of classroom observations. Observations and reflections guided my interpretation of the interviews.

Documents and Artifact Analysis

The second form of data collection included collecting, analyzing, and interpreting local, district, state and national quantitative documents and specific policy artifacts. Local quantitative documents included school attendance reports for six consecutive school years beginning in 2003-04; school demographic reports for the same time span; the district's human resource department's Registration of Educational Personnel (REP) and district seniority reports for the 2008-09 school year. These helped frame the argument I present in chapters 5, 6, and 7. My position as an administrator made access to these reports possible.

Attendance and demographic reports were printed for each year and figures from each, hand counted. For example, attendance reports from the Schools Administrative Student Information (SASI) system (the data management system employed by the district in 2008-09) were run sorting students alphabetically by grade in attendance 75% of the school year. The names of students meeting the criteria were then hand counted to generate attendance figures. Second, demographic reports break down percentages of students by subgroup in SASI as entered by in-take clerks in the school's main office. These figures are then exported to the Single Record Student Data Base (SRSD) from which the state extracts data reported in the MSRC. I ran both SASI and SRSD reports for each of the six school years represented and cross-referenced these to the MSRC data. ⁵ Finally I used the district REP report to identify the highly qualified status of

⁵ Cross referencing these data sets are part of verifying the MSRC data is congruent with data representative of the school and an initial part of the appeal process that nearly every school completes prior to the release of the MSRC to the public. The numbers of

participants, their teaching credentials, placement, academic major and minors, as well as the districts teacher seniority list to verify years of service. The REP report is submitted by human resource departments to the state bi-annually. It documents all administrators, teachers, itinerant staff, paraprofessionals, and clerical staffs in direct contact with students as a requirement of NCLB.

Additional documents included those generated by various departments within the MDE: the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) pupil accounting report to document graduation rate and average daily attendance for the year of the study; the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) individual student report for juniors tested in 2007-08; MME state, district, and local demographic summary for 2005-06 through 2007-08; and the Michigan School Report Card (MSRC), both the administrative and public versions for 2007-08 (available in the late summer of 2008). Access to the MME data is restricted to school personnel with administrative access to the OEAA secure site. The administrative version of the MSRC requires permission through the district superintendent. My position at WMHS provided me access to all of these documents. I described the public version of the MSRC page by page using the *Guide to Reading the Michigan School Report Card 2009* to interpret specific statistical representations. Both the public version of the MSRC and the *Guide* are available through the internet on the MDE website.

Other documents informing this study included national, state, and local U.S. Census Bureau data. Areas of interest included general information on age and race. For

students represented in each subgroup is critical to balance for achievement and percent tested purposes.

this study I focused specifically on the number of people with school age children who were single, married, and divorced; disaggregated by race; social data specifying educational levels of adults with school age children and primary language spoken in the home; economic and housing information. Local data included WMHS's attendance area and data from those surrounding zip codes from which many open enrollment students live. This information was used in the coming chapters to explain how the school demographics differed considerably from the attendance area and to take a position relative to the educational and employment statuses of adults sending children to WMHS.

Several artifacts were also described and analyzed. The description of NCLB found in chapter 3 includes information derived from the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as disseminated to public schools in January of 2002. As the MDE began preparing school personnel for the implementation of the NCLB we received multiple guidance papers and tool books through MDE-sponsored trainings. Access to both the original policy and interpretative tools came through MDE and county level training sessions. Multiple memorandums were accessed from the MDE website to clarify MDE's position on highly qualifying teachers certified before the provisions of NCLB became law (HOUSSE). These memorandums as well as notes from trainings were used to strengthen my interpretation of the NCLB.⁶

Interviews

As noted, 32 staff members were interviewed for this study. Each participant was asked 50 questions framed around the policy's main tenets: general understanding of the

⁶ Eight years prior to becoming an assistant principal I served two different districts as a director of state and federal projects/curriculum director with the translation and implementation of ESEA 1994 and NCLB were primary responsibilities of my role.

policy, standards and accountability, teaching and learning; proven practices, parent empowerment, and highly qualified teacher (see Appendix A for the interview protocol). The interviews were semi-structured; I taped and transcribed each interview which ranged from 31 minutes to an hour and 27 minutes. Teachers were interviewed on their preparation hours and after school. In the end, I gathered approximately 31 hours of interview data.

Once transcribed, I sorted responses electronically according to category for each respondent, printing them as individual files. For example, all teachers' answers to questions pertaining to their general understanding of the policy were broken down into their description of the policy; their belief of its impact on their work; and their understanding of how it fit relative to state and local initiatives. The first level of coding involved examining respondents' answers and listing commonalities and differences to develop analytical categories (Cusick, 1995; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Interpretation of the categories evolved as I looked for conceptual frames to explain what was being observed and documented in each section of teacher discussion or policy description.

I continued this pattern for each section of the interview protocol. The second set of questions on standards and accountability involved asking teachers to describe and explain their understanding of specific components of the MSRC, the state and local MME demographic summary, and the MME individual student reports. To code teachers' responses to these questions, I sorted their answers specific to each question and then counted the number of times teachers answered yes (they knew what the figure meant), no, or demonstrated a vague understanding (somewhat) and whether or not they

could describe their understanding. Other answers touched upon sentiment and prompted longer answers. I sorted these too, listing themes in the columns of their quotes based on common word choices. Explaining what took place involved returning to the literal intention of the artifact being studied as expressed by NCLB guidelines and then through Scott's high modernist lens. The transferability of Scott's social institutional theory to the context of teaching and learning and NCLB strengthened the interpretative process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Questions on teaching and learning asked teachers to make their practice public; they were asked about lesson planning, decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment; to describe their students overall and how they modified their instruction to meet described needs (if at all); about what strategies they used to help struggling students; and to describe their professional development, and reading choices. Admittedly, questions were designed in anticipation of finding – or not finding – evidence of the policy's influence on their work in classrooms in forms expressed in literature; for example, a heavy dependence on test preparation and skill development at the expense of adventuresome teaching, or -- at best -- data-driven decision making and prominence of research based practices. By the time coding began several months after the interview process I dismissed any assumptions about their teaching in favor of identifying similar word choices teachers used to describe their thinking. For example, when discussing how they design a lesson, many teachers used standards and benchmarks for their content area; others listed components of their discipline that communicated their knowledge of their subject indirectly linked to Michigan's High School Course Expectations. I coded both standards and benchmarks. Most of teachers' responses fell

into subjective domains leading me to search for an explanation for my findings and then analyze this relative to the overarching theory guiding the study.

Parent empowerment questions asked respondents to describe the parents of the students with whom they worked, their expectations for them, and frequency of their or parent contact. They were also asked about topics they discussed with parents, and if parents appeared to advocate for their children and if so about what issues. I sorted participant responses by question and then captured the essence of each quote with single word descriptions. For example, some teachers described their parents as "varied" or "diverse;" others described them as "not having much experience beyond high school." Reading an entire interview helped clarify how teachers used specific words like "diverse" to describe educational levels or occupations as opposed to ethnicity. Interpreting the data meant looking at the policy expectations for parents, institutional studies about parent behavior in school settings, an explanation for parent behavioral patterns as described by teachers, and Scott's (1998) theory of high modernism.

Finally, questions pertaining to highly qualified teachers asked participants to describe NCLB's requirements; to reveal whether or not they were highly qualified and to describe how that was determined; define a quality teacher and what that would look like; and whether they felt that the requirements had an impact on their school. Teacher responses were sorted by question with key words marked in margins as with previous sections. Interpreting their responses involved looking at studies that might frame what I was seeing in their responses. I turned to Willis' (1977) description of working class culture to explain the prevalence of subjective reasoning in their responses. Lastly, I

compared their responses to the policy expectations and high modernist logic to make the case.

Study Limitations

The study has several limitations. Here I discuss those I see as most important: my role and how that might have compromised what teachers said; the generalizability of any study that takes one school as the sample and a handful of teachers; information collected through self-reporting and perception rather than on actual evidence of what teachers do and how parents act; and finally my own subjectivity.

As mentioned previously, my role as an administrator may have compromised respondents' ability to speak candidly about their practices, views of NCLB, their parents, and students' as learners for fear of retaliation. One of my duties as their administrator is to evaluate their teaching and participation in the overall school community. Many questions in the interview protocol dealt directly with topics and issues upon which they are evaluated. This potential conflict between my role as a researcher and that of their supervisor may have compromised the level of honesty and truthfulness of teacher responses (Jorgensen, 1989).

A second limitation of this study might rest in the fact that its assumptions are formed based on information gathered from one high school and a handful (32) of teachers. While care was taken to describe people, artifacts, and spaces in detail to insure transferability to other settings, limits in the demographic make-up of teachers serving in WMHS who volunteered to participate and the student body may not necessarily match the population across the country (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Only two African American and 30 Caucasian teachers are represented in the study; the gender

representation was nearly balanced (17 male, 15 female); and most of the staff held a MA or higher (29/32). This may not necessarily match the population of teaching staff of large, comprehensive, urban-fringe high schools across the country. Likewise, the socioeconomic and ethnic representation of the school -- while diverse in the eyes of immediate stakeholders -- may not capture the diversity of schools and students elsewhere.

With the exception of analysis of artifacts, data collected for this study is primarily perceptual and self-reported by teachers as opposed to actual observations of what teachers do and how parents act. These teachers' reality has been shaped by their personal observations of their work with curriculum, instruction, assessment, and data; interactions with administrators, parents, their peers, and students; and the school space. The quality of these experiences shape their conceptualization of the topics discussed in the interview (Dey, 1993). Evidence of this appears when teachers describe what they knew and understood about NCLB. If the highly qualified teacher provision compromised their entry into the field of teaching, that aspect of the policy stood out in their description (SB, TW). Likewise, teachers who were also parents held different assumptions about what parents should know and be able to do relative to forming partnerships with the school than teachers without school-age children (e.g. CC, KC, LG). Their beliefs as a parent informed their assertions as a teacher as did their gender roles. Male teachers, for example, were less likely to contact parents about student behavior and academic difficulties preferring to have the parent initiate contact (e.g. JF, RH). Other examples included individual teachers' descriptions of what constituted a quality practitioner. Nearly every teacher drew examples from his or her own classroom. Reliance on interview responses and not actual observations of their work limits the validity of their responses.

Finally, my role as a participant observer in the study places me within the same social context, with shared experiences, and beliefs about teaching and learning shared by participants. The insider perspective, while a unique component of this study, stands as a challenge because sometimes, "the fish are the last to see the pond" (Erickson, 1986, p. 157) and I had to work hard to view the school setting and participants with whom I spend a good deal of time and take for granted as new and unfamiliar (Latour & Woolgar, 1986). My role places me in WMHS before, during, and after the instructional day; its halls, people, students, and parent interactions are familiar parts of my daily work. Prior experiences as an educator made classrooms, the teachers' lounge, staff meetings, and administrative trainings familiar places. Many assumptions formed had to be carefully edited and revised to be sure that I was only documenting what the interview data represented and not what I assumed was happening based on my familiarity with this school space and these particular teachers.

To summarize, this study of teachers' perceptions of the influence of NCLB on their lives as practitioners in this one school does not intend to describe every high school and every group of teachers. It is, alternatively, a snapshot of a particular time and place and an attempt to tell these particular teachers' story in the wake of a very intrusive federal policy.

CHAPTER 3

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

A FUNCTIONALIST POLICY

Introduction

In a letter prefacing a desktop reference designed to help local educational agencies implement the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Rod Paige proclaims the legislation a *historic* piece of educational reform altering the manner in which the federal government supports public education. The letter argues that NCLB gives states and school districts unprecedented *flexibility* in how they spend their federal educational dollars while challenging every school to *prepare 100 percent of its students to pass rigorous academic standards in mathematics and reading annually between grades three through eight* by 2014. It requires *all* schools to place a *highly qualified teacher* in every American classroom by the end of the 2005-6 school year offering numerous streamline alternative routes and funding sources for teacher training. The legislation, Paige continues, provides for *informed parental choice* and *invests in proven teaching practices* (Paige, 2002).

The lever for these changes is amended Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Ninety percent of American school districts and nearly half the country's schools receive some funding through Title I (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002; Cross, 2004; Hess & Petrilli, 2008). Designed as a key provision to assist the poor, states and local education agencies receive and allocate money based on poverty formulas. Schools receiving Title I federal funds face considerable challenges, as they must meet new accountability standards for student achievement or face severe

penalties up to and including restructuring and state take-over while typically serving high needs populations. This said, nearly every school in the U.S. currently feels the impact of the reauthorization of ESEA 2002, making this a timely and worthy of study.

As a public school practitioner, I offer the educational community a unique inside perspective of NCLB. By closely examining what happens when this policy is implemented in a large, comprehensive, high school, my goal is to make visible both the influences public school teachers have on the policy and the policy's work on a growingly diverse high school in a public school system. I begin a brief description and explanation of the reauthorization and its major features before moving to examine NCLB as a functionalist policy.

No Child Left Behind

ESEA 2002 is an extraordinarily complex policy. Here I focus on five key features. First, the federal government defines school quality through measurable outcomes defined by individual and groups of students' performances on standardized achievement tests. These tests aim to make learning legible and hold teachers, principals, and schools accountable for performances, but not students. Second, schools receiving Title I assistance that fail to make the grade must employ curricula and instructional techniques based on scientific research and federally approved – decisions traditionally left to state and local authorities. Schools that wish to use their federal funding for professional development or the purchase of supplemental materials must back their selections with evidence supporting their "proven record of success." Third, for the first time, the law authorizes the use of federal funds for a voucher-like program of extra tutoring and transport to better schools. This tenet inches federal policy closer to

directing federal funds to private, sometimes religious institutions. Fourth, the law reshapes schools' relationships with parents, advocating a stance of parents as consumers. Fifth, ESEA 2002 requires all districts place highly qualified instructional staff in every classroom establishing firm, measurable criteria regulating attributes of a good teacher (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002; ESC, 2002; US Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind*, A Desktop Reference, 2002). Combined, these features mark an unprecedented involvement of the federal government in critical local education activities.

Legislative tweaks to ESEA 2002 speak volumes to tax payers who question the kind of return they get for their educational tax dollars; it stresses the value of excellence in education; and satisfies parents hoping to provide their children with the competitive edge necessary to compete in a global economy. Amendments to the policy respond to the teacher shortage problem by simplifying entry and hiring. Furthermore, it provides a framework that emphasizes "productivity and performance" through a strong system of standards and accountability in teacher practice and professional development.

Standards and Accountability

ESEA 2002 builds on the accountability and assessment requirements initiated in the 1994 act where setting standards, measuring students' progress in meeting standards, providing help for those struggling students, and holding schools accountable for results are defined. This version of the law is more specific and punitive. It places pressure on states and districts to improve student achievement and close academic gaps among students of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

The primary measure of district and school accountability occurs through statedeveloped annual assessments aligned to state standards. Michigan for example, uses the

Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) for grades 3 through 8 for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; grades 5 and 8 science, and grades 6 and 9 social studies. High school students are assessed in grade 11 in all four subjects using a combination of three exams that measure college and work readiness as well as students' achievement on Michigan's high school course expectations. State accountability and accreditation standards established prior to, in compliance with, and following the passage of NCLB require high school students take the ACT, ACT WorkKeys, and the Michigan Merit Exam. The compilation of exams meets NCLB requirements as well as Governor Granholm's high school reform agenda, which is aimed at increasing graduation requirements and increasing the state's "intellectual capital." The latter goal aims to address Michigan's economic challenges in hopes of shifting the workforce from blue to white collar workers by first preparing more college-ready graduates. All 11th graders must take these tests, including those with limited English proficiency and certified cognitive disabilities. Districts must report individual students' scores and disaggregate them into specific subgroups as evidence of their capacity to serve and improve their results.

AMO and AYP. States must develop annual measurable objectives (AMO) in reading and mathematics to determine if districts and schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards the ultimate goal of having all (100%) students proficient in mathematics and English language arts by 2013-14 (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Suderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005;). A state, school and a district can meet the state's AMO towards the "statistically impossible" (Cross, 2004, p. 140) goal by using rolling averages calculated over two and three year periods. The new law promises to reward

successful districts with accreditation and to punish those that persistently fail to improve. Currently, the task of identifying proficiency levels and means of calculating AYP belongs to states with U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) approval. Given this flexibility, states have created varied interpretations for determining AYP; it is extremely complex nationally (Cross, 2004, Hess & Petrilli, 2008).

In Michigan, the definition of AYP has evolved considerably since the ESEA reauthorization in 2002 to include complex statistical formulas few teachers, administrators, and parents understand. For example, the 2005 testing cycle incorporated measurement errors into AYP calculations granting a new level of achievement: provisionally proficient. Provisional proficiency, when taking into account measurement errors, permits students' scores that fall just below the cut score to count towards a district's/school's proficiency rate. In the 2005-06 test year, Michigan began testing all students in grades three through eight in ELA and mathematics in the fall on the previous school year's content standards, benchmarks, and grade level content expectations. Moving the test from winter to fall meant creating new standards and achievement thresholds. A more detailed look at Michigan's current accountability structure is discussed in Chapter 4.

What remains constant in AYP calculations is that all schools and districts must consider the overall achievement, growth and change rates of a designated number of students within seven different subgroups, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency, attendance rates, percentage of students tested, and overall tested student outcomes at or above the cut scores. The intent is to hold schools accountable for closing the achievement gap between traditionally successful white middle class/affluent

students and those who have historically struggled academically or whose culture resists white schooling (Delpit, 1995; Grande, 2004; Peshkin, 1986; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005; Tavares, 2003). Three variables determine a school and district's potential for success: rigor of assessments, subgroup size, and diversity of an individual school (Abernathy, 2007).

Multiple Years of Continuous Failure. Continuous failure requires Title I schools to respond by enacting a series of interventions that intensify each subsequent year each school does not make AYP. Required changes begin with the school's second consecutive year of failure to meet achievement thresholds overall or within a single subgroup of students. At this point, the school is labeled "in need of improvement" and must take several prescribed steps to rectify the situation. These include developing a comprehensive two-year school improvement plan that focuses on core subjects, employs scientifically proven instructional and organizational practices that differ from customary procedures; using outside consultation; and stimulating greater parental participation. The school must also commit financial and professional resources to professional development of instructional staff (10% of school's Title I allocation must be "set aside"); and clear and timely articulation of the failing school's status to parents, an explanation of what the label means, how their school compares to other district schools, what it is doing to improve its rating.

Communication must include notifying parents of their option to transfer out of the failing school to a successful school within the boundaries of the local educational agency that can include charter and private schools (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Hess & Petrilli, 2008). Failing schools bear the cost of transporting individual students

across the district out of their Title I allocation – equivalent to the individual schools' per pupil formula. An extension of school choice, this sanction gives parents – who are otherwise trapped in their failing neighborhood school – options. The USDOE requires AYP-compliant schools to find a way to accommodate those wishing to transfer; however, limited capacity of these schools to expand instructional space has kept thousands of students from taking advantage of school of choice options (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). It is also not entirely clear that parents want to move their children from these schools (Bell, 2003). In the event that no schools within a district have made AYP, the district must "to every extent possible" make arrangements with successful schools outside of their attendance areas for their needy students. As of 2005, according to Hess and Petrilli (2008) this was a rare occurrence with few high performing districts willing to accept new needy students. Charter schools receiving Title I funding follow the same lines of accountability; schools not receiving Title I funds do not face the same sanctions in most states.

Failing to meet the states AMO for AYP for a third consecutive year in a row moves additional federal money out of the unsuccessful public school environment and indirectly into the hands of private enterprise. Sanctions enacted in year two of consecutive failure continue, adding the provision of supplemental services for the lowest income, lowest achieving students first. Supplemental services include a wide range of organizations: non-profit entities, for-profit entities, and local educational agencies approved at the state level. Schools must inform parents in an understandable and uniform format of the availability of supplemental services, list state-approved providers, and briefly describe services. Again, schools must set aside 20% of their Title I

allocations at the district level for these services, thus potentially restricting their capacity to achieve success by reducing available resources (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Hess & Petrilli, 2008).

Four continuous years of failure launch schools into "corrective action." In this phase, the legislation implores districts to choose one of six options aimed at adjusting the school's organizational structure while continuing to offer school of choice and supplemental educational services options. These include: replacing educational staff linked to continuous failure in mathematics and English language arts; instituting and fully implementing a new instructional curriculum with appropriate professional development for staff – both of which must stem from scientifically proven practices; decreasing school authority at the building level; appointing an outside expert to advise school personnel on efficient ways to implement their plan for improvement; extending the school year and/or school day; or restructuring the school's internal organization. As with other provisions, once the school has developed its' corrective action plan, it must publish and disseminate the content of that plan to parents (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Hess & Pertrilli, 2008).

Hess and Petrilli (2008) point out that the law gives districts a choice as to which corrective action to take leaving them an option to take the path of least resistance. Many districts bound to collective bargaining agreements that remain in effect during corrective action, are limited in what they can do relative to staffing and modifying the instructional day or school calendar.

Five consecutive years of failure requires that a struggling school drafts a plan for "restructuring" that then must be implement before the beginning of the next school year.

Restructuring choices give a chronically failing school a "fresh start" and includes options of: reopening the school as a public charter; replacing all school staff including the principal who are relevant to the school's failure to make AYP in mathematics and English language arts; entering into a contract with an outside entity like a private management company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness; turning over the school's operation to the state; or any other arrangements in the school governance that alters the school's staffing (section 1116, ESEA 2002; Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Hess & Petrilli, 2008). It is within these final two punitive phases that No Child Left Behind begins to dig deep into the heart of the organizational structure of public schooling where it disbands the democratic and bureaucratic structures through consequential actions. Failure to make AYP six years in a row requires the school to carry out one of five alternative governance options.

Restructuring attempts on failing schools prior to NCLB have demonstrated mixed results with few systematic studies available, according to Hess and Petrilli (2008). Simply changing governance is not effective without consideration of modifying the organization, personnel, and instruction. Dissolving schools and reopening them as a new school proves ineffective if it simply replaces the school improvement plan and the principal. Loveless's (2003) study of charter school effectiveness created as "fresh starts" and as competition for public schools after the implementation of NCLB shows mixed results varying from state to state. The effectiveness of charters schools -- often small in size, diverse in types of students, and with limited standardized test scores over a substantial time span – are particularly hard to make generalized claims about. Public school restructuring initiatives that include hiring educational management organizations

and state and mayoral takeovers have netted similar mixed results of success and failures (Hess & Petrilli, 2008).

Requiring a unitary system of accountability for all state schools, the law extends beyond Title I supported public schools to include public charters and non-Title I environments. While not as punitive, the legislation requires these schools to report their results to their communities. In 2004-05, the Michigan Department of Education defined sanctions for non-performing schools that follow a similar sequence.

Proven Practices

A second feature of NCLB is its heavy emphasis on "scientifically proven" practices. The act mandates that schools using Title I funds base instruction, technical assistance, and professional development on "scientifically-based research." The law specifies scientifically based research on firm criteria: (1) drawing from systematic empirical methods reliant upon observation and experimentation; (2) applying rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge across multiple measures, evaluators, and studies; (3) testing stated hypothesis and justifies general conclusions drawn; (4) using experimental or quasi-experimental designs containing within-condition or across-condition controls; and (5) ensuring the replication of studies, or at least providing the opportunity for future work to systematically build upon findings. School districts or individuals must select studies that come from peerreviewed journals or are approved by panels of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review (Hess & Petrilli, 2008; ECS NCLB Policy Briefs, 2002). Failing schools must incorporate federally approved instructional and professional development programs as part of the sequence of sanctions.
According to Cowan and Mansevit (2002), the Bush administration found it necessary to require these standards as it believed existing educational research and instructional practices lacked genuine scientific validation. Policy implementation questions abound as few local educational agencies, schools, and practitioners exhibit the capacity and will to make sound technical judgments about what constitutes scientifically-based instruction, curriculum, and professional development, preferring instead to rely on local knowledge, custom, habit, and tradition (Jackson, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Lortie, 1975).

Parent Consumerism

A third feature of the legislation is that it expands the depth and breadth of local and state reporting requiring states and districts to include specific information on annual report cards (PA 25 School Improvement Report) released to the public by October 15th of each school year. Individual schools, districts, and states must report student achievement overall as well as disaggregated outcomes by race, ethnicity, gender, English proficiency, migrant, disability, and social-economic status. Schools, districts, and states must also report assessment results by performance level, showing two-year trend data for each school subject and grade tested, with a comparison between annual objectives and actual performance for each group. High schools must report graduation rates for secondary students. Individual schools must inform their communities on their performance on adequate yearly progress measures annually. Districts must identify and make public which schools have been identified for improvement through their annual reports.

Previous versions of ESEA established that parents whose children received Title I services in local schools were to have an active voice in program planning and evaluation processes and that schools were to help them assist their children with their education. Schools were to accomplish this by breaking down barriers that kept the disadvantaged parents out of schools and through educational forums with topics like homework monitoring, parent-teacher communication, home visits, school-home compacts, and curriculum nights. The reauthorization preserves existing parent roles as policymakers and educational partners while adding a new emphasis on parents as consumers of their children's education. Successful parent involvement ought to, then, entail more than counting activities parents attend or documenting their attendance at planning and evaluation meetings. Now the goal is to increase parent behaviors that have been proven to positively effect student achievement.

Frequently referred to as parent "empowerment" initiatives (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002; Cross, 2004; Hess & Petrilli, 2008; USDE, 2002), NCLB mandates that schools inform parents of their right to public school choice and supplemental educational services in the event of school failure. This gives parents tools to demand improvement in their schools and to punish schools by leaving if necessary. The logical threat of parent exodus hanging overhead will motivate schools to change.

According to the policy parents will gain stipulated information through specific mandated reporting mechanisms. First, states must communicate results of annual assessments and schools' AYP toward meeting federal student achievement goals to local education agencies, parents, teachers, principals, and the community at large annually. When a local school has been identified for improvement it must give its parents chances

to have input on the school improvement plan, and it must tell parents of their option to move their children to another, better school. The federal legislation expects this pattern of parent involvement to continue in the event of a state education takeover, although the manner in which this is to occur is less specific. Through this language, parents gain a voice in what has traditionally functioned as impermeable school bureaucracy.

Second, parents must receive information from schools that is useful and understandable to them. This means that the school must make clear its status, what that status means, the reasons for it, and how this compares with other schools. The reporting school must define what it is doing to address the problem of low achievement and how the local district and state agency are supporting the school. The act also stipulates that parents have the right to know the professional qualifications of their children's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. In "understandable" language, local agencies must inform parents of the following:

- whether teachers have met state qualifying and licensing requirements for the grade level and subject areas in which they teach;
- whether any teachers are teaching under an emergency or other provisional certificate through which state qualifications or licensing criteria have been waved;
- the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, including the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- whether the child is served by paraprofessionals, and, if so, their qualifications (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; USDE, 2002).

Finally, the legislation awards parents the right to receive their individual child's state achievement outcomes and request to see instructional materials used by teachers. The new rights provided to parents by the reauthorization generate an interesting paradox; they demand that parents with children in Title I schools interact with the school in ways incongruent with the families' cultural norms. Often coming from working class and high poverty environments – an assumption made because of Title I funding guidelines -- the legislation advocates that these parents engage in their child's schooling like their middle class counterparts (Anyon, 1981; Lareau, 2000; Payne, 1996).

Highly Qualified Personnel

NCLB attacks student achievement from a fourth angle, addressing teacher quality in language framed by claims made about the strong correlation found between student learning and service by fully qualified professionals (Cowen & Manasevit, 2002; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1999; Haycock, 1998; Paige, 2002). Here the law attends to two issues. First, children attending urban and poor rural centers often receive instruction from teachers working without training, certification, or mentoring and second, the tendency for schools to over-utilize untrained aides for supplemental subject matter instruction. In both cases, the highest need students receive the lowest quality education (Darling-Hammond, 2004). This portion of the law mandates that all teachers and paraprofessionals in public schools possess appropriate professional credentials by the end of the 2005-06 school year – even those delivering instruction in non-Title I funded environments. It dovetails with the aforementioned "parents right to know," where schools must make available to their community information about teacher and paraprofessional credentials upon request.

NCLB imposes the most significant, wide-ranging requirements ever enacted by the federal government on local educational agencies' employment and hiring practices (Cowan & Manasevit, 2002a, 2005b; Hess & Petrilli, 2008). The legislation defines a highly qualified teacher as one who has met full state qualifications or passed the state teacher licensing examination; has completed certification (thereby eliminating all emergency certification); holds at least a bachelor's degree; and has passed a rigorous state test demonstrating relevant content knowledge. Practitioners hired before the reauthorization (in Michigan, prior to 1992 when state licensing tests came into effect), may meet the subject matter requirement through the same means as new teachers, or they may demonstrate their competencies in all academic areas in which they teach based on highly objective uniform state standards of evaluation (HOUSSE). In Michigan, experienced teachers meet HOUSSE guidelines by either taking the test, having a master's degree in the content area in which he or she teaches or completing a portfolio. Teachers recognized as highly qualified in another state outside of Michigan are not automatically considered qualified in Michigan (Flanagan, 2004).

The law places heavy emphasis on rigorous subject matter preparation for new teachers and strong content knowledge for existing practitioners. The prevalent attention to detail in this area implies Congress finds state certification programs weak in this area. Paige (2002) asserts that content knowledge, rather than course work in pedagogy and teaching practice influence students' academic achievement. Effective teaching, he asserts, when measured by high levels of student achievement, is positively linked to teachers' verbal and cognitive abilities as well as subject matter competency (Paige, 2002 citing Haycock, 1998). Evidence relating teacher certification and preparation in teaching

methods failed to meet the qualifications of scientific rigor or presented data statistically insignificant to draw strong parallels between them and student achievement (Paige, 2002). Research in this area suggests a more complex picture than that painted by either the legislation or Paige (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; National Academy of Education, 2009; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

NCLB and the Educational Marketplace

The fifth and final feature of NCLB is its conception of the education system as a marketplace with consumers (parents), vendors (schools), products (students and their achievement), and quantifiable production standards (of students and teachers). As a piece of educational reform legislation, NCLB overtly promises to address educational inefficiency, particularly in school settings serving underprivileged children using market influences. This is evident in the manner the federal law coerces failing Title I assisted schools to establish conditions whereby all children meet rigorous academic achievement standards; communicate openly with their parents; place qualified teachers in every classroom; and employ objective, rational curriculum, instruction, and assessment methods or reshape the organizational structure of public schooling.

The ESEA reauthorization differs considerably from previous reauthorizations in the unique way the federal government utilizes democratic political control to shift decision-making away from the local public to that of individuals through language steeped in market ideology (Chubb & Moe, 1990). It accomplishes this through multiple venues. First, it addresses the organizational laxity of public schools by making them more responsive to "customers." As a traditionally political, publicly-constituted, funded-governed institution, public education is particularly vulnerable to voices of

special interests groups that express their interests through school board and millage elections, bond issues, petitions, organized protests at school board meetings, direct complaints to school personnel, influence of parent and teacher associations, and legislative lobbying (Cusick, 1993; Labaree, 2000).

Before the reauthorization, public schools provoked exit of its unsatisfied customers, but this action did not initiate change. Labaree (2000) points out two substantial reasons why exit did not affect public schooling. First, exiting customers did not threaten the fiscal base of schools, and second, fleeing customers - those in the upper middle class and typically the most quality conscious and politically influential -- immediately solve their own problem by leaving without effecting the institution they left behind. The reauthorization changes the influence of exiting students by attaching federal dollars to identified students. Dissatisfied parents now can seek other options and their federal assistance goes with them. Schools that wish to hold onto their federal dollars now need to be far more conscientious about their own districts. This market-influenced change challenges public school's assumptions and beliefs about customer service and student proficiency as these have not been driving purposes prior to the legislation.

Second, the legislation challenges other traditional strongholds within the organizational structure of public schools when it uses market language to craft a standardized definition of a highly qualified teacher. University credentials -- in the form of bachelor degrees with focused course work in teaching content areas coupled with uniform state standards of evaluation -- objectify the connection between teacher

preparation and the potential for student achievement. While obviously negating the complex nature of teaching as something more than the transmission of codified knowledge, the act of labeling a quality teacher through standardized measures and credentials translates into the quantitative language of accountability by which federal and state authorities justify school practice within standardized, rational plans readily communicated to the public (McNeil, 1986).

Third, the heavy emphasis placed on the validation of program designs, instructional methods, professional development, curriculum materials, and assessment through scientifically proven practices strongly communicates influence of industrial management thinking. The act is laden with terms referencing the need for reliable and valid data based on rigorous, systematic and objective procedures, presented in sufficient detail and clarity to insure the replication of results (or at least formed with the ability for others to systematically build on stated findings). The overarching emphasis of employing scientific, rational processes to educational practitioners, and quantifies teaching and learning for purposes of commodifying them (McNeil, 1986).

Fourth, market-influenced revisions in the reauthorization redefine public schools' relationships with the community, specifically with parents. As described earlier, the legislation preserves original frameworks for parent involvement while including provisions that encourages them to interact with education as a private good like any other such good in the commodity market. It does this through a language that gives parents permission to access private and public schools of choice with their "failing" school providing them a Title I voucher to offset the costs of transportation or tuition. The act assumes that only students or their parents have stakes in public

education and the benefits it brings them as individual consumers (Labaree, 2000). Exiting is quick and painless, involving minimal investment of time and emotional energy; it instantly satisfies the individual consumer's needs without consideration for those left behind (Hirschman, 1970; Labaree, 2000). Another indicator of market ideology surfaces in the legislative text that requires schools notify their parents of their "right to know" about teacher and paraprofessional qualifications, as well as individual students' state test scores, and instructional materials used. This makes schools accountable to highly knowledgeable consuming parents looking for a return on their educational tax investment (Hirschman, 1970). This portion of the legislation places considerable demands on teachers, administrators, and parents and makes questionable assumptions about their capacity and will to engage in this new competitive, market driven game of schooling.

A Functionalist Policy

An analysis of each main tenet of NCLB finds strong parallels between the intent of the legislation and the functional intent for public schooling. To better understand the logic informing the policy, I turn to Hurn (1993) who, through both a historical and contemporary analysis of the expansion of schooling, framed three functional purposes for schooling in the wake of a complex, modern society. Modern industrial society, functionalists claim, needs citizens who are literate and exhibit complex cognitive skills; have moral and cultural consensus; and who have been efficiently and fairly sorted and selected for adult roles based on talent. Let us now consider how Hurn's description of the functional paradigm sheds light on NCLB as well as critiques of this perspective.

Development of Complex Cognitive Skills

Industrialization and urbanization altered the socialization patterns of children. Previously learned skills, values, and beliefs of adult society were learned by participating in adult activities from an early age. Prior to these societal changes, children learned particular crafts by observing and participating in that activity with their parents or other adults within the community. The modernization of society eliminated many existing occupations and created new ones that parents and community members were ill prepared to pass onto youths. Changing occupational demands of modern society generated the first functional purpose for schooling: to teach youth the new skills necessary to perform new occupations (Hurn, 1993). Specifically, a productive society needs literate workers with developed mathematical and technological skills. Less relevant to my argument, but worthy of mention, is the functionalist belief that society also needed a collection of workers who are punctual, can follow written directions, and adapt to the demands of steady repetitive effort associated with factory life.

The strong emphasis on student performance in reading, writing, and mathematical knowledge in the legislation echoes functionalist purposes of education. Holding schools and their personnel accountable through federally-mandated standardized tests and enacting harsh measures for schools failing to measure up puts the emphasis on the economic importance an efficient, knowledgeable, and marketable American workforce. When schools leave "no child behind" academically, they function to serve broader political, in this case, economic aims.

Conflict theorists offer a counter argument to these thoughts, assuming that hidden within a noble agenda are social, economic, and political agendas aimed at

propagating social and economic inequality. Framed as neo-Marxist and radical thoughts by Hurn (1993), conflict theorists (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1977; Illich, 1970) posit that schools convey a particular type of consciousness devaluing feeling, personal intuitive knowledge, and traditional popular culture in favor of "real knowledge" contained within the disciplines and subjects schools teach. Over time, participants come to believe that only experts and large-scale organizations can solve social problems, that scientific and objective knowledge is the only rational knowledge that exists, and that the only legitimate culture is an educated one. Students unable to perform well on sanctioned exams, therefore accept their fate as failures in a modern technological society assuming lower-status service oriented occupations more fitting their measured ability (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Illich, 1970). While NCLB holds schools accountable for student success, conflict theorists may argue that it values a particular kind of knowledge – an abstract set of essential thinking skills – and consciousness exchanged for future economic and social successes.

Development of Moral and Cultural Consensus

A second component of the functional paradigm professes that moral consensus and cultural homogeneity are necessary in a diverse, modern technological society. Calling upon the work of Durkheim (1961), Hurn (1993) clarifies the function of schools as agents of a truly national society and as institutions of uniform moral education. This emphasis aims to restore societal cohesion and moral unity in the wake of industrialization. Durkheim (1961) asserts that schools, through the teaching of history and instruction in common values and morality tied students to ideas and purposes of the nation-state. Only schools could make citizens through the socialization of successive

generations of immigrants with differing customs, languages, and cultural traditions (Hurn, 1993 citing Durkheim, 1961). Further clarification of this function of schooling stresses the importance of teaching universal norms, in particular, those that value of rewarding good work and punishing poor work regardless of any personal relationships between parties (Hurn, 1993, again citing Durkheim, 1968). In essence, schools function to wean children from the particularistic, affective, and personal domain of their families and to develop attitudes that promote reliance on knowledge and expertise instead of familial custom.

Standardizing curriculum and holding schools accountable for transmitting sanctioned knowledge to all students – particularly diverse ethnic and racial groups, limited English speaking students, and students with disabilities –communicates the value placed on the production of citizenry with common knowledge of English, U.S. history, virtues of free enterprise, importance of individual achievement, and hard work (Hurn, 1993). Explicit enculturation appears through standardized tests measuring students' aptitude in core academic areas (including economics which I correlate to free enterprise). Furthermore, with language dictating that teachers demonstrate proficiency in core academic areas, it seems rational to assume the legislation aims to insure all children receive comparable instruction in English, U. S. history, and economics. Assessing both teachers and students on individual achievement through standardized tests – students through state and national assessments and teachers through basic skills and content area examinations – conveys the importance of common knowledge, hard work, and on the importance of qualifications (rather than personal preference). And finally, parent empowerment language presses parents to voice their private interest in their own child's

individual achievement by giving them authority to question the qualifications of their child's teachers; ask critical questions about curriculum; access their child's standardized test scores in a timely manner; and assert their child's right to additional services should the school fail to adequately instill common skills and values.

Conflict theorists might question the nature of moral and cultural consensus communicated in the legislation. Hurn (1993) points out how critical theorists (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis 1976; Illich,1970) argue that schools instill a particular kind of moral code, one that convinces people they receive the success and failure that they deserve. By emphasizing individual achievement through standardized assessments, critical theorists posit, unsuccessful students simply do not work hard and receive the appropriate consequences. Certainly, critical theorists (e.g., Apple, 1982) would challenge the nature of knowledge assessed in standardized tests and mandated in state and federal curricular models, finding flaw with its rational abstractions and its totalitarian nature (Hurn, 1993).

Equal Opportunity

A third trait of functional thinking holds that schools are the great equalizer – the single most important institution that works to erase the handicaps of birth and create a society truly open to the talented (Hurn, 1993). Equal opportunity is the key to a meritocratic society for functional theorists, one in which talent and effort determines an individual's status, thereby diminishing the correlation between parents' social status and their children's adult social status and educational levels.

A closer look at the meaning of equal opportunity is necessary here. The conception of equal opportunity has evolved, according to Hurn (1993), shifting from

legal obligation to active affirmation insuring equal treatment of different groups of people. Where once schools were charged with creating conditions exposing disadvantaged and underserved groups to cultural and cognitive opportunities void in their home and community lives, schools now must insure "equal results" (Coleman, 1966). Under this charge schools become accountable for gross differences in attendance, or success rates of different groups with the expectation they will take measures to reduce these differences. Schools must do more than avail opportunities; they must plan, demonstrate, and document effective strategies.

Evidence of the functional definition of equal opportunity as equal results is prominent in NCLB. One needs look no further than the criteria outlined for student achievement, teacher quality, parent empowerment and the emphasis on scientific basedresearch practices for affirmation. Regulations clearly state that schools are accountable for assuring all children meet the same high standards for reading (and writing) and mathematics and schools must disaggregate the achievement data by subgroups as proof. The articulation of particular subgroups is not a change – they represent traditionally disadvantaged, underserved, and special needs populations. If any group fails to make adequate yearly progress toward proficiency as measured by objective tests, schools must research, plan, and implement revisions in curriculum, instructional methodology, instructional staff, or school organization in a timely manner. Any revisions adopted by a failing school must meet approval by state agencies expecting to see only scientifically proven practices implemented. Recognizing that every child needs to experience instruction with teachers who have knowledge and skills legislative regulations require schools recruit and hire teachers whose credentials verify their preparedness. All

teachers serving students must demonstrate content area mastery through standardized assessment, receive state certification, and have a bachelor's degree. This effort, the logic goes, equalizes the playing field.

Both Coleman (1966) and Jencks (1972) have crafted provocative arguments shedding light on the powerful influence home and community life have on a child's school experience. Jencks found, for example, that affluent parents tend to place their children in schools with quality services and facilities, extend the length of the school day by exposing them to cultural experiences during non school time, more often impress upon them the importance of remaining in and doing well in school. The communities in which these children live in reinforce these values; children tend to associate with other children with similar interests and values (Cusick, 1993; Hollingshead, 1949; Willis, 1977). Ultimately, school achievement depends upon the will and aptitude of the student (Jencks, 1972), which is, in turn, greatly influenced by home and community associations.

Both Coleman's and Jencks's research informs parent empowerment legislation written in NCLB. First, schools are required to set aside specific amounts of federal funding (1% of allocations over \$500,000 or more) specifically for parent literacy and outreach programs. Schools serving high percentages of underserved, underprivileged youth must invite parents to participate in program planning, extend them information in an understandable format, and offer them avenues of informed choice should their school fail to meet federal guidelines. By inviting parents into the conversation of schooling, the legislation asks parents to take ownership for their child's education and exercise voice. In essence, the legislation literally mandates schools teach parents of disadvantaged

students' virtues that Coleman's and Jencks's research finds to correlate with higher student achievement.

The functional paradigm asserts that schools are the great societal equalizer, but critical theorists beg to differ. First, critical theorists point out how systemic discrimination within schools limits their potential to equalize opportunities of disadvantaged youths in the race for status. Legislation cannot usurp personal bias and prejudice towards individuals or groups. In schools, Rist (1976) finds that teacher and school personnel's perceptions of disadvantaged and minority students potentially alter the manner in which these groups of students receive instruction and are placed in academic tracks. Specific examples include physical placement within the classroom, and the manner in which teachers address and respond to students' questions and comments. From this view, students "inherit" their parents' low status by virtue of self-fulfilling prophecies rather than their innate ability or talents (Jencks, 1972; Okey & Cusick, 1995).

Second, critical theorists like Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Apple (2000) question both the fairness and type of knowledge measured on standardized tests and authorized through state curriculum frameworks relative to the home, community, and school experiences had by working class and disadvantaged students. A close look at the Michigan Curriculum Framework Document (MCFD), for example, presents content standards and benchmarks that represent content knowledge as a series of conceptually woven, essential thinking skills; it does not specify facts, dates, textbooks or particular book titles. The ambiguity permits local schools the opportunity to pick curricular materials that best match local values, attitudes and cultures. Teachers can guide students

in the exploration, reflection and construction of meaning of key concepts. In some school and district settings, teachers and administrators struggle to interpret and synthesize the MCFD into appropriate concrete representations for instruction. School staffs interpret these guidelines based on their assumptions about their learners' will and capacity to learn content knowledge, their students' ultimate professional and life goals, and their students' social status complicating standardization (Anyon, 1981, Rist, 1976). The explicitness of NCLB's accountability requirements led Michigan to build upon this document to create Grade Level Content Expectations (GLECs) for grades K-8 and the High School Course Expectations (HSCEs) for each high school required core content area clearly defining state expectations but not necessarily filtering for instructional interpretations.

Anyon (1981) provides insight into this tension. In a study of schools nested within various socio-economic communities, she found dominant patterns between the taught curriculum, student perception of knowledge, and teacher's perceptions of their learners. In working class schools, for example, Anyon found teachers conceptualizing school knowledge as a series of facts and simple skills. Teachers believed students needed the basics, "the three R's – simple skills" (p. 7). With limited prior knowledge, lack of parental support ("their parents don't teach them anything," p. 7), and limited student interest, teachers in working class environments felt it difficult to teach anything too complex. It seemed important for teachers "to keep the kids busy" (p. 7). The mathematics taught emphasized drill, procedures and following explicit steps; problems appeared on worksheets disconnected from real world contexts. Staff believed that textbook exercises that stressed mathematical reasoning and inferences were too difficult

for the students; they eliminated these sections from instruction. Other text representations and student work carried this theme. Social studies work involved recall and retention; copying teacher's notes, answering textbook questions, coloring and assembling cut-outs. Socialized in this environment, students reply to Anyon's queries asking them to identify the source and origin of knowledge with comments like "books, teachers, the board of education, and scientists" (p. 11). Some students simply did not know where knowledge came from. Knowledge, then, for working class students interviewed by Anyon was not something they constructed or owned – it belonged to someone else and came to them through listening. Anyon's findings echo Rist's (1976) assertions about self-fulfilling prophecies and lend support to critical theorists' assumptions about fairness of standardized tests and assessments. Working class students from Anyon's studies would struggle to meet high academic standards because their social and intellectual environments limit their opportunities for cognitive development.

NCLB's assertion of the parents' role in insuring successful student achievement for their own children in an effective home-school relationship as necessarily rational, objective, individualistic, and consumer-based has limited potential for achieving equality. Lareau (2000) sheds important light on this element of the legislation through a careful analysis of the connections between social class, family and school. She defines this relationship as inter-institutional and finds distinct variations in patterns exhibited from different social groups.

Lareau's (2000) close examination of working class parents and their relationship with school found a distinct separation of family life from that of educational institutions - a property that differed significantly from the upper middle class families. Working

class parents prepared their children for school but did so in ways significantly different from middle class parents. They taught their children manners and rudimentary educational skills; were supportive and helpful, but did not supervise, compensate for, or attempt to intervene in their children's educational program. Educational levels of working class parents; social status relative to teachers; limited access to income and material resources; and manner, routine, and purpose of their work affected their relationships with educational institutions and their perceptions of schooling in general. Lareau (2000) argued that limits in working class parents' educational level, for example, restricted their understanding of diagnostic and instructional language and inhibited their active role in the home-school relationship. Less flexible employment schedules, strong separation of home and work, and limited financial and material resources also restricted their participation in school events during the school day and shaped their belief about separation of school and home activities.

In contrast, upper middle class parents actively supervised, supplemented, and intervened in their children's education; they challenged teachers' judgments and often attempted to circumvent the system. Their social status and educational level enabled them to generate an equal relationship with teachers. The nature of upper middle class parents' work, where they operate with less direct supervision and timed/policed routines, permitted them opportunities to engage in school activities during the instructional day. Habits of blending home and work activities extended to the culturing of their children; they frequently brought work home merging the two social institutions. Upper middle class patterns of behavior mirror those advocated by the legislation. The potential for NCLB's parent empowerment component of the legislation to level the playing field may

fall short in practice because of unequal resources and dispositions between social class groups and their social institutions of home and school. One does not change ingrained social and cultural norms through such mandates.

Clearly, the blueprint informing NCLB has functionalist intentions and many flaws that are inconsistent with the manner in which people in various social institutions interact. In the next chapter I examine another institutional theory, high modernism (Scott, 1998) and how it further explains the flawed logic of NCLB in the social spaces of school.

CHAPTER 4

SEEING NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

THROUGH A LENS OF HIGH MODERNISM

The point is simply that high-modernist designs for life and production tend to diminish the skills, agility, initiative, and morale of their intended beneficiaries. They bring about a mild form of this institutional neurosis. Complex, diverse, animated environments contribute to...the producing a resilient, flexible, adept population that has more experience in confronting novel challenges and taking initiative. Narrow, planned environments, by contrast, foster a less skilled, less innovative, less resourceful population. This population, once created, would ironically have been exactly the kind of human material that would in fact have needed close supervision from above. – J. C. Scott, Seeing Like a State

Introduction

In NCLB, we see an evolved, market-based, high modernist, functionalist policy with both explicit and implicit aims to enable direct federal intrusion into state and local management of teaching and learning. In this section, I intend to examine an antagonist lurking within the high modernist frame promising to derail the federal policy's noble intentions of closing the achievement gap by improving leadership, teaching, learning and parent engagement through a system of inducements and punishments. To accomplish this, I begin by first analyzing NCLB through the lens of high modernism (Scott, 1998). Second, I describe and explain Scott's (1998) concept of mētis or practical knowledge and the important roles it plays in various forms of human interaction within complex, changing, and unpredictable social physical spaces. Third, I examine the "art of locality" a term Scott uses to describe how an individual with practical knowledge imaginatively translates generalities -- rules or technical knowledge -- into successfully local applications. Fourth, I discuss how Scott differentiates between technical and local knowledge specifically their overall purposes and how each is learned. Each element of

the description of mētis sets up Scott's rationale as to why state simplifications fail. Finally, I place his analysis into the context of schooling, specifically teaching and learning to teach. This becomes important as Scott reminds us that thin, formulaic simplifications imposed by state (or in our case federal) power are destructive because they do not consider the importance of the delicate collaboration between practical and formal epistemic knowledge in human relationships with one another and their environments – natural and manmade - while simultaneously aiming to control participants.

High Modernist Policy

NCLB attempts to make public education legible to state authorities through a series of federal interventions that intend to improve the quality of schooling for all children and, therefore, all of society. It does this through a series of governmental actions Scott (1998) defines as high modernist.

High modernism, according to Scott, administratively aims to rationally order nature and society through state interventions that plan to improve the quality of the human condition for all of society based on the reasoning of science and technology. Governing authorities accomplish societal ordering through unrestrained authoritarian power (regulations and mandates) and the limited capacity of civil society to resist plans. Policymakers working in the spirit of high modernism vest strong faith in linear progress and preconceived, tangible, and quantifiable goals. Their unbridled, heroic commitment to scientific and technical knowledge promises to liberate society from the irrationalities and myths of the past. This process of social improvement involves perceiving society as a reified object, separate from the state, something onto which the state can design and

impose conscious, rational, scientific interventions with the purpose of perfecting its population (Scott, 1998).

As a policy document, NCLB follows high-modernist logic. It acts on public school settings, using tight regulations and procedures, centralized federal (and then state) authority, and close monitoring of individual schools and their personnel as means of achieving compliance (Elmore, 1979). The legislation demands that all children become proficient in math and English language arts validated through annual assessments aligned to state standards. Ineffective schools -- those operating with little capacity to resist and receiving Title I assistance -- must develop or identify high quality, effective curricula; must take into account the experience of model programs for the educationally disadvantaged and the findings of relevant scientifically-based research as they develop their plans for services; and must use effective instructional methods and strategies based on scientific research. The heavy emphasis on scientifically-based research practices implores schools to abandon ostensibly ritualistic, intuitive, and ineffective practices of the past in favor of those "proven" to be technically superior. This challenges the practice of the majority of public school teachers and administrators who have shaped their practice as rugged individuals through trial and error and by combining their personal biographies with the folkways of teaching (Britzman, 1987; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

As a high modernist document, NCLB operates to simplify education. Scott (1998) defines simplifications as abstract representations of space, people, and language that governing authorities oversee. Simplifications exist as informational briefs expressed in terms easily replicable across many cases. Facts appearing in state

schematics lose their particularity; they have restricted ability to portray the complex variations existing within the aggregate data (Scott, 1998). School and district standardized test scores function as a state schematic; they generalize student learning and teaching, collapsing details and ignoring relative distinctions. The quality of instruction becomes synonymous with student achievement outcomes measured by state imposed tests. In the case of NCLB, data sets label school settings as urban, suburban, or rural, differentiate them by poverty levels (determines Title I eligibility), student achievement scores, and ethnic demography. The policy's aim to portray education through a series of static, impersonal aggregates potentially conflicts with the assumptions and beliefs of school personnel hold about teaching and learning, which is, for practitioners, a highly personalized enterprise.

Synoptic facts accumulated through state simplifications are static, impersonal aggregates that permit the state to standardize the schools for the purpose of management stripping the educational process of its complexity. With a distant vantage point, NCLB (as a state simplification) provides authorities with documents and statistics of human activities of interest to them – the capacity of schools to assure all students achieve academic proficiency in mathematics and reading – for the purposes of enumerating and locating the successful or failing schools. It makes educational practices and/or outcomes more legible and manageable from afar.

State simplification is necessary, according to Scott (1998), for without the synoptic view, governing authorities would lack the capacity to enact interventions insulating populations from potential assistance. Existing as standardized measures of counted, classified units that authorities can manipulate and combine, state

simplifications reveal new truths about the population. In the case of education, state simplifications shaped by NCLB provide authorities with information about the achievement of specific subgroups organized by gender, educated within particular kinds of school settings by certain types of teachers with specific curricula and instructional interventions.

While necessary, state simplifications lack the facility to place into a bureaucratic formula the diversity and complexity of natural systems and their capacity to adopt or die. Existing as objective bodies of information applicable throughout a nation, state standards make local situations legible to outsiders, but this information holds little concern for the locality's human community and the aesthetic, ritual or sentimental values it places on a school, land, customs, a language, education, or ethnicity (Scott, 1998). Scott (1998) provides numerous examples as to how broad simplifications seeking to control and order human and natural environments frequently falter because their designs can not predict or control unforeseen resistance, dismiss necessary diversity and interdependency in these spaces, usurp delicate natural balances, and neglect the power of local knowledge and customs to shift and make micro-adjustments for continued existence a point upon which I build in a future section. Schooling, as Lortie (1975) reminds us, is particularly resistant to change as it is armed with social and structural mechanisms for sustainability of the status quo.

Mētis

Scott (1998) defines "mētis" as a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence developed in response to a constantly changing, complex, uncertain natural and physical environment. All human activities require a degree of mētis; all activities

taught by having individuals engage in the activities themselves involve mētis. Scott gives us examples of learning to fly a kite, ride a bike, drive a car, sail, and fish as activities that involve developing skills necessary to adapt to an unpredictable physical environment. To master such acts, individuals must make many imperceptible adjustments best learned by practice (Scott, 1998). Learning to sail, for example requires understanding how one's boat functions under power and sail and knowing how and when to raise sails and modify their angle in response to the wind and seas. Individuals can learn the technical knowledge about the boat's systems, how the boat moves through the water, and how the sails catch the wind as well as learn hard fast rules about water currents and weather, but each sailing trip and boat is unique, requiring that an individual make adjustments to the physical environment by combining technical knowledge with that learned through trial and error and experience.

People in more complicated fields of work - firefighting, emergency medicine practitioners, rescue squads, public safety personnel, electrical line-men and farmers involve human action within precarious environments who respond quickly and decisively to limit damage and save lives. While essential skills of each line of work can be taught, Scott (1998) reminds us that each situation is unique requiring actors know which "rule of thumb to apply in which order and when to throw the book away and improvise" (p. 314). It requires a delicate balance between inspired experience and improvisation to successful put out fires, rescue and apply medical assistance to individuals and animals in natural and manmade disasters, resolve public conflict, or work through natural phenomena. Each begins with a complex, unpredictable environmental event requiring actors devise techniques and equipment to resolve the

situation; they cannot simplify their environment in order to apply a cookie-cutter solution.

Scott argues that nearly all human interaction involves mētis. Complex physical actions require constant adjustment to the movement, values, desires, or gestures of others (Scott, 1998). Scott's competitive and cooperative examples include both individual and team athletic contests and non-combative engagements like dancing, playing music, or lovemaking. The instant, quasi-automatic responses to an opponents moves and the ability to deceive one's opponent in boxing, wrestling, and fencing are learned only through long practice of the activity itself. In team sports, both competitive and cooperative aspects of mētis are employed when the an individual player must exhibit the combined knowledge of how his/her team moves as well as how his/her team interactions considers variations in particular and general skills of the individual members and the combination of those skills as a team, the team's chemistry, as well as the unique challenges of each opposing team and that specific contest (Scott, 1998).

Scott (1998) extends the arenas in which we find evidence of mētis in individual and group problem solving to include politics and war diplomacy. Both of these highstakes settings involve the practitioner(s) shaping the behavior of partners and opponents to his/her own ends. More complex than team sports or the physical act of learning to sail, both the diplomat and politician are simultaneously attempting to influence their partners and counterparts while their opponents are also attempting to outwit them in complicated, changing physical environments. One must cooperate, manipulate, outwit, and guess about moves and deceptions simultaneously. Successful players have the

ability to adapt quickly and well to unpredictable human and natural events while making the best out of limited resources. Practice, reflective study of similar situations and various actors' responses over time, trial and error, and experience with success and failure are critical. These skills are difficult to teach.

In each case described - from the simple act of learning to ride a bike to the more complicated task of political diplomacy - practitioners engage in similar but never precisely the same situations and deploy quick and practiced adaptations that become almost second nature. Rules bound within these skills are acquired through practice resulting in a general "feel or knack" for the action or strategy. Metis resists simplification into deductive principles learned through book learning because the environments in which it is worked out are complex and unpredictable making it impossible to apply rational decision-making based on formal procedures (Scott, 1998).

Mētis involves imaginatively translating general knowledge into situated knowledge for successful local applications. The practice and experience reflected in metis is always local, according to Scott (1998), where individuals make minute adjustments or translations to fit a unique time and place. Scott provides a rich portrait of local knowledge via a discussion of seamanship. In seamanship the general knowledge of navigation differs from the local knowledge of piloting a ship into a particular harbor; the latter is a highly contextual skill. When navigating the open sea, general rules of navigation are readily applied, but each harbor is unique requiring the pilot know features of the local wind, tides, local traffic conditions, and shifting sandbars as well as how to bring different kinds of ships safely to berth in variable conditions (Scott, 1998; see

Twain, 1899 for an example). The local pilot knows one harbor; his knowledge would be irrelevant if transferred to another harbor.

According to Scott, social and environmental reform policies that do not consider the important role that local knowledge plays in translating general rules (laws) into successful local applications fail. In his study of state simplifications applied to forestry, revolution, urban planning, agriculture, and rural settlements, Scott found that each failed because of the generality of the attempt and the lack of consideration of the unique properties of a particular forest, a particular revolution, a particular farm at a particular time within a particular space for particular ends. The more general the rules, the more they require translating if they are to be locally successful (Scott, 1998).

Technical knowledge differs from mētis. Unlike mētis, technical knowledge is based on hard-and-fast rules, principles, and propositions; it is codified, taught, and modified differently. Technical knowledge is universal and verifiable; it is organized analytically into small, explicit, logical steps that can be taught as a formal discipline. Where local knowledge is concerned with practical results, personal skill or a touch, technical knowledge is impersonal, often quantitative stressing explanation and verification. Technical knowledge may or may not have practical application as it is the premise of theory. Scientific insight, discovery, and invention differ from technical knowledge, because they deal with risk and uncertainty; modern science -- and therefore technical knowledge -- works best where there is only a singular goal, the end specifiable from the activity capable of being precisely measured, involving exact calculations, or rigorous logic (Scott, 1998). Scott gives us the example of how scientific agriculture addressed the problem of growing the largest number of bushels of a crop at the least cost

per acre revealed through experimental, one-variable at a time trials, void of consideration of the issues of farming life and community, family needs, long-term soil structure, ecological diversity and sustainability. The lack of balance between technical knowledge and mētis associated with farming life led to the failure of the plan.

Local knowledge is practical, opportune, and contextual rather than integrated into the general conventions of scientific discourse (Scott, 1998). The value of mētis, Scott reminds us, is its local use, purpose, value, success and plasticity. Its formation is the result of close and astute observation of the local environment by those with a vital investment in the observation; local people are passionate about the outcomes because their quality of life is contingent upon the findings. Success frames its development; usefulness determines its deployment. Cultivation of local knowledge is a by-product of having lived as a member of a community, year in and year out in the field; knowledge gathered from observation, practices, and experiments is passed on orally to other community members. The intent is not to contribute to a wider body of knowledge but to solve a concrete problem faced. Sometimes practical knowledge precedes science; the insight is affirmed by scientific trials.

Unlike technical knowledge learned from books, local knowledge is implicit and automatic. An experienced practitioner of a skill or a craft, Scott (1998) points out, develops "a repertoire of moves, visual judgments, a sense of touch, or a discriminating gestalt for assessing the work as well as a range of accurate intuitions born of experience that defy being communicating apart from practice" (p. 329). The practitioner is often at loss to explain the knowledge; it is common sense to those within the community. Insight and intuition are part of mētis -- for an experienced practitioner the tricks of the

trade are always verifiable through formal measures. The value of the practitioner's insight is its application in situations that require rapid judgments of high but not perfect accuracy employed by medical practitioners, rescue workers, farmers, and teachers. Scott (1998) makes an important note that the development of local knowledge requires that the practitioner make a mistake at least one and involve observations and orally transmitted knowledge during informal apprenticeships.

Acquiring local knowledge occurs in specific social contexts involving a community of interest, accumulated information, and ongoing communication. The distribution of local knowledge is not democratically distributed; it involves both having a knack and access to the information and the experience which are not common and may be restricted. An example of spaces where the transmission and sharing of local knowledge occurs includes artisan guilds, gifted craftsmen, certain classes, religious fraternities, entire communities, men and women in general (Scott, 1998). The social structure of these communities, the advantages that the monopoly of knowledge may confer, the marginality of these social spaces to the state and markets determines the degree and depth of mētis development. Local knowledge is not homogeneous; it is differentiated by both the nature of the community and its specific environment.

Scott's descriptive analysis of local knowledge takes a critical turn when contemplating its destruction and replacement with standardized formulas prescribed by the state and large-scale bureaucratic capitalism. According to Scott, any form of production or social life cannot be made to work with formulas alone; actions of the state are ones of control and appropriation in the name of efficiency. Elimination of local knowledge is a precondition of administrative order, appropriation, worker discipline,

and profit. Combining the assumption that epistemic knowledge is universally superior with authoritarian social engineering is dangerous. Cleansing processes of local, skilled workers abilities to make practical adjustments and compensations to particular environments and materials is impossible and often results in irreparable damage to the social and physical environments (Scott, 1998).

Contextualizing Local, Practical Knowledge to Schools

While Scott builds his argument and descriptions of metis based on his studies of failed social and environmental state simplifications involving city planning, revolutions, farming, and forestry, there are clear connections to be made to the craft of teaching, the process of learning to teach, and NCLB. Both acts of teaching and learning to teach occur in socially complex, unpredictable, and constantly changing environments. Learning to teach requires the novice practitioner to sort through his/her assumptions of teaching and learning acquired through the long apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) while negotiating simultaneously combative and cooperative social interactions requiring political and diplomatic social skills occurring both in isolation and within a larger social context of a school. Most novices enter teaching with a combination of technical knowledge about subject matter knowledge; transformations of subject matter knowledge into representations for learners, students as learners and human beings with diverse sets of needs and developmental aptitudes (Shulman, 1986; Wislon, Shulman, & Richert, 1987); the science of learning, classroom management, and assessment learned through their university studies. Their abbreviated practicum provides novices with the opportunity to merge technical knowledge with the precarious social realities of the classroom and school settings. That practicum continues well into the first several years

of teaching where expectations hold a novice perform with the same ability as a veteran (Lortie, 1975; Moore Johnson, 2004). Often, both the novice and experienced practitioners in the school setting quickly find tensions between the theoretical knowledge learned in universities and their idealistic visions of the craft and the practical knowledge needed to survive the complex, uncertain, and messy processes of teaching and learning (e.g. Lampert, 1985, 2003; McDonald, 1992).

The social context of teaching occurs in dynamic spaces where the practitioner must learn to anticipate the moves and advances of his/her learners and professional peers. At times, the interaction presents itself as an athletic contest; the teacher must establish his/her authority in the classroom while individual and collective students aim to assume the same, each studying the actions of the other (Cusick, 1993; Jackson, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Sedlak et al, 1986). Interaction of the classroom space between teacher and students and students and their peers can also be cooperative. Successful classroom practitioners are able to orchestrate instruction and instill compliance through keen insight responding to the moves, expressions, and emotions of their students as measures; good teachers study their students and are sensitive to their needs and aptitudes.

Just as social relations within the classroom and school can resemble athletic contests dependent upon teamwork, both spaces are highly diplomatic and political. Teachers must establish sovereign leadership in the classroom space evidenced by perceived and actual control of learners. Student behavior must be purposeful, normatively controlled, and steady, with all activities designed to produce learning. Eliciting work from immature, changeful, and divergent learners involves negotiating multiple venues; good teachers pay attention to scheduling activities, getting students to

think and do what they need them to, keep supplies coming, and deal with unexpected emergencies (Lortie, 1975). Successful teachers create classroom spaces that model well-run cities; their actions within the classroom, the school, and the extended community involve continuous dialogue to insure classroom activities result in positive experiences for both students and teachers.

Learning to teach requires novices and experienced practitioners continuously solve problems as they figure out how to teach complex abstract subject matter to involuntary clients in isolation. Mistakes happen during the learning process effecting both the teacher and learners. Teachers pick up helpful hints from professional peers and additional on-the-job training that help them develop their teaching style and effective classroom management – which combines the process of constructing meaning in a discipline with delivery, order, and compliance. Over time, teachers incorporate methods adapted from their professional peers that are useful and purposeful to their goal of instructing learners while maintaining order in continuously changing environments (Lortie, 1975; Jackson, 1990). They adapt techniques that work and abandon those that do not based on individual definitions of success. Good teachers learn to imaginatively translate diverse bodies of knowledge about learners, subject matter, and social control into purposeful classroom applications.

The socialization process associated with learning to teach is both public and private; access to teachers' practical knowledge is restricted because it develops in seclusion. Novice teachers must sort through their simplistic public visions of teaching learned through years of observing teachers at work as students, the official ideologies of universities preparing teachers, and official perspectives of the public school in

relationship to the contradictions realized at the pragmatic level on their own in their own classroom spaces (Britzman, 2003). Both experienced teachers and those learning to teach speak overtly about their personal conflict with the technical knowledge and theories offered them in their university preparation courses and the functions they are required to perform (Britzman, 2003; Lortie, 1975). Teachers quickly find that the general principles and rules established by educational researchers are too general to explain the particulars of individual classroom experiences (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Ultimately they resist the official ideologies in favor of that which was learned through experience, trial and error. Teachers' vision of the craft of teaching is constantly reworked and reinvented on personal, subjective levels in relation to the narratives of others in the institution (Britzman, 2003). While the learning occurs primarily alone in daily negotiations, the shared public-ness of teaching and the commonality of the physical conditions generate a common view of the work, joy, and struggles of teaching shared by those in the practice. Not everyone can learn to teach.

Teaching lacks systematic, codification of practical experience. The work of the teacher has not been subjected to sustained, empirical, and practice-oriented inquiry into problems and alternatives found in other disciplines taught and researched at the university. Professional training for teachers has not linked recurrent dilemmas to available knowledge or to cases and simulations where issues can be deliberated; teaching is void of a technical culture (Lortie, 1975). This fact lends itself well to the formation of a local, situated, contextual knowledge development, in other words, mētis. An informal guild develops – a collegiality of individualism further strengthening the assumption that access to the pragmatic knowledge of teaching is limited.

Chapters that follow examine the precarious tensions existing between the universal technical knowledge and situated practical knowledge of educating everybody's children coupled with attempts of NCLB to eliminate local knowledge in order to impose administrative order on the work of schools, establish a system of worker discipline for non-compliance, and the illogical attempt to attach business metaphors and scientific process to the complex craft of human improvement. The next chapter looks closely at an artifact of NCLB – the Michigan School Report Card – and how the scientific and mathematical reasoning of the high modernist policy conflicts with the local knowledge of school practitioners rendering the artifact useless to them but functional for the policy's authoritarian aims.
CHAPTER 5

LOST IN COMPUTATION:

TEACHER'S VIEWS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Yes, innumerate the carriage parts – Still not a carriage.

When you begin making decisions and cutting it up rules and names appear
And once names appear you should know when to stop.
Tao-te-ching (from Scott, 1998)

The Michigan Department of Education annually makes a determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all public elementary, middle, and high schools in Michigan. AYP evaluates schools and school districts in the areas of academic achievement, participation in state assessments, graduation rate for high school and student attendance for elementary and middle schools. In addition, the Department reports on Education YES! – a Yardstick for Excellent Schools, the state school accreditation system under which letter grades are assigned for academic achievement and indicators of school performance to determine state accreditation of Michigan schools.

This report card system is available for parents, citizens, teachers and school administrators to learn about how schools are both performing and improving (https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/).

Introduction

The Michigan School Report Card is a response to the NCLB mandate that public

school performances on state standardized assessments should be made public. Moving

away from historical methods of public accountability where schools provided

rudimentary measures of school resources and minimal indications of student

achievement, the Michigan School Report Card provides the public with a hybrid of input

and outputs with a strong emphasis on student outcomes on standardized achievement

tests. It combines requirements for public reporting with state and federal accountability

with the singular aim to improve student achievement for all students. Assessment models vary across the nation ranging from a cross-sectional status change or cross sectional grade change to a longitudinal cohort change or longitudinal individual change models. Nearly all states report at least average aggregate scores for students in a given year as one of their components of public reporting (Hanushek & Raymond, 2003). Michigan uses a cross-sectional status change system reporting distribution averages of students across various levels – advanced (level 1), proficient (level 2), partially proficient (level 3), and not proficient (level 4).

A cross-sectional status change, average distribution model examines the average student achievement of a school for a particular grade over time, aggregated across grades for elementary and middle level schools. The status change model is the most common approach utilized when measuring what is happening in schools with scores manipulated in a wide variety of ways (Hanushek & Raymond 2003). Michigan deploys inducements or sanctions based on a school's ability to meet expected levels of change; these come in the form of positive press and elimination of sanctions for schools achieving the goal for two consecutive years or negative press and fiscal consequences for those not meeting expectations. This form of accountability system is flawed, according to Hanushek and Raymond (2003) because it does not take into consideration underlying determinants of achievement outside of the school setting as well as the fact that it necessarily compares two different groups of students. The cross-sectional status change model attempts to address this with the calculation of a measurement error for individual student scores; but when consistently applied across different schools in different settings it is insufficient to offset ranges of differences across a given state,

district, school, or classroom. In diverse school settings with high levels of mobility and poverty, differences in student background, family structures, preparation, and cognitive abilities influence the difference in aggregate performance in the status change model. It is difficult to separate school input from other factors when measuring student achievement with this model (Hanushek & Raymond, 2003).

In Michigan, as required by law, students take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) in mathematics and English language arts in grades three through eight. The MEAP measures students' competency in social studies standards in grades six and nine and in science in grades five and eight. High school students take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) in grade eleven. The MME is a three prong assessment aligned with the Michigan Merit Curriculum, as well as work and college readiness expectations that come with the High School Reform agenda launched by Governor Granholm, the State Board of Education, and the Michigan Department of Education in the fall of 2006. The MME requires testing occurs on three state determined days (with make-up testing offered two weeks later on three set dates). Students take the ACT plus a writing assessment on the first day, the WorkKeys (an assessment that measures reading for information, locating information, and mathematical applications) on the second day, and the Michigan Merit Exam on day three which tests students' knowledge of the state core content expectations for mathematics, science and social studies not measured in the first two days assessment. Because there is overlap in content domains across the three days, the tests on the third day are designed to complement, but not be redundant with, content on the first two days.

State psychometricians merge scores from three days testing for each academic core subject area. The Michigan School Report Card reports individual school and district performances based on information gleaned from these merged scores. Cut scores are determined by "representative panels" that establish cut scores for each level and content area and assigned to select schools. Once reviewed by panels, these scores are submitted to the Accreditation Advisory Committee comprised of five national experts appointed by the State Board of Education. The AAC advises the State Board of Education (SBOE) on the implementation of the *Education Yes*! school accreditation system and its alignment with NCLB expectations (<u>https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/2008</u>).

Anyone can see the public school report cards by accessing the MDE website through the Office of Assessment and Accountability portal. Additional links advise readers to access the *Guide to Reading the School Report Cards and Frequently Asked Questions* to assist them with interpreting the reports which is, no doubt, a response to the NCLB requirement that states must provide parents with information about a school's performance in easy to read, accessible formats.

Because the legislation intends to make the process of schooling and its products legible to the public and to implore teachers to make objective, informed decisions about their instruction, curriculum, and assessment, the capacity to read and understand the information produced for the public and school personnel is critical. What follows is a description of each page of the Michigan School Report Card; an analysis of the document through the conceptual lens of high modernism; a depiction of interviewed staff's responses to questions guiding their views of it; and finally an explanation of

teacher responses to the report card with the intent of ferreting out evidence of local knowledge in their responses as framed by Scott (1998) and how this interacts with the technical knowledge of the school accountability.

The Michigan School Report Card

The Michigan School Report Card is found on MDE website. A click on the School Report Card icon on the OEAA Home page begins the process. Two forms of the Michigan School Report Card are accessible – one for individual school personnel and a more generalized non-specific one for the general public. Navigation tool bars are on the left side of the home page; public access happens by following a drop down menu on the bottom left hand corner choosing between school, district, or by inserting a local school's zip code. School personnel access their version of the Michigan School Report Card with usernames and logins through an administrative log-in toolbar. Upon entering an individual school's Report Card Home page, readers have potential access to eight electronic pages through two trees of information by following a series of directional cues on the website inviting them to view details about the Status Score and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Curious about how teachers viewed the report card and the data requirements of NCLB, I printed out the full 2007-08 report card for WMHS and asked teachers to identify parts from each page. Before summarizing their comments, I describe the report card and the necessary cross-referencing steps readers must undertake in order to understand the NCLB mandated documentation of student achievement.

Page 1: Overview

The first page of an individual school's report card lists the name of the principal and his/her contact information on the left hand side just beneath the school's name, address, and phone number. The Composite Grade is found in the upper right hand corner. These three pieces of information are found on top of each reporting page.

As a high school, WMHS's report card grade describes the achievement for tested students in grade 11. Viewers examine a chart on the first page of the report card describing student achievement *scores* for the four academic core subjects and corresponding Ed Yes! letter grades based on figures computed by averaging the Achievement Status and Achievement Change scores for a content area:

Table 5.1

Michigan S	School	l Report	Card	Cover	Page
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	Status Score	Adjusted Score	Ed Yes!	
	2007-2008	2007-08	2007-2008	
Student Achievement	View Details			
English Language Arts	62.4	62.4	D	
Mathematics	61.1	61.1	D	
Science	62.6	62.6	D	
Social Studies	68.6	68.6	D	
Achievement Subtotal	63.7	63.7	D	
Indicators of School		100	Α	
Performance				
Preliminary Grade		76	C	
AYP Status (Adequately		Did not make AYP		View Details
Yearly Progress)				
Composite Grade		C		

In the case of WMHS, Status and Adjusted Scores for each content area are in the 60th percentile range equating to Ds. The Achievement Subtotal and corresponding grade is based on an average of the four content area's Adjusted Scores. These abysmal letter grades appear in stark contrast to the self-reported Indicators of School Performance which earned an A. Readers without administrative access cannot view the strands that make up the Indicators of School Performance, a school's response, or the evidence a school posts in support of each claim leaving the rationale for the perfect adjusted score and the A letter grade unclear in relationship to the poor scores earned for student achievement. Whanton Moore's Preliminary and Composite Grades average to a C; it did not make AYP.

A close look at the student achievement scores and the Indicators of School Performance raise questions as to how these scores are calculated. Some guidance about the factors that shape Composite Grade and Adequate Yearly Progress follow the chart on the School Report Card overview web page. Here readers see how the MDE calculated the Composite Grade and brief descriptions of how the Achievement Status and Achievement Change are calculated. Descriptive paragraphs are laced with exclusive statistical vocabulary. For example, the Composite Grade derives from averaging the aggregate achievement subtotal score and the school's self assessment; the aggregate achievement score is weighted at 67% and the indicators are at 33%. Readers must understand terms such as "aggregate" and what it means to "weight" scores. Weighting scores for student achievement relative to the school's self-reported concepts assures schools that MDE has considered "other" variables (Hanushek & Raymond, 2003) relative to the work of schools beyond the single indicator required by NCLB. Additional definitions follow, beginning with the Achievement Status asking readers to know what a "weighted index" is and how it is applied in schools with 30 or more valid student scores in a content area tested; this is followed by a description of achievement change where the MDE utilizes multiple linear regression to establish its predictions for each content area and grade level assessed for a school. Readers must be familiar with the concept of

multiple linear regression and its role in making predictions and how this fits within the complex schema of NCLB. Finally, a two sentence narrative about the Indicators of School Performance tells readers that this is the school's self-rating for "each component" but it does not specify what these are and how they relate to the school's accreditation process. Only authorized users (school personnel) have access to the detailed responses each school inserts for the five standards of continuous school improvement; responses to the Indicators are directly linked to a school's accreditation awarded in concert with AdvancedED (formerly North Central Accreditation) and MDE *Ed Yes!* reporting systems. *Ed Yes!* links the school process to NCLB's singular goal of improving student achievement for all students. Inquisitive minds may double click on the <u>view details</u> icons to examine further how the Status and Adjusted Scores are calculated.

Descriptions about AYP follow those of the Composite Grade. Bulleted concepts include: AYP Determination Using Aggregated Assessment Data Across Grades; Feeder Codes Used for AYP; Subgroup Sizes for AYP Determination; Full Academic Year; Demographics Used for AYP Determination; AYP and MI-Access Assessment; and Title I status. Again readers are treated to an array of specialized vocabulary MDE uses to validate its compliance with the expectations of NCLB. *AYP Determination Using Aggregated Assessment Data* tells of how proficiency for AYP is based on the weighted sum of the proficiency index computed for grade 11 at the school. Hanushek and Raymond (2003) specify this as a component of Michigan's employment of the cross-sectional status change model where distributed averages of students' scores across four achievement levels are averaged: advanced, proficient, partially proficient and not

proficient. Readers must return to the Guide for Reading the Michigan School Report *Card* for further clarification if the concepts of weighted index value, proficiency index, and weights relative to the calculating AYP are unclear. Feeder Codes attach students' fall testing scores to the schools students attend the previous school year. For high school MME assessment results, this does not apply unless a student has attended less than one full academic year (FAY) in the school in which he/she takes the spring test. The description following FAY requires students be in attendance for three consecutive count dates; the MDE gathers this information through the Single Record Student Database (SRSD) that all schools in Michigan use to communicate critical student demographic and service information to meet NCLB and other state reporting requirements. Subgroup Sizes for AYP Determination correlates with Demographics Used for AYP Determination. Michigan retains a minimum of 30 students within a specific subgroup determination for calculating AYP for groups of students. Again, this is restrictive information; nowhere in the text following the chart do readers know what constitutes a subgroup, how the school attaches identifying characteristics to individual students, or what the Unique Identification Codes (UIC) has to do with assessment demographics. Readers do see that only authorized uses have access to the information that they in turn can amend in the event of a reporting error by accessing their data file. In compliance with NCLB, Michigan identifies students in distinct categories; individual students may be sorted into multiple categories. These include all students, gender, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black – Not of Hispanic Origin, Hispanic, White – Not of Hispanic Origin, Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Special Education, Migrant, and Homeless. The report card text does not list these specific

groups of learners nor does it explain why these groups are relevant to AYP. AYP and MI-Access heading tells readers that "federal policy issues and decisions have changed the way that MI-Access data are used in making AYP decisions"

(https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/school one only 1 2004 pf.asp) before advising them to turn to The Guide to Reading School Report Cards for further clarification. MI-Access is the test given to students meeting specific special education requirements designated in their Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Students taking the MI-Access are cognitively impaired. There is a specific cap on the number of students schools can identify to take this test. Finally, the narrative explains *Title I Status*. School districts identify schools through the School Selection Process in the Michigan Electronic Grants System (MEGS). This too, is restricted information as readers are not told the relevance of Title I selection relative to NCLB and AYP, nor are they told how schools are selected. MEGS is a secure site with selection based on the percentage of students living in poverty attending a school and the relationship this has to the district's overall poverty level. Schools identified as Title I receive supplemental funding through the Title I grant and are subject to sanctions identified by NCLB for failure to meet state determined AYP achievement goals. WMHS, while eligible for support because the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch exceeds the district average, does not have Title I status. Much of the report card language is restricted and processes for accrediting a school through both the NCLB and state systems are unclear.

View Details – Weighted Index Value: Page 2

Page two contains information concerning the weighted index value, status scores and adjusted scores. For someone new to the system, understanding what these terms mean

requires some website sleuthing. One needs to use the *Guide to Reading the Michigan* School Report Card to see how both the weighted index value and status scores are calculated. The *Guide* describes the four-step process used to calculate the weighted index value:

- Multiply each students' scale score by the performance level for each content tested (i.e. 510*2);
- 2. Sum the resulting values to get the sum of the index values;
- 3. Sum the performance levels or weights;
- 4. Divide the sum of the index values by the sum of the weights.

Charts in the *Guide* show how the weighted index value for each content area is scaled on a 100 point system to generate the status score. Each content area has different cut scores for the weighted index value determined by State Board of Education (SBOE) appointed committee. The table for high school weighted index values and corresponding status scores appears like this (see Table 5.2):

Table 5.2

High School							
Score Range	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies			
100 - 90	107.5 and above	103.3 and above	104.7 and above	119.5 and above			
80 - 89	96.1 - 107.4	95.5 - 103.2	95.6 - 104.6	112.8 - 119.4			
70 – 79	85.0 - 96.0	87.1 - 95.4	86.6 - 95.5	107.1 - 112.7			
60 - 69	85.1 - 88.9	79.4 - 87.0	80.4 - 86.5	99.4 - 107			
50 - 59	85.0 and below	79.3 and below	80.3 and below	99.3 and below			

MDE - Weighted Index Value and Corresponding Status Scores

Here readers can more readily interpret the figures presented on the second page of WMHS's report card pictured below. The first column on the left lists the score

ranges in increments of ten from which the status score and corresponding Ed Yes! grade

come for each subject tested. Figures beneath each content area column are ranges of weighted index value averages established by the SBOE committee. The highlighted band represents the WMHS average weighted index values for each content area and the score range for those values.

Table 5.3, found on page two of the report card, makes more sense with the above chart in hand. It reads as follows:

Table 5.3

Status Score					
Content Area/	Year	Weighted	Status	Change	Adjusted
Grade Level		Index	Score	Adjustment	Score
		Value			
			View d	etails	
English Language Arts					
High School	2008	86.2			
	2007	85.7			
Content Area Average	Average	86	62.4	0	62.4
			62.4		62.4
Mathematics					
High School	2008	80.2			
	2007	80.1			
Content Area Average	Average	80.2	61.1	0	61.1
			61.1		61.1
Science					
High School	2008	81.9			
	2007	82.1			
Content Area Average	Average	82	62.6	0	62.6
			62.6		62.6
Social Studies					
	Average	99.7	62.6	0	62.6*
High School	2008	110.2			
	2007	108.9			
Content Area Average	Average	109.65	74.5	0	74.5
			68.6		68.6

Here one sees the content areas measured for WMHS on the MME in the left

hand column and two year's of data represented in the columns to the right -2007 and 2008. These data represents the two years that schools have given the MME. Prior to the spring of 2007, high schools proctored the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) to students in the fall of their junior year. Both the time of year and content of the MME

create data incongruent with that formed from the HSPT, therefore only two years of test results inform WMHS's status and adjusted scores. The third column lists the school's weighted index value for each content area for each year and the respective averages for each content area.

Returning to the chart found in the *Guide to Reading the Michigan School Report Card*, we can see how the weighted index value averages for each content area fall along the 60 – 69 score range that make up the status scores visible in column four. Zeros represent the change adjustment for each content area leaving the adjusted score equal to the status score. When schools have zeros reported in the change adjustment column one can assume that the school has met the state objective for overall proficiency for that content area as described in the AYP Determination Using Aggregated Assessment Data Across Grades on the previous report card page. Figures represented in both the status and adjusted score columns appear on page one and are those that form the Ed Yes! letter grades of Ds for each content area viewed there as well.

The second form of data provided in the report card is status change. Readers access this from page two of the report card by clicking on the <u>view details</u> icon located below the weighted index value column header. This takes readers to achievement change on page three.

School Report Card Achievement Change: Page 3

Page three of the report card provides readers with some familiar and unfamiliar pieces of information. The left hand column lists each content area measured, the level assessed – in this case high school - improvement rate, and average adjusted score for each content area. Column two lists years of information collected to calculate change

rates; 2007 and 2008 scores. The third column identifies the percent proficient in each content area for each of the two years followed by an actual score for the current year in the row labeled "improvement rate." Content areas measured, two years' data represented, and percent proficient are familiar to most readers as these numbers are regularly reported in state and local newspapers. The improvement rate row for each content area holds critical information related to state predictions of improvement for each content area for a particular school and it is here where information becomes less familiar for most readers. It includes an actual percent proficient score, a predict percentage, a difference percentage, an adjustment percentage, and the actual adjusted score based on a series of calculations not overtly visible to the reader.

Information following the chart does not specify how the state figures change for high school; it does tell how multiple linear regression was used to calculate figures for both elementary and middle schools relative to data collected from three previous years' assessments. Specialized vocabulary frames an incomplete description of what the chart is telling viewers for WMHS. Again, readers must return to the *Guide for Reading the Michigan School Report Card* to better understand from where these figures come. Page three presents viewers with this chart (see Table 5.4):

Table 5.4

Report Card Status Change

Content Area/						
Grade Level	Year	% Proficie	ent	和基本因素用品		
English Language Arts	ilian sheri			的深处是是由的神话		
High School	2008	55.44%				
	2007	45.18%				
Improvement Rate		Actual	Predict	Difference	Adjustment	Adjust
		55.44%	47.72%	7.72%	0%	Score 62.4%
Content Area Average Adjusted Score				62.	4%	
Mathematics	AND SAU					
High School	2008	47.23%				
	2007	39.42%				
Improvement Rate		Actual	Predict	Difference	Adjustment	Adjust
		47.23%	39.87%	7.36	0%	Score
						61.1%
Content Area						
Average Adjusted Score				61.	1%	
Science			中在目前自己的	用其自己的情况。此外		
High School	2008	54.19%				
	2007	49.35%				
Improvement Rate		Actual	Predict	Difference	Adjustment	Adjust
		54.19%	51.29%	2.19	0%	Score
						62.6%
Content Area						
Average Adjusted Score				62.	6%	
Social Studies	Tradition					
Middle School	2008	-	4			
	2007	-				
	2006	-				
	2005	-				
Improvement Rate		Actual	Predict	Difference	Adjustment	Adjust
		-	-	-	-	Score
High School	2008	77.40%				
	2007	76.90%				
Improvement Rate		Actual	Predict	Difference	Adjustment	Adjust
		77.40%	74.17%	3.23	0%	Score
						74.5%
Content Area						
Average Adjusted Score				74.	5%	

A close look at one content area of the chart with information from the Guide to

Reading the Michigan School Report Card sheds light on the complex statistical

reasoning used to generate status change figures for Michigan high school test scores.

For example, for English language arts one sees that 55.44% of WMHS juniors were proficient in this content area in the spring of 2008. In 2007 45.18% of a different group of juniors were proficient in the same subject. The Improvement Rate row contains data stemming from calculations used to predict the rate scores must improve in order to meet the NCLB goal of 100% proficient by 2013-14. Calculations begin with the actual students proficient in the content area; for our example we see 55.44% proficient in English language arts. The next figure is the "predict" percentage of 47.72%. In order to determine from where this percentage comes, readers must turn to the Prediction and Error chart as well as the formula for linear regression found on page 7 of the *Guide*. MDE gives us this formula for calculating high school predictions for the 2007-08 spring MME:

(Percent proficient 2006-07 * 2006-07 multiplier) + constant

The Predict and Error chart below gives us a 0.355 multiplier for English language arts and a constant of 4.747 (see Table 5.5):

Table 5.5

Prediction and Error							
Content	Grade	Multiplier	Multiplier			Standard	
Area		2005 -06	2006-07	2007-08		Error of the Estimate	
English	4	0.219	0.269	0.469	2.968	8.618	
Language	7	0.208	0.166	0.336	27.787	6.785	
Arts	11		0.355	0.586	4.747	7.544	
Mathematics	4	0.145	0.215	0.391	23.253	7.145	
	8	0.124	0.214	0.450	19.244	8.119	
	11		0.338	0.620	5.298	7.661	
Science	8	0.181	0.310	0.475	0.394	8.164	
	11		0.365	0.575	3.026	7.712	
Social Studies	9	0.208	0.272	0.483	2.384	7.070	
	11		0.399	0.512	7.158	6.757	

MDE - Prediction and Error Chart

To determine the predict for our example, we must perform the following calculation: (45.18 *.355) + 4.747. The resulting figure is then added to the 2007 percent proficient (45.18%) to form the predict figure of 47.72% for English language arts. Once again, a reader must have a sound understanding of mathematical reasoning and an inquiring mind to make sense out of figures used to calculate a school's change rate.

The process does not end here, however. Readers note a difference of 7.72% derived from subtracting the predict from the actual achievement score for English language arts. The standard error of the estimate found in the last column (for English language arts 7.5444) becomes important only when calculating the adjustment figure. No adjustments occur to the school's status score for English language arts because it did not meet any of the four following qualifications:

• Schools where the actual score exceeds the prediction plus 1.5 times the standard error of the estimate will have a 15 point adjustment added to the achievement score for that content area

• Schools where the actual score exceeds the prediction plus the standard error of the estimate will have a 10 point adjustment added to the achievement score for that content area;

• Schools where the actual score is less than the prediction minus 1.5 times the standard error of the estimate will have a 15 point deduction applied to the achievement score for that content area; and

• Schools where the actual score is less than the prediction minus the standard error of the estimate will have a 10 point deduction applied to the achievement score for that content area (<u>https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/2008</u>).

The point here is that act of reading the Michigan School Report Card requires the capacity and will to engage in complex scientific and mathematical reasoning in order to form a generalization about the quality of education received by students in a particular school at a particular time. If one lacks the capacity and the will to perform these tasks, that which is portrayed on the report card for any school risks being seriously misinterpreted. And the goal of making information about schooling accessible to the public and parents is unfilled.

View Details - Adequate Yearly Progress Status - Grade Tested 11: Page 4

As previously noted in the year of the study, WMHS did not make AYP. Readers of the report card may click <u>view details</u> to better understand how this was determined. Double clicking the link takes viewers to page four of the school report card displaying AYP Status-Grade Tested 11.

The opening paragraph reminds readers that the NCLB uses AYP as a means of holding schools and districts accountable for student achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics based on state assessment results. It continues to clarify how schools must meet AYP for participation, graduation, school achievement as a whole, and for each subgroup in which 30 or more students are enrolled. Page four provides the public with the following chart summarizing AYP Status for Grade 11 with an encouragement to view details for how the AYP goals were evaluated for both English Language Arts and Mathematics (see Table 5.6):

Table 5.6

Report Card AYP Summary

Student Group	AYP English Language Arts	AYP Math
	2007-08 View Details	
All Stadents	<u>view Details</u>	No.
All Students		110
Ethnicity		
Black or African American	No	No
American Indian or		
Alaskan Native	-	-
Asian		
American		
Native Hawaiian	-	-
Or other Pacific		
Islander		
Hispanic or Latino	-	-
White	No	No
Multiracial	-	-
Limited English		
Proficient	No	No
Students with Disabilities	No	No
Economically Disadvantaged		
	No	No

Column headings tell of the two content areas for which WMHS is responsible for student achievement. In the left hand column are the subgroup categories for which AYP is measured. The requirement to disaggregate student achievement data into subgroups is not new – it originated in the 1994 ESEA reauthorization; publicly reporting it in this fashion was mandated with the NCLB Act in 2001. School personnel receive training specifying why these specific student groups are chosen, however the public is given no indication as to why the data is reported on these groups only even when turning to the *2009 Guide for Reading the School Report Card* (p. 12) for clues. This chart tells us that for WMHS, the school did not make AYP for either content area overall or for Black, White, limited English proficient, students with disabilities, or economically disadvantaged students for which it had at least 30 students tested. Too few American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino children attend WMHS to apply the rating.

AYP Status English Language Arts/Mathematics – Grade Tested 11: Pages 5 and 6

Again, viewers are encouraged to click <u>view details</u> for each content area to explore why the school did not make AYP relative to graduation rate, individual and student performances on the MME, and number of students tested. Doing so produces the following chart (both mathematics and English language arts are identical so I produced one example, see Table 5.7):

Table 5.7

School Status for Meeting AYP Components						
Student Group	Percent Assessed 2007-08	State Objective 2007-08	Safe Harbor 2007-08	Graduation Objective 2007-08	Graduation Improvement 2007-08	AYP 2007-08
All students	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	No
Ethnicity Black or African American	No	-	N/A	-	N/A	No
American Indian/Alaskan Native	-	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Asian American Native Hawaiian Or other Pacific Islander	-	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Hispanic/Latino		-	N/A	-	N/A	-
White	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	No
Multiracial	-	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Limited English Proficient	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	No
Students with Disabilities	No	No	No	Yes	N/A	No
Economically Disadvantaged	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No

An introductory paragraph leads readers through a general summary of what the

headings mean reminding us that each cell communicates which of the NCLB objectives

for testing and attendance were met for this particular school and its student subgroups. As a large, diverse high school WMHS must meet many AYP objectives. In order to make AYP for each represented cell, 95% of all students and student subgroups must be tested in both content areas; all must meet the state achievement objectives of 55% proficient in mathematics and 61% proficient in English language arts or reduce the percentage of all and student subgroups achieving in the lowest quartile by 10% as compared to the previous year to meet safe harbor; and have 80% of all students and student subgroups of the class of 2008 graduate in a four-year window.

A Closer Look at AYP Status

Recall that WMHS did not make AYP for either content area. Pages five (ELA) and six (mathematics) provide us with more details as to why students in grade 11 collectively and within specific subgroups did not make AYP.

First, for percent assessed, it appears that not enough of all students nor students within the Black, White, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged subgroups were tested to meet this first objective requiring 95% complete the ACT, WorkKeys, and MME; sufficient limited English proficient students were tested. Unlike the more specific charts viewed by schools, the public does not see the percentage tested for the whole school or individual subgroups.

Second, both page five and six show us that all and White students met the *state objectives* for 2007-08 for both English language arts and mathematics. As viewers, we do not see the target nor do we see what these students scored. To find this we must return to the 2009 (p.12) that tells us that for this tested year, schools must demonstrate that 55% of all and identified subgroups of its students are proficient in mathematics and

61% in English language arts. These annual measurable objectives stem from 2001-02 assessment data, "representing the percentage of proficient students in a public school at the 20th percentile of the State's total enrollment among all schools ranked by the percentage of students at the proficient level" (p. 12). Levels of proficiency for the two content areas vary for each grade level tested in Michigan. The *Guide* discusses why this occurs referring to the state's use of weighted averages of state wide targets for each grade level tested. In the case of WMHS, this involves only one grade level and the aforementioned targets of 55% for mathematics and 61% for English language arts. Furthermore, the state bases proficiency for AYP on the weighted sum of a *proficiency index* calculated for grade 11 based on targets set for each content area. The proficiency index must be equal to or greater than zero for a school, a district, and a subgroup to meet the state objective.

A series of calculations detailed in the *Guide* (p. 13) coupled with additional charts defining grade level weights and proficiency indexes make the AYP determination visible to inquiring readers. Unfortunately, the school report card only provides us with the overall student proficiency for grade 11 on page three; readers cannot tell how far off the individual subgroups were from making AYP from the information provided.

Michigan considers two additional factors when determining whether or not a school and its students have met state objectives: multi-year averages and adjustments for measurement errors. Multi-year averages provide schools one more opportunity to meet the state objective for the English language arts and mathematics using a three step averaging system found in the *Guide* (p.14) as follows:

- Step One Look at the school's most recent State assessment results.
 Does the school meet the State target? If yes, the school makes AYP. If no, go to Step Two.
- Step Two Calculate the average of the school's most recent and preceding year's State assessment results (two-year average). Does the school then meet the State target? If yes, the school makes AYP. If no, go to Step Three.
- Step Three Calculate the average of the school's most recent and preceding two years' State assessment results (three-year average). Does the school then meet the State target? If yes, the school makes AYP. If no, the school is classified as not making AYP based on the State target and the safe harbor test is applied (<u>https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/2008</u>).

The state does not apply this system to subgroups but does use it for schools that have fewer than 30 students assessed in a particular grade level and uses it whenever possible to assign an AYP status. Multi-year averages are also applied for percent assessed for the same purposes. Readers cannot ascertain if this is the means by which WMHS made AYP for the state objective for all and White students tested in both English language arts and mathematics.

Finally, as a means of assuring the reliability of AYP calculations and recognizing the high stakes involved in determining a school's AYP Michigan considers two forms of measurement errors when calculating individual and school levels of proficiency: a standard error of measurement (SEM) and conditional standard errors of measurement (CSEM) (https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/2008, p. 15). Aiming to avoid either misclassifying students as proficient or non-proficient, the State first employs a 95% measurement error confidence interval around each student's score. The MDE calculate this using both the standard deviation and the reliability of test scores whereby they build in a variance in students' scores based on other factors than achievement such as "chance error, differential testing conditions, and imperfect test reliability" (p.15). The SEM index only provides an estimate of the average test score error for all students tested, therefore the state also employs the CSEM for individual test level score estimates as well (p. 16). In some cases, this CSEM places students in a "provisionally proficient" range adding their score to a school's percentage proficient. The only means an individual or school notices the influence of the measurement error factor in determining proficiency is to view secure test documents where research files note a student's level as provisionally proficient for a subject area tested. This is not information made available to the general public or visible on the public report card. Once again, readers must be familiar with statistical analyses and language to make sense out of this portion of the report card.

Third, beneath the column identifying "safe harbor," we see that for all students -Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan native, Asian American/Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, White, and Multiracial - this category is not used in determining AYP. For limited English proficient students and students with disabilities, safe harbor has not been met; and for economically disadvantaged students it has. Returning to the *Guide* for further explanation, safe harbor is a means by which a school can make AYP by demonstrating a 10% decrease in students not proficient overall or within any subgroup while also meeting percent assessed and the graduation objective. This means reducing the number of students who

score in levels three and four in English language arts and mathematics. For WMHS, the number of economically disadvantaged students scoring non-proficient was reduced by 10% from the previous year's cohort. Unfortunately, the subgroup did not make AYP because not enough students took the test.

Fourth, the chart identifies the "graduation objective" for all students and students within all identified subgroups who have a graduation rate of at least 80%. Thus, the series of "Yes"es in Table 4.8 inform stakeholders that WMHS students met this objective. Evident to readers is that all, White, limited English proficient, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students all have met this objective for the class of 2008. What is not clear is why the Black/African American subgroup has a dash for this category when we know that there have been at least 30 students in this category. For the 2007-08 school year, eighty percent of the class of 2007 must have completed high school within four years.

The final column summarizes the AYP status for WMHS. Here we find the corresponding series of "No"s for all students and those within represented subgroups. While not specified anywhere on the report card, NCLB clearly indicates that for a school to meet AYP for all students and students within individual subgroups of at least 30, the school must have met standards outlined for percent assessed, state objective or safe harbor, and the graduation rate. WMHS, having not assessed enough of all students or those within a specific subgroup, led to the judgment that the school did not make AYP.

In sum, the eight pages of the Michigan School Report Card are dominated by aggregates of information gathered from three days of testing in the spring of the reporting year. Michigan complies dutifully with the authoritarian power of the federal

mandate creating a document steeped in scientific reasoning. As a snapshot of school performance the Michigan School Report Card represents the present for the purposes of projecting the future but the information it communicates is incomplete. The artifact and the processes undertaken to produce it intentionally purges the social interactions and the situated contexts of the education process while simultaneously smartly marketing the information in a form that nearly all citizens recognize – report card grades. Those reported letter grades stem only from that which was objectively measured and supported with evidence as a means of demonstrating and communicating an individual school's progress of federally driven social and economic reform. The process places great faith in the ability of the numerical logic to portray absolute truth and a comparative base upon which its readers can judge the school's effectiveness and efficiency.

Generalities of the Michigan School Report Card

High modernist policies and their artifacts, Scott (1998) argues, attempt to make order out of nature and society through a series of governmental interventions highly dependent on scientific reasoning and technology. They accomplish this through the use of mandates, regulations, and marketing that make it difficult for the subjects to resist. High modernist policies and practices are committed to using linear processes with preconceived goals of perfecting society. The strong emphasis on progressive scientific reasoning purges dependence on the subjective irrationalities of past judgments. High modernist logic simplifies that which it acts upon eliminating particularity and complex variations. Details are collapsed into broad generalizations; static, impersonal facts that permit authorities standardized spaces and people for the purpose of management (Scott, 1998). The Michigan School Report Card, generated in compliance to NCLB is an extension of high modernist thought.

Conceptually, the Michigan School Report Card attempts to organize the activity of individual schools using complex mathematical reasoning communicated through Internet in compliance to federal mandates launched by NCLB. It fulfills policy requirements to the letter of the law, calculating and communicating to the public the effectiveness of individual schools in a language – at least on the surface level - they can readily understand – a report card. Michigan has chosen a method of accountability – a cross-sectional status change model -- to meet reporting requirements that measure status and change in achievement within individual schools and across grades.

As detailed earlier, Michigan has established annual measurable objectives (AMO) for making AYP for elementary, middle and high school levels; in 2007-08 this is apparent in the state objective for student achievement for students in English language arts of 61% and mathematics at 55% for grade 11. Linear regression informs the predicted ascent to perfection – the 2013-14 goal of 100% for individual schools and appears as the predict figure on page three of the report card. Michigan takes advantage of the flexibility given to states in calculating AYP by including self-reported Indicators of School Performance as well as the inclusion of a measurement error. Both these factors offset the flaws of the cross-sectional status change model but are overtly simplified in the representative letter grades displayed on page 1 of the report card. Readers do not see the detailed reporting that individual schools perform when completing the required Ed Yes! document on the AdvancedEd website nor do they have access to claims made and evidence offered on behalf of the Indicators of School

Performance. The measurement error and the means by which it is calculated is only visible to readers willing to access the complementary, Internet-accessed Guide to Reading the Michigan School Report Card. Additionally, Michigan complies with reporting regulations requiring local districts communicate critical programmatic and identifying characteristics for each child, teacher, and administrator on a statewide digital data base (the SRSD) from which it manages the activities of schooling evident in the report card demographic categories. From there, MDE gathers and reports achievement data for individual schools disaggregated into the required subgroups broken down into various levels of proficiency. Readers are also made aware of whether their school has made AYP and the number of years it has failed to do. School districts and individual schools have limited capacity to resist the portrayal of their school in this manner. The MDE extracts information from school databases and scale scores from state-prepared standardized tests and re-assembles them into reportable information in compliance with unrestrained authoritative power of NCLB. That which is portrayed in the Michigan School Report Card is simplified representation of the complex acts of teaching and learning.

The MDE employs mathematical reasoning expressed in statistical language when assembling Michigan Report Card data. Calculations derivative of arcane statistical formulas generate visible outcomes from standardized tests implemented in federallyspecified grades. In the case of this study, three days of testing for a group of juniors in the spring frame report card information. Whether an extension of the policy or an attempt of the MDE to shelter faltering schools, statistics used in calculating AYP status and change rates are ostentatiously obscure to average readers requiring them to employ

critical reading and research skills as well as advanced statistical reasoning to understand how the simplified letter grades on the first page of the report card came about. We see this first in the calculation of status scores on page 2 where readers must turn to an accompanying guide to reading the report card to see the four-step process the MDE took to generate weighted index values and an accompanying chart to see how "representative committee members" scaled the average weighted index values into scores translated into letter grades on page 1. Additional calculations follow as readers view how average proficiency levels for each content area are manipulated to determine whether a school's rate of ascent is on target with federal expectations of perfection by 2013-14 in reading and mathematics. Once again, readers must return to the supplemental guide and make their way through linear regression formulas, constants, and standard deviations to understand how the percentage of state prediction for achievement lines up - or does not - with any reported change in percentage proficient had by a school for content areas measured on the state exam. If these steps were not enough to challenge the reader, the MDE considers four criteria for making adjustments to the change rate involving multiplying set variables to the standard error of measure. Finally, determinations for making AYP involve similar manipulations of data and caveats for exceptions to the general rule including proficiency averages, weighted indexes, rolling two and three-year averages, safe harbor, and measurement errors. All of these steps require readers have some depth of understanding of statistics and the will to muddle through the thick descriptions steeped in the vocabulary of scientific reasoning.

This artifact of high modernist logic explicitly and implicitly functions as a market tool for authoritative power. On the surface it utilizes a familiar framework to

communicate a simplified interpretation of the act of schooling; naming it the report card and using letter grades to communicate school success and failure is a manner to which most people can relate as they have received report cards at one point in their lives. The report card provides the same amount of information on its first page as people have seen on their own report cards when attending school - letter grades quickly equated to positive or negative and sometimes ambiguous assessments of their learning (Jackson, 1990). In the case of WMHS, the Ds earned for achievement and the overall C grade overtly describe a less-than-adequate performance in content area instruction; it intentionally sells a poor bill of goods, broadcasting abysmal grades for teaching subject matter.

The policy also represents a market agenda. It begins by advertising the quality of a school's product as measured by state and federal products by simplifying the dynamic process of teaching and learning to the form of status scores and letter grades. Policy logic portrays the parent or future home buyer as a consumer of education positioning them to use the report card as a tool to make important decisions about the quality of their individual child's education or prospect home value. Product quality and cost are important to consumers thus making the report card an effective instrument in marketing a current or prospective school's cost-effectiveness and efficiency. It answers the question about the quality of return tax payers get on their educational investment in an easy to read, familiar form. Seeking the biggest "bang for their buck," educational consumers are prompted to use the report card as a trigger to exit a low quality school in favor of one meeting higher industry standards (Cusick, 1993; Labaree, 2000). Educational shoppers armed with Internet access can surf for better schools through the

same MDE portal used to view their own school's progress. Requiring states to generate school report cards satisfies business interests invested in economic security of the nation by embarrassing poor performing schools into improvement to remain competitive (Cross, 2004; McDonnell, 2005). WMHS, with poor performance scores and grades appears to be producing sub-quality products that fail to meet industry standards.

Policymakers make several assumptions about educational consumers: first, that all stakeholders have the will and capacity to seek out and interpret this form of information about their schools; second, that the information presented to them is relevant to their specific needs; and third, that the public and parents have internet access. Each assumption reflects mechanistic, objective thinking. First, the act of gathering information to make informed decisions suggests readers can utilize critical reading and research skills to differentiate school quality from information presented in the report card; that they will make decisions about schools based solely on academic achievement data stripped of any subjectivity attached to the school environment. As described in previous sections, community members form working class or impoverished areas have limited understandings about how schools work; their judgments are subjective in that they care more about the affective than the effective domains (Cusick, 1993; Lareau, 2000; Willis, 1977). As we shall see in the next section, even teachers struggle with information in the report card overtly claiming that the information presented has little significance for them as practitioners and is often misleading. Second, the information presented to the community is a gross simplification of what takes place in the school shrouded by slick statistical representations that are difficult to understand unless one has a background in statistical analysis. The data are purged of any nuance that makes a

particular failing or successful school different from those to which it is compared. If educational consumers are merely looking for collective test scores on a fixed test given in a specific place and time, then the report card is their ticket to gathering this information. However, if they are looking for program information, the quality of care offered to individual and collective students, or the general "feel" of the building then the report card data falls short. Finally, using technology to communicate outcomes symbolizes the mechanistic nature of NCLB's requirement for the development of a school report card because it both omits consideration of the way local people authenticate and communicate experiences through direct observation and conversation on personal levels (Lareau, 2000; Scott, 1998) while also assuming that they have the skills and will to research school quality distanced from the object itself.

Teachers' Views of the School Report Card

Introduction

As a participant observer, I am a member of the school community and often take the lead in preparing materials for staff professional development and the school improvement process. Each fall WMHS administrative and school improvement leadership teams open the school year with a discussion about the Michigan School Report Card and what this document tells our community about our work. Every teacher on staff in attendance at the opening day in-service has seen every reporting page of the Michigan School Report Card for WMHS for 2007-08 as part of this process. The process does not stop there. Using specific student performance data gathered from the MDE OEAA web site teachers are guided through an analysis of aggregate student scores for each content area. The leadership team points out achievement gaps between subgroups and distribute articles highlighting contemporary studies on students of color, those living in poverty, and learning the English language to help them develop an understanding of potential underlying causes for achievement gaps. The leadership team summarized individual student performances on specific content strands measured in the MME for each content area; teachers are then able to see strands where students perform well and poorly. Teachers then collectively reaffirm or modify WMHS's school improvement goals for the school year based both on MME and local data.

Despite having described and explained the Michigan School Report Card for WMHS to every teacher and its relationship to their work at WMHS only 11 of 32 reported having seen the document before. Several themes arose in the interviews. WMHS teachers – recall that all but two of them hold masters' degrees – struggle to make sense of the data. They have extreme difficulty interpreting what headings mean and how the information reported connects to their work in classrooms. This was most obvious in direct "no" answers given when asked to tell if they knew what the numbers or headings meant. As educators, each found the entire report card only marginally useful and that its use was dependent upon what the information meant to their own work in the classroom and how much they recognized. Also noteworthy were the physical aspects of the interviews: teachers literally recoiled when holding the document; many answered in abbreviated phrases when asked to tell what particular headings on charts represented about their school, and often appeared frustrated when studying the document.

Here I present the teachers' perspectives using four overarching ideas relative to the explicit and implicit intent of school accountability expressed in NCLB. The first theme is *use* where responses are framed around the explicit requirement that school

personnel use data to make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To determine usefulness, teachers were asked to describe and explain what the specific meaning of each part on each page of the report card and asked if and how they used it in their practice. The second more implicit concept organizes teachers' thoughts about the policy's high modernist *intent* to make teaching and learning legible to stakeholders through the use of simplified representations. Answers suggesting that the report card data might be used to make decisions about the quality of schooling are found in this section. The third concept reveals teachers' thoughts about the report card's *usefulness to the community*. Here both the implicit and explicit intentions of public accountability are explored as teachers described their beliefs about the ability of their community to read and properly interpret the generalizations of their work presented in the report card. Finally, I explore the section of teacher exchanges describes teachers' perceptions about report card's *influence on their practice*.

Use

During the interview, I asked each participant 25 questions about the report card (see Appendix X for interview protocol). Each teacher was presented with a full paper version of the electronic file. They do not have access to nor ask to view the *guide to Reading the Michigan School Report Card*. Every teacher – whether familiar or unfamiliar with the document - found it difficult to read. When looking at the data, teachers gave short, to the point answers; quantifying their answers was simple as many responses were direct yes and no (see Table 5.8 for a summary of their responses).

Table 5.8

Summary of Teachers' Responses to Report Card

Question	% Yes	% Somewhat	% No	
Have you seen this document before?	50	4	46	
What does it tell you and your community about this school?	Answered	Answered in narrative		
Status Score?	0	0	100	
Adjusted Score?	0	0	100	
EdYes! Grade?	19	0	71	
Status Score - view details - weighted index value?	3	0	97	
Adjusted Score?	0	0	100	
Change Adjustment – percent proficient?	50	21	29	
Predict?	3	0	97	
Adjustment of Zero?	0	0	100	
Indicators of School Performance?	12	26	62	
Discuss this with colleagues?* 26% did not answer	18	3	53	
Useful to parents	Answered in narrative			
AYP - view details subgroup categories - seen before?	90	0	10	
Significance?	18	10	72	
Percent assessed?	66	3	32	
Threshold?	34	0	66	
State Objective?	3	0	97	
Safe Harbor?	3	0	97	
Graduation objective?	13	3	84	
Threshold?	6	3	91	
AYP – no in spite of yeses – make sense? N=30	23	0	77	
Useful to the community?	19	9	72	
Look your community's report card up?	38	0	62	
What does the C grade tell you as a teacher about this school?	Answered	l in narrative		

Some interview questions appear to have touched upon teachers' sentiments about their work and the level of ownership of their school; these answers were longer and are represented in the chart as "answered in narrative."

Page 1. Teachers do not understand the information communicated in the achievement status and achievement adjusted score for the 2007-08 report card (Table 1). Not a single teacher reported understanding from where the percentages come. Some (71%) were able to deduce that the Ed Yes! grade was reflective of the percentage earned for both achievement scores. Most WMHS teachers have a general understanding that the Indicators of School Performance are self-reported (88%), but most could not name the strands on which the school reports (even though they have been given multiple tasks

bound around those strands over the last three years). Teachers sensed that the Composite Grade came from averaging the achievement status and adjusted scores with the indicators of School performance but they did not know the weighted values.

Page 2- Status Score. The chart (Table 4.3) on page 2 of the report card did not aid teachers' interpretation or understanding of the information on page one. They knew the weighted index value was not their students' proficiency level but they could not deduce from where the percentages come; only JB understood what weighted index value meant relative to the reporting of standardized test scores:

in reference to other standardized tests – again, like in the ACT and the AP tests and stuff like that you know - the weighted index is... there are certain categories where each question is worth so many points to whatever that this is what you get after everything is scaled and rearranged – that is what I would guess, but...

JB admits to being an avid student of standardized tests, and he appeared comfortable reasoning his way to an explanation of how status score was determined:

I would imagine that there is again, some sort of a chart or a formula that they use that if you have this weighted index it turns out to be the score – kind of like the ACT where if you get 44 – 45 questions right it becomes a 26...I am sure there is something there that gets to this formula, but without seeing that, I don't know why we have this...but it does look like the weighted index goes up status goes up – but the actual of how it gets to that, I don't see it.

Viewing the adjusted score change of zero, JB hypothesized about the results: "I am going to assume that nothing was tinkered with; we didn't say, 'Hey Johnnie needs to be
taken out' or 'This kid needs to be taken out.' We made no changes in our data." No other teacher tried to figure out the data, thus rendering it useless to them.

Page 3 – Status Change. I then asked teachers to make sense of the headings on page 3 of the report card (Table 4.4) which details status change. All teachers recognized content areas tested, but only half recognized that the percent proficient represented the percentage of students meeting state expectations for the content area. Some teachers made educated guesses. CC who thought it reflected how much the school had improved from the year before. MT thought it was a prediction of what "they" thought the school would score. Others simply shook their heads or replied that they did not know. One math teacher understood predict in relationship to the proposed slope of improvement toward the goal of 100% proficient by 2014 (MT), but no one knew the method used by the state to determine it. All teachers could deduce that the difference represented the actual score less the predicted one. No one understood why the adjustment remained zero, but one teacher guessed that all the zeros for adjustment meant that the "testing went well" (JC). In spite of their educational levels and advanced educations, page three of the report card is neither useful nor understandable to this staff.

Page 4 – Adequate Yearly Progress Status. I asked each participant what page 4 (Table 6) told them about WMHS's AYP status for both content areas and then inquired about what they knew of the categories on the left hand column. Recall that these represent the federally-determined subgroup categories. All teachers could infer that page four communicated that their school did not make AYP for either English language arts or mathematics. When asked about the categories identified on the left side of the page, ninety percent were able to identify them as the school's subgroups.

Responses to the significance of the subgroup denotation surfaced mixed sentiments, both political and inquisitive. Examining the subgroups for RH struck a nerve:

I don't think that the writers of this law have a clue as to what we do here on a daily basis. Most of those politicians that created this particular law...were not teachers – were never teachers...and even the director of the...secretary of education when this was brought back to the forefront was not an educator. And so, I think that those people have number one...an idea based on the wrong side of the desk and I think that number two, by segregating out the different ethnicities and the ED (economically disadvantaged) versus not is more political. I think it is more political number one, for the politicians to be able to suggest that they are working towards improving student achievement and subgroups of people who are traditionally...the disadvantaged, the oppressed, the minority...but on the other hand I think it is easier to say, "You know what? Your school as a whole is serving the majority of your students who want to be served but because you are only serving 45 % of this particular subgroup, you are a failing school." I think that it is easier politically to make sure schools fail that way.

SW had other questions:

It is very frustration that we don't see Arabic or Middle Eastern when our current administration and our current administration's father has brought us this population that is not represented on the National Report Card – beautiful thing politics is...

SW notes his critical view on the Bush administration's political agenda connecting the war in the Middle East and the influx of Iraqi refugees to WMHS's to test scores. Other teachers mentioned the absence of the Middle Eastern population from the demographics, including MO who believes that "they" fail to address culture when designating subgroups of children in favor of separating people by race:

Well they are looking for minorities although they don't cover our major minority – they don't really talk about cultures, they are just talking about basically colors of skin. So if your skin doesn't fit one of these ...one of these categories then it is not going to show up that you are a minority when in all actuality you are.

YY thought that demographics represented people grouped by culture with common habits:

Well the relevance would be that there is a tendency for those subgroups to culturally think the same way....you know, have the same advantages and disadvantages, no...depending on which way you look at it. Usually those people will think the same; act the same, be at the same levels...Obviously there are some people out there that don't exactly fit, but if you take the group as a whole, you know, the average person would be the same, think the same...

Ultimately, only 18% understood the rationale behind the law informed by years of considerable research requiring schools, districts, and states to desegregate their achievement data to identify traditionally underserved and underperforming groups of children. By making these groups visible, the policy empowers education as a means of

social reform; it pushes schools to close test score gaps for students whose lack of student achievement has been correlated with social ills such as unemployment, illiteracy, poor health and nutrition, and crime (Cross, 2004, Hess & Petrelli, 2003). Some scholars suggest that the cards are stacked up against schools as students classified in these subgroups traditionally resist white middle class knowledge structures (Delpit, 1996; Grande, 2004; Lareau, 2000; Peshkin, 2000; Willis, 1977) or are viewed as nonintellectual (Taveres, in Apple; 2003). The Middle Eastern Americans, many whose families are war refugees from Iraq enrolling into WMHS as ELL newcomers, are classified as white on the demographic summary but are seen by teachers as different. Collectively, Middle Eastern Americans make up nearly a third of WMHS's student body; approximately 12% of them are English language learners. Only one teacher (RH) recognized other subgroup distinctions as important in his work.

AYP Status English Language Arts/Mathematics – Grade Tested 11: Pages 5 and 6. Both pages five and six of the report card provide details about AYP for English language arts and mathematics. All of the participants were able to find that the school and its students' performed the same within each assessed category for each content area. Sixty-six percent (21) of teachers knew that percent assessed represented the number of grade 11 students who participated in all three days of testing. Only one teacher knew the target (95%). All could infer that the school was not successful in getting all of its students tested.

Both the state objective and safe harbor were unfamiliar to 97% of the staff some of whom, like LG, guessed at their meanings: "The standards, the strand, the things that

every school should know in the different areas; (safe harbor?) I read that safe harbor has to do with kids in non-traditional situations."

Only RC understood the state objective related to the percent proficient for each content area although he did not know all the caveats attached to achieving AYP as described in the 2009 Guide to Reading the School Report Card; and JB was somewhat familiar with the ten percent rule affiliated with safe harbor but unfamiliar with the need for the group or collective of students making AYP in this domain to also meet the percent assessed and the graduation objectives.

Only 13% of teachers could identify the graduation objective with even fewer (6%) knowing the target for that objective. A few guessed on the graduation objective, suggesting it represented the state's prediction of how many would graduate based on past performances (LG, JK, and JW), that there are certain questions earmarked for the graduation objective (KG), a percentage of students who had met certain competencies from the tested cohort (EF). No teacher observed the introductory paragraph above the chart explaining the graduation objective and the 80% target for all students and student subgroups.

Finally, only seven (23%) teachers interviewed made a connection between the language of No Child Left Behind and the subsequent series of "No"s in the last column of the chart on pages five and six detailing AYP status for mathematics and English language arts. These teachers understood that the school needed to have all students and students within quantifiable (n = 30) subgroups meet participation, state objective or safe harbor, and graduation objectives in order to have met AYP guidelines.

In the end, these pages, like the others of the report card were seen as nominally useful and understandable to the interviewees.

Information presented in the report card appears too general for teachers; the aggregated figures of the previous year's tested juniors are too remote from their current classroom realities and their local situation to have substantial meaning. Many claimed that they have more valuable data which is collected through class work, social interactions, and relationships with their students. Although they may have the skills necessary to understand the report card, they choose not to. The state and federal accountability framework of standardized tests scores and weighted and calculated percentages and differences do not align with the teachers' own schemas for teaching effectiveness and student learning where results may not be seen for months or years after students leave their classroom and make connections in their adult worlds. When asked what they use as information instead of the report card, each teacher noted something about his or her practical experience. Teachers use multiple measures of formal and informal means of assessing learning extending beyond guizzes and unit tests to include their perceptions of students' investment in their learning, and observations of students' social, economic, and emotional needs and varied cognitive abilities gathered over time. They reflect upon the ability of individual students to apply what was learned in their classroom to real life contexts that often do not become apparent until students have long left WMHS as a measure of impact. Information they use to inform instruction is generated from data collected each hour, day, week, and semester of teaching a particular group of students. As local practitioners, they make countless adjustments to

their delivery to accommodate the varied and unpredictable situations they face in their classrooms each day.

The report card data exists in stark contrast to the way that teachers gather and analyze information in their locality. Its gross simplification of the quality of their school, their teaching, and student learning is not useful to them because the solutions sought to daily problems arising in schooling individual students are not resolved via cookie-cutter solutions. The report card data represents a snapshot in time with a predetermined purpose operating on the outside of and in contrast to the world in which they live and serve. It may have made the schooling legible to the community through the use of familiar symbols, but interviewees question the validity of the information represented in letter grades.

I now turn to describe what the teachers' feel the intent of the report card is for them and their school community.

Intent

Recall the high modernist intentions laden in requirements of NCLB where the federal government employs unrestrained authoritative power, gross simplifications manifested through scientific reasoning and technology, and market strategies to communicate individual school's effectiveness and quality in meeting standards for perfection (Scott, 1998). Mandates force states to produce public school report cards that employ accountability measures stripped of local contexts in favor of aggregate figures formed through complex series of statistical operations. NCLB requires that states extract demographic and test data from school databases, reconfiguring them using linear, rational, objective means. Ultimately, Michigan produces a school report card that

communicates student achievement status and change utilizing percentages and letter grades to which readers can relate (at least in so far as the grades are concerned, if not their calculations). The Michigan School Report Card simplifies the complex process of teaching and learning to a statistical score captured in a specific time and place void of past influences or other external variables potentially influencing individual and collective groups' potential for a federally prescribed quality education. The policy implores stakeholders to use these thin descriptions of public schooling to make informed decisions about their school and the quality of education received by their children.

In this section I examine teacher responses to questions about the school report card to determine if they believed the report card successfully made teaching and learning legible to stakeholders and if the reporting format effectively commodifies teaching and learning (McNeil, 1986) to influence the community's perception of the school.

When I asked each participant to look at the report card cover page, he or she immediately responded to the letter grades for each content area, the Indicators of School Performance, and their school's Composite Grade. Recognizing Ds as low-performing for each content area and the C Composite Grade as average, WMHS teachers felt that this is not an accurate representation of their school. Many thought it was an unfair snapshot of a particular time and place with missing descriptions of important programs. Several teachers feared that parents, unclear as to what the data meant would make decisions about schooling based on their misinterpretations. RC puts it this way:

If I were not a teacher I think the only thing I would probably look at as a community member is did the school I plan to send my kids to pass or not. I don't

think the public has a good understanding of what passing or what the grades for schools actually reflect.

CC echoed this concern:

It does a disservice to our school. When someone tells me that (they look at these report cards) when they want to move to the community, I tell them they need to go to the school and go for a tour; ask if they can do drop-ins because this is doing a disservice to all schools.

JB also raises questions about the portrait:

(From) this snapshot, it looks like the school is just an average school. But...when you are looking at these general things here, what gets lost are all the special details and the programs...This is the overall snapshot of the kid from the smartest of the smart to the dumbest of the dumb. This is where we average out...Some schools are better because, based on location, social economic status – whatever, they might have more smart kids or less dumb kids or no subgroups or something like that which impact their score...

Every informant objected to the portrait of the school's collective performance. RH explained:

(What the report card) tells me is something way different than it tells the community. It tells the community that this is a really crappy school. Especially the achievement subtotals say D, the grade says C but then there is that A...when I look at the breakdown in terms of the Ed Yes grade for the individual content areas they are all Ds. ...As a teacher here I don't see that as an adequate reflection

of our work here...D stands for poor and I don't see that in our day-to-day teaching.

PC affirms the participants' general stance that the grades misrepresented the school and that the poor performance might discourage parents from choosing this school:

If was sending my kid here, I might say - according to this document - it is not a good school. But teaching here I disagree with that...it is a little bit of average; I would probably give it a score of a B to this school...or a B+ as kind of a total overall grade. I think it is a pretty good school. And I don't think these scores are...reflective of the kind of students...according to this all our students have D knowledge, and that would not be true.

Some teachers were angry at the potential consequences of what they saw as a misrepresentation. JF, hunched over in his chair as he angrily observed:

I have developed a bias against (this kind) of information. I don't think that happens in the general public – I think that the general public misinterprets (this kind) of information and makes assumptions based on the misinterpretation of that information. And that is not good.

Out of the 32 teachers, only one believed that the letter grades are accurate: We are about average...there is a lot of room for improvement; I don't thing we are the worse school in the local area, but...I think we are far from the best...it is

you know, we have a lot of room for improvement.

In sum, the majority of participants had an emotional reaction to the Michigan School Report Card seeing it as misleading and inaccurate. The act of reducing their

school to a set of grades stripped away the individual nuances and "feels" that - for them - make their school more than a C school. They objected to and worried about the clear message to parents and other stakeholders that their school is ineffective. This might have been a reaction to the objectification of teaching and learning inherent in the reduction of their school to grades based on three days of testing. Alternatively it might have been a reaction to the harsh message the report card sent to the community – and others – about schooling at WMHS. In this sense, the report card achieved its intent to objectify teaching and learning in these teachers' views.

Usefulness to community

When considering any form of communication it is critical to consider the audience for whom the piece is written. Is it possible to simplify the complex, unpredictable nature of teaching and learning in ways to make it understandable to all communities? Is the Michigan School Report Card capable of delivering its important message to the WMHS community – described by teachers as working class, with limited degrees of higher education, often living in poverty, and frequently speaking in languages other than English? Teachers do not believe so. Nearly three-quarters of those interviewed (72%) do not think the report card is useful for parents because it is difficult to understand (for them) and it fails to tell the whole story often oversimplifying what is going on in the school.

Recognizing that she struggled to understand many of the headings and figures represented on pages within the School Report Card, KC justifies her belief that its information would mislead parents:

If I can verify that I only know one eighth of the things that you showed me I am thinking a parent won't even know the one eighth. Ignorance is not having the knowledge but they would still make a decision based on that ignorance, not in the bad way... they would base [the decision for] their children not going to a certain school or thinking one way...on the facts without knowing what each of those meant ...giving value to those numbers when truly inside of the classroom things could be seen so differently.

JF affirms KC's statements:

You are not getting enough information and the information that you get is not fully understood...I think that the general public misinterprets that information and makes assumptions based on the misinterpretation of that information. And that is not good.

CC thinks that parents are using the Report Card information but like many of her colleagues, she feels this is not a positive:

I think they are using it and I think that it is does a disservice to our school. When someone tells me that's what they do when they want to move to the community, I tell them they need to go to the school and go for a tour, ask if they can do drop ins because this is doing a disservice to all schools.

The Report Card tells a story, these teachers feel, but not an accurate one. Furthermore, the information, as presented is detrimental to the school. For 19% of WMHS teachers, the Michigan School Report Card is useful to their parents and community members who the assume use the information to make decisions about where to purchase a home and how their neighborhood school compares to others in the area.

In the end, the report card delivers on its intent to objectively represent WMHS and to commodify teaching and learning. The exchange rate is the quality of education the community assumes it is getting based on the letter grades and the corresponding percentages attached to the school's performance. By quantifying the educational process with a series of numbers that make minimal sense to teachers or parents, the report card effectively eliminates the nuances and sentiments these teachers' attached to the schooling processes; this seriously contradicts with teachers' reality bound as it is in their daily experiences in classrooms and within the social setting of their school. The report card successfully presents information to the school community in a language many community members will understand – letter grades, about a school that potentially informs their decisions about whether or not they should attend whereby it satisfies the market agenda outlined in the legislation.

Having described teachers' beliefs about the Michigan School Report Card's usefulness and understandability, I turn to discuss their perceptions of its influence on their work in their classroom.

Influence on Practice

First, more than half (53%) of the teachers interviewed admitted that they did not have conversations about the report card information with their colleagues; more than a quarter of them did not respond to the question at all or answered off task; six (18%) teachers claimed they had significant dialogue with their peers about it. Five of these six

teachers responding positively serve on WMHS's school improvement leadership team, perhaps providing them a forum for discussion.

Their reflections range from the specific to the general. RH, for example describes how conversations within the English department focus on how to improve minority students scores in writing and reading and how to close the gender gap in the same content area. Another teacher, working within the special education department notes how there is significant planning in response to the Michigan School Report Card for WMHS; and MO details how she and her colleagues debate the letter grades and compare themselves to other teachers in other schools and in other districts receiving a C as a composite grade.

Of the 17 (53%) responding that they were not having conversations about the report card, many answered with a simple "no;" others elaborated on the lack of value the document holds for them. SW, for example, returns to the difficulty he has reading and interpreting the information, thereby limiting his ability to have substantive conversations; JC comments that the report card has no influence on the day to day operations of his classroom. The brevity of their answers reflects their disconnectedness from the document.

Secondly, an overwhelming number of teachers did not find the document useful to them as teachers because it was either difficult to read, presented information that was too generalized or simplified, or they thought it counter productive. SW, for example explains that he absolutely does not use the information for instruction:

And again, I guess the frustration would lie that in my undergraduate degree and in my masters degree, I took statistic classes and those

statistics (the report card's) were foreign to masters level statistics courses – so that is odd. And I could just see, that is coming from a master's degree, bachelors...an educated person. I could just imagine what a parent would think of those numbers and scores.

SW relays the difficulty he found in interpreting the statistics presented in the report card despite his educational preparation. He too had thoughts that the parents in the community – many of whom were less well educated – would find the report card meaningless and obscure. Another teacher, KB, feels that the information in the report card fails to detail the quality of the staff:

The report card does nothing for me. Especially for somebody who is in the building every day who has been here for twelve years...Are there some things that can be improved in the building? ...There is not a school that you could walk into that you could say it is perfect – everything is great the way it is but...there is no way that those scores are reflective of number one, the caliber of teachers that teach in this building...and the effort and the training and the workshops they attend...it is not reflective it...its ...it makes me angry actually.

Another participant, JF, shares similar thoughts observing the report card data were not reflective of life in his classroom: "This data...doesn't make sense or it doesn't reflect the actual events happening ...taking place in your classroom...Consequently a teacher develops a bias against analysis, against data."

The nonverbal aspects of the interviews were also telling. Both their abbreviated responses and their body language conveyed a sense of disdain and distance from the

objective information put in front of them for discussion. AH pulled her knees to her chest while discussing the report card; JF hunched over his desk. Several participants turned their bodies away from the document when I asked questions about the report card and other test reports (CC, KG, KC). Participants' negative physical and emotional responses to the data -- coupled with their refusal to learn how to read and interpret the report card results -- suggest resistance. The report card and its simplified, linear, objective portrayal of their school functions represent a form of knowledge counter to the local knowledge they use to make classroom decisions and judgments about their school.

Practical Teacher Knowledge and the Michigan School Report Card

Let us consider two salient points of Scott's institutional theory that lends an explanation to tensions found in participants' reactions to the Michigan School Report Card. Steeped in technical, political rhetoric and oversimplified forms, information presented in the report card is deemed useless by teachers as it is too removed from the activities and needs of their daily lives. Second, utilizing scientific reasoning advocated by high modernist schemes, the report card fails to communicate information that is both accessible and comprehensible for stakeholders. Serving to generate legible images of public schools for the sake of management from afar, the report card's gross simplification removes nuances of schools that make them unique to their localities; resulting representations are unfamiliar to those closest to the school. That the analyses strip schooling of its personal nature only exacerbates their alienation from the report card.

Uselessness

Information presented in the report card was deemed useless because it exists outside of the world in which the teachers live and work. It is a different form of knowledge – that Scott calls *techne* – a form of knowledge that high modernist thinking values as the universal truth. High modernist schemes like NCLB and its artifacts attempt to purge references to contextual local knowledge as such local and personal knowledge is viewed as irrational, too embedded in the actions of the past, and steeped in myth (Scott, 1998). For those who see the craft of teaching as heavily dependent upon teachers' abilities to develop "a repertoire of moves, visual judgments, a sense of touch, or a discriminating gestalt for assessing the work as well as a range of accurate intuitions born of experience that defy being communicated apart from practice" (Scott, 1998, p. 329), teaching is steeped in what Scott calls *metis*. The tension existing between techne and metis – that is between technical, hard knowledge and practical, situated, local knowledge – is played out in teachers' responses to the report card where they find the information presented useless to their everyday lives as practitioners.

The impersonal, quantified information detailed in the Michigan School Report Card is viewed as useless by staff because it does not have a practical application to their everyday teaching lives. Teachers find the generalizations bound in the statistical story of their school too distant in time and space to apply to the complex, socially and academically messy work in the classroom. Report card data, they find, captures student achievement on a group of students who are no longer in their classrooms; and even if they were in attendance the information bound in the document does not speak to the specifics of individual students and their myriad of social and emotional needs, instructional methodologies deployed by specific teachers of assessed subjects, or of the varied social dynamics of particular classrooms during specific hours of instruction at this time. Its broad generalizations, while making it easy for authorities to compare and contrast schools statistically, are void of the timely, contextual information that teachers need, value, and use to manage teaching and learning in their present classrooms. An embodiment of technical knowledge, the Michigan School Report Card's information is too removed from the practical day to day activities of the school for WMHS teachers.

Incomprehensible Scientific Reasoning

The information captured in the Michigan School Report Card is steeped in political rhetoric that serves policy makers ends at the expense of those of school practitioners. Individual students and the complex, varied exchange that is indicative of teaching and learning is reduced to a series of aggregate scores from which policy makers form comparative judgments from afar about the quality of education and nature of return on taxpayers' dollars delivered by individual institutions. It successfully commodifies education shifting school purpose away from democratic aims in favor of one predetermined goal – perfect academic achievement for all. The rate upon which schools make the ascent to standardized perfection becomes the ultimate measure of quality. Participants resist this sterile representation of their school overtly noting how the subtle nuances of teacher and teaching quality and varied nature of student successes achieved over time are lost in translation or, perhaps more accurately, computation.

Precise mathematical computations used to generate information listed in the report card dismisses the qualitative interaction between the teacher and the learner occurring hour to hour, day to day, week to week. Teachers grimace as they examine the

document's headings uncertain about the meaning of items like the first page's status score and its corresponding grade, the second page's weighted index value and it's relation to the status score, the worth of measuring percent assessed, the connection of safe harbor to the valuation of students content knowledge, or what the definition of state objective have to do with the work of human interaction they partake in daily as practitioners. Even when guided to what specific headings mean, teachers filter the information for usefulness resisting the information's technical nature. The political elite, however, use the quantitative information to market a school and its staff's (in)competency relative to federal guidelines and to simplify the school's student body into subgroup aggregates to further build their case against public schooling.

The Michigan School Report Card uses formulas in the form of sophisticated statistics to make predictions and to measure the productivity of schools as prescribed by NCLB. Problems surface, however, because the social life of schools cannot be made to work within the context of formulas. Scott (1998) describes the tension between the technical knowledge represented in high modernist schemas and the local knowledge deployed by practitioners engaged in human action and operating in precarious environments. Teaching, as previously discussed is steeped in local knowledge shaped by experience and applicability to classroom problems. WMHS teachers sense this, finding their school's report card to be a useless portrayal of their school in a couple of ways.

First, the data bound on each page stands as an impersonal, quantitative explanation of their work. The particular headings and numeric representations found on their school report card have no meaning for them; the vague simplifications do not

function to solve any immediate problem in their current classrooms. These teachers opt to rely on their practical knowledge to make determinations about the quality of their school overtly stating the importance of making judgments based on a perceived "feel" gathered from a site visit, inquiry about the kinds of programs offered, and direct contact with personnel serving within the school. In their worldview, the Michigan School Report Card does a disservice to their school because it does not balance technical knowledge bound in the statistical formulas with local knowledge found in the context of WMHS.

Secondly, WMHS teachers render the data generated from scientific reasoning useless because it is difficult to understand in spite of their educational levels. As described in detail, readers must engage in critical reading and research and have some knowledge of statistics in order to make sense out of measures employed by the report card. The method of employing scientific reasoning to accurately and objectively verify findings is an extension of technical knowledge. As practitioners, teachers historically have refuted the value of technical knowledge favoring that which is learned on the job Britzman, 1975, 2003; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Lortie, 1975). Abstractions bound in the scientific reasoning of theories are too remote from their classroom realities; this fact presents itself in WMHS teachers' collective responses to the Michigan School Report Card which they find too general and steeped with information that seems irrelevant to their daily work with students. Few teachers can engage in the inclusive statistical conversation of the report card; they do not comprehend what the data tells them. They project their personal sentiments upon their parents who they feel do not have the educational levels to interpret and accurately respond to the report card. In fact, few feel

they will pursue information past the cover page. In sum, the tension existing between the technical knowledge of this high modernist artifact and what it does and does not tell them about their school and the local knowledge that teachers rely on leads the teachers to reject the accountability measures as, at best, unhelpful, and at worst, harmful.

CHAPTER 6

"A REAL COMMUNITY AFFAIR":

PARENT EMPOWERMENT AT WMHS

Society (becomes) an object that the state might manage and transform with a view toward perfecting it...it speaks about the improvement of the human condition with the authority of scientific knowledge ...disallowing other competing sources of judgment. -- Scott (1998)

Introduction

No Child Left Behind alters the relationship that parents have with schools and school personnel form with their parents. Noting the strong correlation between parent engagement and student achievement and limitations experienced by disadvantaged and minority families served, the original authorization of ESEA in 1965 encouraged schools to design parent literacy, health and nutrition, and curriculum events to help close the achievement gaps between targeted students and their more affluent counterparts. Budget and program plans required a specific set aside at both the district and local levels to ensure these acts were part of overall spending agendas. Framed by market theory and driven by authoritarian high modernist visions, NCLB now arms parents of the lowest performing, neediest students with federal Title I funds to exit chronically failing schools, seek supplemental educational services, and demand information about teacher quality, curriculum materials, instruction, and assessment (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). The policy establishes parents' roles as consumers of education by empowering them to seek the best education possible for their individual children through diligent research and the use of scientific reasoning.

Michigan markets school production to stakeholders with school report cards that simplify and generalize teaching and learning into aggregates derivative of standardized test results and complex statistical formulas. The report card authors, as we saw in the previous chapter, create the document as a means of simplifying teaching and learning for the purpose of management; those unable to discern its meaning are left insubordinate and disadvantaged (Scott, 1998). NCLB authors assume parents as informed readers and tax payers -- will use this information to determine if they are getting the most for their educational tax dollars and are getting the quality of education necessary for their children to have the competitive edge in a tight job market. The policy attempts to break historical and traditional social interactions parents hold or do not hold with their schools.

A paradox exists between NCLB's authoritarian, high modernist aims and stakeholders' dependence on local knowledge as a means of making decisions about their children's education. On one level, we see the policy mandating that parents engage in scientific reasoning in order to choose the best (perfect) education for their individual children, and on another level, we see the potential for those refusing to yield to the scientific plan swept aside (Scott, 1998). Frightfully, those the policy is designed to serve suffer the most because they lack the capacity to interpret and respond to the document.

Opening with a description and explanation of the demographic make-up of the Whanton community as well as the population surrounding it, this chapter establishes an understanding of the social, economic, and educational status of a school's blended community as a means of determining their potential for engaging in the policy's intent.

As will be shown, children outside of the community attend WMHS and their attendance adversely influences the policy's high modernist, parent empowerment plans: these community members come from populations with low levels of education and limited economic resources, which potentially compromise parents' capacity to access critical information and engage in scientific reasoning. Teachers' perceptions of their students' parents and descriptions of their interactions follow. As their responses unfold we see that their experiences with parents shape their expectations for interaction (Anyon, 1981), thus reinforcing parents' peripheral role. Finally, I return to Scott to analyze parents' habitual interaction with WMHS. Conflicts surface between NCLB's high modernist assumptions about the consumer role parents can play under the law, their capacity to engage in scientific inquiry to make informed judgments about the quality of education in which their children partake, and the traditional means that most parents gather information about schools and their children's learning.

WMHS Community

Whanton Moore High School is a divided population. Historically, the school supported members of its local community educating children from the city of Whanton. With the advent of choice and Whanton Community Schools' open enrollment policy, WMHS has experienced a migration of children from the neighboring school communities south of the city's border. In spite of being a chronically failing school, the district's reputation and the school's Michigan Blue Ribbon School's status make it a favorable choice for parents fleeing crumbling inner-city and fringe city schools.

At the time of the study, school demographics portrayed a diverse community; 80% of students were White; 12% Black; and nearly 5% were Asian/Pacific Islander.

Forty-seven percent of students received free or reduced lunch – an indicator schools use to gauge percentages of students living in poverty; over a third of students spoke a language other than English in the home with 15% of students categorized as English language learners (ELL) (WCS SASI, 2009). Census data from the city differs considerably from the demographic enrollment of WMHS. Family structure, education, workforce, and poverty level statistics from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (www.factfinder.census.gov) provides some contextual insight.

Family Structure, Race, and Education

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2000) tell us that in the city of Whanton approximately 82% of the families in town with school age children are two parent families; 12% are single parent families with the mother as head of the household; 6% have fathers as head of households. Some children were raised by their grandparents; nearly 40% of Whanton grandparents are raising their grandchildren with nearly 20% providing for them for 5 years. In the surrounding community, 89.6% of residents are White, 2.6% are Black, and 4.6% are Asian. Most adults in the community are high school graduates or higher (81.2%) with 17% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Less than 6% have a graduate or professional degree.

Neighboring communities south of the city from which many students attending WMHS come vary slightly in family structure and educational levels; one reported 65% of families with children under the age of 18 are two-parent and 25% are single parent families with the mother as the head of the household. Of all grandparents residing in this city, 42% were raising school-age children. The racial composition of the community there is very similar to that of Whanton with 88.3% White, 4.4% Black, and 2.5% Asian.

The percentage of adults 25 years and older having earned a high school diploma or higher is slightly lower than WMHS's immediate attendance area with just under 73% accomplishing this; only 9% of this neighboring city's adults hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. Just over 2% have a graduate or professional degree out of this population.

Many parents choose to send their children to WMHS from inner-city schools close to Whanton. Families living on the north side of Detroit are strikingly different than those of Whanton. Only 43% of families with children under the age of 18 are twoparent families in this area of Detroit. Nearly half (48%) of children under the age of 18 are living in families with female heads of households. As in the city of Whanton, some grandparents are caregivers for children under the age of 18; in north Detroit, 45.6% of grandparents occupy this role. North Detroit's racial make-up is considerably different from those of Whanton and its South Whanton; 11.8% are White, 85% are Black, and less than 1% are Asian. Education levels of people living in this zip code are somewhat different from those of Whanton with fewer than 80% of city residents have a high school diploma or higher and 14% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Less than 5% of the population has a graduate or professional degree.

When comparing family and education levels of Whanton, South Whanton, and the north side of Detroit to national census figures interesting similarities and differences appear. South Whanton has slightly less than the national average (68%) of children under the age of 18 living with two parents; and citizens in Whanton and the north side of Detroit have slightly lower percentages of adults with a high school diploma or higher with figures hovering around the 80th percent mark compared to the national average of 84.5%. South Whanton's percentage of two-parent families of school age children was

only three percent lower than the national average of 68%. In contrast, all three communities sending children to WMHS have far fewer citizens with a Bachelor's degree or higher than the national percentage of 27%. Ten percent of the nation's population has a graduate or professional degree, far exceeding figures for all three communities. The most profound differences lie in family structure and racial composition in north Detroit. While percentages of single parent, female heads of the household in Whanton are close to the national average of 7.2%, single parent, female heads of the household in South Whanton (25%) and north Detroit, (50%) far exceed this mark. Finally, the racial composition of the north side of Detroit is nearly the opposite of national averages for White (77.5), Black (12.9%), and Asian (4.6%). The sharp contrast in family structures, race, and levels of education contribute to the diversity noted by this study's participants. **Workforce**

Occupations held by residents of Whanton and communities south of the city are reflective of educational levels with most work held requiring less than a graduate or professional degree. U.S. census data reveals Whanton residents hold occupations in service (17.2%), sales and office (26.1%), production, transportation or material moving (19%), and construction and maintenance (11.3%). The largest percentages of workers are in manufacturing (22.6%) and health, education, and social services (17.8%); mean household income is \$59,924. Only 26.3% held managerial or professional occupations. In 2000, the unemployment rate of Whanton was 2.3%. At the time of this study, unemployment in Whanton hovered around 10%.

Residents of South Whanton (48091) have similar percentages of workers in service occupations (16.3%), in sales and office work (27%), in production,

transportation or material moving (25.3%), and fewer than 12% in construction and maintenance. Far more workers serve in manufacturing roles (28.7%) and fewer in health, education and human services (11.4%). Nineteen percent have managerial or professional occupations. The mean household income was \$46,808 in 2000, with a 3.5% unemployment rate (in 2000).⁷

Northern Detroit residents on have similar percentages of workers in service occupations as Whanton residents (19.6%), far more performing sales or office work (30.4), far less in production, transportation or material moving (19.7), and fewer workers in construction and maintenance roles (7%). Northern Detroit has nearly 19% of residents working in manufacturing jobs, 21.1% in health, education, and human service roles, and 23.3% in managerial or professional occupations. The mean household family income of this community falls slightly lower than that of Whanton and South Whanton at \$45,610 (in 2000). Northern Detroit had a 5.8% unemployment rate in 2000 (to use comparative data).

Comparative to national averages in 2000 Whanton, South Whanton, and northern Detroit residents have similar percentages of workers in service jobs (15%), sales and office occupations (25%), construction and maintenance jobs (9.4%), and health, education, and human services work (20%). These three cities, however, have far more workers in production, transportation, and maintenance than the national average (14.6) and far fewer in managerial or professional roles (33.6%). Clearly, considerably more workers in these three cities serve in unskilled or semi-skilled hourly wage occupations

⁷ Note: As this study was conducted during the recession of 2008-10, this statistic is no longer accurate.

that do not require a Bachelor's degree or higher. The prevalence of strong labor unions may contribute to the competitive salaries earned by these predominantly working class people.

Income

With the exception of Whanton, residents of South Whanton and Detroit have slightly lower household incomes than the national average of \$50,046 in 2000. Unemployment rates in Whanton and South Whanton were similar to the national average of 3.7%; north Detroit was considerably higher at the time. Current figures for these residents may differ considerably from those reported in the 2000 as Michigan's unemployment rates are the highest in the country at nearly 15% as reported in October of 2009 compared to the national average unemployment rate of 10% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

Poverty levels at the time of the survey range from 9.2% for all families to a high of 43.6% for female head of households with children under 5 years of age in the city of Whanton. Married couple families with children under the age of 5 had the lowest poverty level with 4.3% earning income below the poverty level. Family poverty levels in communities south of Whanton are similar; South Whanton has 8.3% of families living below the poverty level and north Detroit has 13.9%. These figures are substantially different from those reported at WMHS at the time of the study where nearly one out of two high school age children received free and reduced lunch (based on income earnings below the poverty level and number of family members in the household). This could be because many children attending the school are from outside of the city limits, the arrival

of many Iraqi refugees, and the substantial impact the troubled auto industry has had on the area in the past two years.

WMHS Teachers' View of Parents

WMHS teachers' images of parents resonate with Lareau's (2000) descriptions of parents from different social class structures. Values guiding the place of education in their children's lives, cultural resources afforded by levels of education, dimension of their work, and their social networks contribute to or limit parents' capacity to take advantage of NCLB's parent empowerment aims. What follows is a description and explanation of WMHS teachers' perceptions of their students' parents.

Values

Lareau's (2000), work establishes a useful lens through which to interpret teachers' perceptions of parent involvement at WMHS and ultimately parents' potential to take advantage of NCLB's parent empowerment intention. In her interviews with teachers and the principals at both a working class and affluent schools Lareau uncovered habitual patterns of interactions. In the working class school for example, she found staff members felt that parents' low levels of participation and low priority of school were directly linked to the value their community held for school and their lack of education. Teachers in the working class school linked high levels of truancy to the value parents placed on school's importance; Lareau associated this to specific parents who either did not attend school regularly themselves or who had not finished high school. Staff, both the principal and teachers, at the working class school expressed frustration when dealing with excessively truant and tardy students and their parents. Parents, who were not engaged this staff believed, placed school beneath other familial obligations. Active

parents on the other hand, were "concerned and supportive," (p. 98) evidenced by their presence (volunteering) in the daily activities of school, at special events, and parent-teacher conferences.

The blended demographics of Whanton Moore High School set it up for mixed levels parent engagement. Teachers who teach the required academic core courses describe diverse patterns of parent participation. JA who teaches three levels of biology (a required subject), says: "If you look at the number of parents who contact me or are involved, you are looking at maybe 40 - 50%. Some parents I don't hear from at all."

LB, who teaches biology and chemistry, notes the difference in her parent contacts:

It actually varies between the two classes. With my chemistry classes I actually have a lot of parent involvement; I get a lot of parent emails and phone calls asking how they are doing and what kind of projects are coming up. I don't get that a lot with my biology students. I have very little contact with them...I may have spoken to six of them throughout the whole semester.

A math teacher, JB who serves a wide range of students from general to advanced placements, notes the range of parental interactions as well:

In general, I mean, it is a diverse group. I would say when I am dealing with the advanced kids, I am dealing with 50 - 60% of the parents over the course of the year. Most typically, just at conferences or an occasional email. Kids in general classes...(there) is a much, much lower percentage. I would say probably 25 - 30% and (with) those there really is no pattern.

CC teaches English 10 General (required), Introduction to Newspaper, runs the school newspaper, and also teaches a Literature to Film course:

I have two or three (parent contacts) a semester. If I have a really low level student who is not turning anything in, usually the parent contacts me – but like I said, I like to take care of everything in the classroom. And usually I can...I usually get students to work so I don't have any failing students. And that is the number one reason that parents call...if their student failed.

JC, a government (required) teacher working with primarily juniors and seniors, says that he rarely hears from his parents. KC, who teaches Investigative Forensics, a general (non-college prep) science class and who serves primarily at-risk learners describes her parents this way: "In general...(they are) not there...let's look at Open House. Fifteen parents out of 150 students. Horrible. They ...are almost out of the education...They have already handed their kid over to us it seems."

JF teaches English 11 General, English 11 CP (college preperatory), and Advanced Placement Composition. He views parent contact relative to student success in his classroom: "most often I see the parents who meet success in class. And the kids who do not meet with success in class? I see those kids' (parents) rarely – ever."

Even when noting the socio-economic diversity of their parents, teachers overwhelming notice the limited ways that parents make contact. Overwhelmingly, most use email; teachers also talk with parents at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences. KG, an English 10 General and Publications (an elective) teacher puts it this way:

Some are very involved – probably 10%....but for conferences I probably have about ten percent of my kids on email and about ten percent of the parents came –

the same ones, of course and the rest...I can't even get a hold of them on the phone. There is no involvement for most. My lowest...achieving kids, I can never contact their parents. If I do, I don't get a very rational parent...they are so uneducated themselves.

Study participants delineate two parent types. The first type is a small percentage of parents who initiate contact with them generally through email, attend parent-teacher conferences, and are attentive to their child's progress in a course. Their students tend to be involved in college preperatory or Advanced Placement classes. These parents behave in ways similar to the affluent ones observed by Lareau (2000); they are also likely to have the capacity and will to engage teachers and school administrators in the manner outlined by NCLB.

On the other hand, a majority of parents who were hard to reach or never heard from, were parents of children in the general educational track, and were not present at parent-teacher conferences. Lareau (2000) found that while not visible and obviously engaged in their child's educational experience, working class parents with lower levels of education do value the importance of earning a high school diploma; they participate in the education of their child by preparing him/her for school, keeping in touch with the teacher and knowing what is going on in school insuring their child has good manners and proper behavior while in attendance; and they turn the responsibility of educating their children to the school (Lareau, 2000). These parents may not have the capacity and will to negotiate NCLB expectations. Both types of parents value school; the manner in which they express it differs.

Several WM teachers reference patterns of parent interactions that tell them that parents willingly turn the education of their children over to teachers but remain concerned. For WMHS teachers, the nature of correspondences with parents at times reveals their lack of knowledge about how school works and a commitment to insure their children receive good grades. Some parents associate grade attainment with the quality of instruction without concern for the student's responsibility for learning. The grade is equivalent to being paid for going to work (Willis, 1977). RH, who teaches both English 10 General and English CP (college preparatory), makes this observation:

I don't think that the parents get it...I don't think they understand what goes into education...you know what goes into learning. Not very often do I have parents come up to me (at conferences) and ask me to identify specific skill deficiencies or specific skills strengths...mostly it is, "He got a B and how come he didn't get an A?" You know, I don't know how to answer that question.

AH, who teaches English 9 General (required), describes how parents who contact her like to stay informed about any issues their children may be having in school: Are they turning in work? Are they behaving? Lareau (2000) finds patterns of concerns about punctuality and conduct more so among the working class parents than the affluent; the latter tending to take more initiative with parents when problems arose, to question a teacher's competence with the principal, and make more demands on the staff. MH teaches Algebra II (required) and Algebra II/Trig Accelerated. She finds a range in parent knowledge about curriculum and how high schools work in general:

There are some people that don't...they don't know anything about our new standards, they don't know...how many credits their students need – they don't

even know the classes their kids are taking or you know the teachers their kids have. Then you have all the way across the fence to the parents that know the new state standards, the new requirements; they know how many credits their kids need to graduate, they know who their counselor is, they know who their teachers are and they what their kids are doing for homework every single day because they are involved and paying attention to the information we are giving them.

MH's observation of diverse levels of parent knowledge remains consistent with her colleagues' observations of the school's blended population. On one hand, MH has parents who have taken the initiative to gather information by attending meetings or looking up available information on the Internet about their school. Yet she also has parents who willingly turn the education of their children over to the school and appear passive in their engagement.

The changing demographics of WMHS's community also becomes apparent when examining student truancy rates over the span of five years including that of the study. Lareau (2000) describes truancy rates as an indicator of school value. In her study, teachers in the working class community reported high rates of truancy with students missing as much as half of the school year. Derived from WMHS student data bases, the table below describes the number of students absent ten or more times during the school year and the percentage that number represents of the overall population by grade:

Table 6.1

YEAR	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
GRADE	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
9	299	70	354	76	379	80	339	82	382	81
10	299	72	343	80	414	87	391	82	373	86
11	298	83	340	85	387	87	416	94	437	95
12	330	90	306	89	366	93	380	95	371	95
Total	1226	78	1343	82	1546	86	1526	88	1563	89

Student Attendance Patterns: 10 or More Absences

Note how truancy rates for students increases in every grade level over five years. As noted in previous chapters, the poverty rate nearly doubled going from 25% to 47% in the year of the study, the percentage of White children decreased 10% and the percentage of children of color attending WM increased from 5% to 12%. Students new to the district and those indigenous to the community hold school attendance at different priority levels than community members of the past.

Cultural Resources and Dimensions of Work

Lareau (2000) poignantly describes the differences in the occupational and educational status of the working class parents from their more affluent counterparts and school instructional and administrative staffs and how these differences played out in school relationships. The working class parents, Lareau found were mostly high school graduates with many fathers being high school drop-outs who themselves noted their educational shortcomings. Her observations of parents affirmed this, as she found many participants broke rules of Standard English when speaking and had limited vocabularies in comparison to the more affluent school community of her study. Working class parents, limited by their educational backgrounds, struggled with elementary school
material. Their sense and actual capacity to assist their children with instructional material reinforced their tendency to leave educational matters to the school.

Parents from the working class school held jobs of lower occupational status than their teachers which also influenced the nature of school interactions. Lareau cites how fathers were assembly line workers, construction workers, cement workers, a police officer, and unemployed; working mothers held jobs as waitresses, assembly line workers, salespeople in retail stores, and bookkeepers for the family business. These skilled and semi-skilled occupations influenced the relations the working class parents had with their teachers leading parents to believe that they were not equal to their teachers – that teachers held a specialized body of knowledge for which they had years of training. Lareau reports how parents felt they lacked the confidence and self-esteem to raise questions about objectionable practices their children experienced in school for fear of retaliation or their own misunderstanding about the school's inner workings (Lareau, 2000).

Work dimensions inform school interactions and parental support for school at home as well (Lareau, 2000; Willis, 1977). Participation in activities before, during, and after school is often limited for working class parents whose work is highly supervised and performed on site in designated shifts. Recall that WMHS teachers make note of the difficulty they had reaching some parents by phone and how infrequently they see them in general. Parents' work roles may contribute to this. Advancement in working class occupations correlates directly to the ability of the individual to perform his/her work well in the work environment; these roles do not require employees bring home work after scheduled shifts. Parents socialized in these work spaces expect their children to

complete their work in the classroom; they stress punctuality and attendance when inquiring about their children's behavior. With their work more supervised than their managerial counterparts, they expect teachers to supervise and assume responsibility for student actions, decisions, and punctuality. Familiar with less autonomous work – which often has distinct time and attendance boundaries -- working class occupations lead parents to maintain a separation of home and work – something they passed along to their children (Lareau, 2000).

Affluent parents in Lareau's study, on the other hand, held occupations equal to or superior to teachers. Fathers dominated familial structures with mothers often having occupational prestige as well. Lareau (2000) found that these parents' sense of occupational equity led them to take initiative with teachers when problems arose, to question a teacher's competence with the principal, or make demands on staff. Unlike their working class counterparts, these parents were not passive, insecure, or dependent upon their children's teachers (Lareau, 2000). WMHS teachers feel the presence of these parents too. While fewer in number, they are the parents who initiate contact, appear informed about how school works, and are more visible in parent leadership groups like the Band and Athletic Boosters.

Demographic data of WMHS's immediate attendance area and communities to the south ground assumptions that most sending parents have educational levels inferior to those of the school's teachers and hold occupations similar to the working class parents in Lareau's study. With fewer than 19% of residents having earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher and fewer than 27% holding managerial or professional occupations requiring high levels of education, a large majority of parents in the immediate attendance area and

those south of the city have lower educational and occupational status than the teachers of WMHS. The presence of more educated, professionally employed parents creates the polarity WM teachers observe relative to parent employment and ultimately their participation in school matters.

Most of PC's interactions with parents of his students in English 11 General and Spanish I occur through the parent-teacher conferences where only 50% of parents attend in the fall and fewer than 35% in the spring.⁸ This presents him with diverse views of WMHS parents' occupational and familial make-ups:

In general they are working class; some of them have jobs where they are not there for their kids when they come home – some of them have two jobs. Then on the other hand, you will have a dad that stays home or a mom that stays home – it is very diverse in general.

KB echoes PC's observation:

I have kids who are from...if you want to look at AYP, from a lot of those subgroups...you have somebody who was laid off...you have kids who are coming in where we don't think they live in the district that come from other places that aren't doing so well...I deal with kids of parents of big happy families...parents who both have their jobs and everything is okay...it is quite a mix.

⁸ Parent Teacher Conference Data is calculated by hand counting the number of report cards not picked up and dividing that into the total enrollment. These figures are for the 2008-09 school year.

GK, a former automotive tech teacher currently teaching 20th Century World History, a general education class required of all students, reiterates his colleagues' observations:

(Parents I see hold)...9 to 5 jobs, industrial jobs, serving directly the automotive community or indirectly the automotive community. Everyone is in the community to work for/on the automobiles. (Our parents have) language barriers... a lot of language barriers when I call home...many broken homes. Not too often do I see, you know...I have a mom and a dad... a father and a mother contact. Not too often do I see a father and a mother at parent teacher conferences.

SW who teaches Health, Physical Education, Media and serves as one of the varsity football coaches describes WMHS parents as a blend between the blue-collar, hard-working factory people with whom he easily relates, the upper-middle class small business owners, and the new poverty class of people moving in from urban areas, and those left behind in the economic rubble of the auto industry. SW also notes how new parents come to the "blue ribbon" school believing, "I have done my piece, I have got you here...now it is up to the school...It is the schools job, don't talk to me."

Over all, more than a third of teachers noticed what they call the "diversity" of their parents' employment status and family structures. Interactions with parents lead WMHS teachers to believe that their parents have competing understandings about school, work in varied settings (if at all), live within traditional and non-traditional familial settings, and have differing levels of education. Several teachers explicitly reference the parents' different levels of education and how that implicitly informs

students' behavior. YY, who teaches Algebra and Geometry, observes student work ethic and various levels of education within the WMHS community with who he has contact:

Most of the parents that I know are hard working parents who are not necessarily college graduates but do work for a living. They are out in the workforce, but when it comes to education...maybe I don't know...very few would have a college background...which is not necessarily a bad thing because a lot of those kids that I have, they are hard workers...I would have to say maybe 30% of the parents ...of my students are probably there at conferences, or email me periodically, or speak to (me). My lesson plans are on-line...very rarely do parents know that.

Another math teacher, LG whose classes are made up of a blend of ELL and general education students also detects the difference in parental education and degree of contact:

All parents I have ever met want good things for their kids but they don't always know...how to make it happen. And so if the kids come from families where their parents went to college, then I get a lot of emails from that mom or that dad immediately. Or if they didn't (go to college) and maybe they think that, "Well I didn't do well in Algebra – I didn't even take Algebra," I don't get a lot of feedback from them. Right now I don't have a lot of parent involvement directly.

Both YY and LG remark on the wide range of parent education and what they sense is a relationship between their parents' educational levels and connectedness to the

school. This is similar to what Okey and Cusick (1995) found when interviewing parents of dropouts: problems with schooling were seen as a part of the family history.

Occupational roles held by parents, coupled with the dimensions of their work shape the nature of their interactions with and expectations of school personnel. At WMHS, teachers clearly delineate parent concerns. Teachers perceive some parents send their children to school prepared to put in a good day's work with the expectation that they be paid with a good letter grade for doing just that. Others parents express anxiety for their sons' or daughters' punctuality and conduct, others send emails to teachers letting them know when their children are going to be absent. Many staff members observe that their students' parents know very little about how school works or about essential thinking skills and school success. Without specific student and parent names to pinpoint family types and course enrollments it is difficult to ascertain if parent unease about these matters directly correlates to the type of work and educational level of parents.

The separation of home and work manifest itself in interactions some parents have with school; contact is limited or non-existent for some. Lareau's (2000) work, however does provide some helpful insights along social class lines that lead me to believe that these issues surface mostly among students in general education classes where students' parents have lower levels of education than their teachers and work in unskilled or semiskilled occupations when employed.

WMHS teachers note that some parents initiate contact right away and are familiar with the way school works, are aware of their children's teachers' names and counselor, and are able to ask the right questions about their children's educational

progress. Contact is frequent with some parents; they openly express high expectations for their children's learning beyond high school. Relying on demographic data of sending communities, this would be a smaller percentage of parents relative to the overall population. Parents behaving in this way resonate with the actions of the more educated, affluent parents in Lareau's (2000) study.

Expectations

Portrayed by WMHS teachers as socio-economically and ethnically diverse with values indicative of both the working class and affluent parents (Lareau, 2000), teachers' hold competing expectations for WMHS parents. WMHS teachers want parents to be aware of what is going on in school although they do not necessarily want parents to interfere with their work in the classroom. They want parents be aware of their children's grades, their homework assignments, and social interactions at school. Parents, WMHS teachers believe, need to send their children to school prepared to learn. RH explains it this way:

RH: My expectations of parents is to have an understanding of what we do here...and really provide support in terms of encouragement to do the work and to strive for perfection...Not they'll ever get there ...none of (us) will, but to shoot to learn as much as they can...I think that the parents here...don't really know what the kids are supposed to do, and I don't think that they have a concept of...what goes on in a class. I see that manifested more in the college prep classes than I do in the general classes...My expectations of the parents is to support what I do here and then best way they can do that is to encourage the kids to come prepared to do the work, to find out what the kids are learning, and to

find out when the kids are frustrated but in terms of what I am teaching in the class...and to just stay out of that.

Another colleague, CC, elaborates:

As a high school teacher I don't have the same expectations as an elementary teacher...my students are 15 to 18 years-old...I hold them responsible - so I don't see a lot of parents like elementary school...you know they pick their kids up and see the teacher everyday, so I expect...I am hoping the parents at least feed and clothe the children and get them here and I take care of everything after that.

Teachers' view of parent involvement in part, reflects the working class value of keeping home separate from the work of school; send them prepared, but leave the work of education to the teacher. Another assumption begins to appear too, as high school teachers assume that their students need to take responsibility for their own learning; this belief is more consistent with educated parents' expectations.

Another theme in teachers' responses is their desire to have parents know there is always going to be homework; to create a quiet working space for children to study, and then to make sure that they are doing it. Here teacher expectations stress the blending of home and school; a trait that many of the working class parents would struggle to uphold. This appears in more than half of teachers' responses. LG explains:

Yes...it is just that they take an active role in their kids' learning. They understand that Monday through Friday their child is going to have a homework assignment and so you need to say, "Just do it, show it to me."...That kind of thing...just so that the little triangle between the parents, the students and me keeps moving in the right direction...my other expectation of parents is that if

they feel that something is not right that they come to me so that we can together devise a plan to fix it.

LG's last comment leads to a third issue stressed by a number of teachers interviewed: the need make contact with the teacher if their child comes home with an unusual story relative to something that took place in class. Generally, teachers find that parents are shifting blame to teachers when advocating on behalf of students. TD, a 45year veteran expresses her concerns this way:

Well...I expect them to be able to...hear my side of the story so that we can have a dialogue. And I don't expect parents to come in on the attack because I don't attack them, I don't attack their children, so I expect it to be reciprocal. I also try with parents...to no matter how good or bad a student is ...I work really hard to say something positive before I say something negative.

A novice teacher reports the same:

My expectations for parents in terms of communication is to...be patient before rushing to a judgment upon a situation...where most of the time it is a negative situation where the judgment is rushed. And take a moment and find out what is going on.

Here a fourth theme emerges -- the desire for teachers to see parents keep lines of communication open. Nearly every teacher mentioned the large number of students for whom they are responsible and the expectations that parents contact them first to initiate conversation. This is a double-edged assertion. On one hand, teachers express the need for communication, but expect parents to initiate the contact. But the majority of their parents are serving in working class occupations which might run contradictory to what most parents confidently can do. Small percentages of parents are making contact and as

pointed out by several teachers, these are the most educated of the lot. The low number of reported contacts made by teachers – some state they never contact parents first -establishes low levels of interactions between home and school. While these teachers make limited contact with parents, therefore restricting the development of a productive relationship, they insist that parents be supportive of their work in the classroom academically and behaviorally. Support for them, is backing them up; reminding students about the importance of school. EF provides us an example:

My expectations for my student's parents (are) for them to value what they are doing in my classroom. Especially being an art teacher I know there is some what of a bias as to the value and importance in terms of what they are doing there. So I am hoping that my parents will value what they are doing and support me if I am having a problem with their child. I believe that it is a real....community affair a child being in school. There has to be parent involvement, teacher and students...between the three of us...working together as a team trying to get these students to be successful in a classroom.

Finally, teachers stress the importance of being physically present at school; to volunteer, donate, and to participate in the Booster clubs. These beliefs seem rooted in teachers' own experiences. For example, GK explains:

I would like the parents to be involved more...have a more physical presence in the school...the calls in when something is wrong are not enough. I am sorry, the emails in when something is wrong are not enough. Come to the school; sit in your child's class. Be a volunteer in your child's class even if it is checking papers or monitoring the

halls...become a volunteer. This might come from my mother volunteering as a lunch room lady for...eight years all six of her kids went to school.

GK's statement reflects his middle class values of the connection between work and home (his father is a school superintendent). While a small percentage of WMHS parents can fulfill this expectation, a large percentage of WMHS parents work in occupations that limit their capacity to comply or have been socialized in their work environments to maintain a separation of home and work. They may also have grown up in families that were alienated or estranged from schools, where that separation was taken for granted and unquestioned.

In the end, teachers' expectations operate in opposition of most of what the literature suggests about their parents' values about school. Where they find parents not involved, they carefully define involvement relative to what should be happening at home requesting that parents leave instruction to them. Matters involving homework require parents set up a space for their children to work – and then make sure that they are doing it rather than performing a tutorial role. Establishing a work space at home can run contradictory to their working class parents' beliefs about the separation of home and school. Some teachers stop giving homework all together knowing that some parents do not have the capacity to help their children and their limited physical resources leave many students without technology to complete tasks at home. Several teachers mention how they would like to see more parents on campus volunteering, but admit they do not do a good job of asking parents to help; parents can donate, belong to Boosters, or work concessions – they are not expected to assist with instruction.

No Child Left Behind invites parents to challenge teachers about the nature of the curricula and practices they are using; they are invited to push back if their children are not receiving a high quality product. It urges them to gather information reported on the web-based Michigan School Report Card to make informed decisions about the quality of education their children receive at WMHS in relation to other high schools available to them and their children. Teachers, when asked directly how often parents ask them questions about instructional methodology and the quality of curricular materials, reported that not a single parent has asked questions about these matters. In fact, limited evidence exists to suggest parents are using the Michigan School Report Card to choose WMHS; if it were the case, more families might choose to leave this chronically failing high school behind.

Objectifying Parent Participation in Local Schools

Both teacher perspectives and demographic information set the stage for opposition between NCLB expectations and the capacity and will of WMHS clientele. As with each tenet of NCLB examined thus far, the parent empowerment component uses high modernist logic to inform parents about individual schools and their school district's progress to the goal of improving student achievement, as well as mandating the manner in which parents participate in the school improvement process. NCLB requires that parents make informed decisions about the quality of their individual child's education by systematically reviewing their School Report Card, their school and district's Annual Report, the preparation and licensing of their child's teachers, the quality of instructional materials, as well as the progress their children make relative to state achievement standards in reading and mathematics (and more recently science). Empowered by rights

embedded in the policy, parents can exit their chronically failing neighborhood school in favor of one proven successful by federal and state achievement standards. Participation rights are consumer-based arming parents with the right to ask questions, seek quality services, and exit when their demands are not met.

Policy language defining parent participation is steeped in high modernist thinking. There is a heavy dependence on scientific and mathematical reasoning relative to making informed decisions about an individual child's education. NCLB assumes the singular goal of education as academic proficiency in reading and mathematics; it assumes stakeholders share the same aim. Parents, thus, are to focus on test scores. Information about a children's achievement is coded, expressed in reports mailed home to the parent, and verified through systematic analysis of the testing mechanism itself by state assessment psychometricians. The entire affair is impersonal, universal, and impervious to context. Individual test results are to frame parents' assumptions about the quality of teaching and learning occurring in an individual classroom and school. Armed with these data, parents then systematically gather additional information about the quality of the school from the School Report Card, the Annual Report, as well as documents generated by the school detailing highly qualified teacher status and curriculum materials in order to form a universal judgment about the education being delivered. The inquiry process inferred in the policy is constricting in that it is dependent on the precision of the quantified representations of teaching and learning and the power of scientific reasoning stripped of the complexities and mysteries of human motivation and behavior that occur in the social setting of a specific school and classroom.

Employing universal judgment gleaned from a sterile inquiry process, an empowered parent must act as a change agent on behalf of his/her child's educational experience seeking objective supplemental supports and a more successful school placement as described by federally determined quantitative measures. Again, the parent must employ scientific and mathematic reasoning to research and select a good school. Both processes – evaluating the quality of the home school and choosing a better placement -- require the parent to follow through with the same form of inquiry. Expectations for parents require they make claims, ask questions, collect objective and quantifiable evidence, weigh the value of that which was collected, form a generalization and choose wisely. The informed consumer must continuously evaluate the quality of his/her decisions to keep ahead of the competition.

Another high modernist goal of NCLB may be to remake the role of parents; to eliminate their habits, traditions, and political practices as they relate to school. NCLB empowers those capable of rationally improving the quality of their children's lives appearing to intentionally leave those unable to adapt, disadvantaged and excluded. The traditional means through which parents gather information about school through social networking and presence (e.g. Bell, 2005; Lareau, 2000) is replaced by a state representation availed only through the internet and to individuals capable of making meaning out of the document. Parents seeking to talk about the document or challenge its representations are restricted by its cyber-venue. Instead of sticking around to change the quality of their home school, parents are encouraged to exit. NCLB authors assumes parents of consistently non-successful students will pull up their roots and move their children to new, better schools where they are certain to experience success disregarding

any travel limitations or familial ties that often supersede the value of school (Lareau, 2000). Those not willing to engage in the new individualized adventure are left behind in failing schools. Data on parents' patterns of school selection and switching schools suggests that it is often the disadvantaged who stay in those failing schools, and that parents are not always most interested in test scores as the information relevant to where their children should go to school (Bell, 2005).⁹

High modernist, social schemas highlighted by Scott (1998) help explain policy logic here. Using the redesign of Brazil's capital city Brasilia to make his point, Scott describes how the state's plan intentionally eliminated venues of spontaneous and traditional civic life found on its streets and squares. City planners did this in part, to purge the capital city of its historical image of political corruption, ignorance, and backwardness. The new state-imposed design "fixed" the problem by generating a functional space devoid of any recollection of Brazilia's past; streets and squares serve only the purpose of the ministries (the state). The new city exists in "bland anonymity" (p. 129) purged of the nuances of its culture. It is legible for efficient management of populace, their activities, and the space from above. The delicate balance of complex social order indicative of the economic and social functions as well as the individual needs of the city inhabitants was planned out of the new design. In the place of streets are roads and highways used exclusively for motorized traffic. All other public visiting spaces have been designed out eliminating opportunities for people to gather and

⁹ See also Why Parents Fight to Keep "Failing" Schools Open, Chicago Public Radio, Produced by Linda Lutton on Thursday, January 28, 2010.

communicate informally or formally. By limiting social venues, city planners restricted opportunities for the new city's population to organize demonstrations against the state.

The new plan for parent empowerment authorized by NCLB does much the same. Here parents are like the citizens of Brasilia and the Michigan School Report Card the sterilized representation of the school. Encouraged to engage as modern consumers free of the flawed social habits of the past, parents interact with and gather information about their school through the Michigan School Report Card, the Standards and Poors reports, and the Annual Reports where they receive a state-purified view of their school via cyberspace. The banal report card cleanses the school of its individuality, history, and culture, eliminating any sense of charades schools' may deploy to hide human imperfection lurking within their walls or the busy, complex, and endlessly interesting humanity that walks through the door with the children and their teachers. Serving the state and federal government, the document simplifies the complex activities of the school into manageable statistical units that hold limited meaning to the people living and learning in the space. School report cards are anonymous documents like the new Brasilia; individual names of students and teachers are erased, leaving only the principal's name visible. Access to the MSRC occurs individually, on-line. The state successfully limits opportunities for stakeholders to gather to discuss -- formally or informally -- the properties portrayed. As teachers were keen to point out in the previous chapter, the image of the MSRC is ripe for misinterpretation by an uninformed viewer.

Yet NCLB describes parent behavior that is inconsistent with the manner in which most parents select and interact with public schools. The information provided to parents exists without the contextual nuances that define the learning experience of an individual

child; data segments presented in the test scores do not portray the quality of the school and/or classroom climate; do not consider the multiple adjustments individual and collective teachers make to classroom uncertainties and levels of motivation of individual children; do not adequately describe the complexity of the individual child's relationships with him/herself, his/her parents, peers, teacher, and school support staff; and do not define the amount of resources available to each stakeholder. Parents in many communities base their decisions on factors extending beyond collective test scores and more so about the potential their children will enjoy and feel a part of the educational community they join.

Parent Engagement at WMHS

From the teachers' perspectives, most WMHS parents interact with school in manners reflective of working class parents described in the Lareau's (2000) research. While some have the capacity to be more engaged and empowered by the policy, few are. Given what we know about them demographically and from teachers perceptions, consumer expectations outlined by NCLB are incongruent with the manner in which these parents interact with their high school. They have nominal patterns of communication and presence; limited knowledge about how school works, curriculum, and graduation requirements; limited accessibility by phone or email; ask more questions pertaining to conduct, social interactions, and completion of work as opposed to the quality of instructional materials, instruction, and assessment; work in occupations requiring limited levels of higher education; and may hold expectations that leave the work of educating children to the school. This is a distinctly different clientele -- with a different set of capacities and wills – than will pick up the opportunities advocated by

NCLB. These parents are passive participants for the most part, with only a few aggressive initiators who challenge authority – or the quality of instruction, curriculum, and assessment – on behalf of their children. They are not researchers. Information bound in the Michigan School Report Card and Annual Report, as we have observed, is too general and difficult for teaching staff to understand let alone parents with limited levels of education and knowledge about how schools function. Parents choosing WMHS during open enrollment do so because they perceive it to be a better school than the one they left behind; a safer, cleaner learning environment. Few if any parents -- according to WM teachers -- inquire about instruction and curriculum affirming the assumption that parents are more concerned about subjective qualities of schooling and letter grades earned rather than the school's and their individual child's performance on a standardized test and the subsequent AYP status posted on the MSRC. If this were the case, enrollment would be declining as the Michigan School Report Card overtly states that WMHS is a chronically failing school. This has not been the case.

CHAPTER 7

"IT IS NOT ABOUT US"

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The great failure of rationalism is not its recognition of technical knowledge, but its failure to recognize any other. – Scott (1998) quoting Pascal (342).

Introduction

It is clear from describing teachers' actions and decisions in the classroom relative to curriculum, instruction, and assessment that the WMHS staff as a collective is not being significantly influenced by the narrowing of the curriculum and measures of student learning brought upon by NCLB despite experiencing four consecutive years of failure while serving a group of diverse, high needs population. As a well-trained and "highly qualified" staff – with the exception of one staff member serving special needs students – WMHS teachers are, in a strange way, beating the odds. But how has the highly qualified teacher provision influenced this staff's vision of a quality teacher? What are teachers' views of it? Is that aspect of the policy influencing this high school?

In this chapter, I begin with a brief explanation of the highly qualified part of NCLB and its evolution. I then describe WMHS teachers' visions of a quality teacher and compare and contrast their views with that of NCLB. Finally, I examine the highly qualified teacher tenet of the policy – as well as WMHS teachers' views of it -- through the lens of high modernism.

Defining Highly Qualified Teachers

Second only to accountability, the highly qualified teacher portion of the NCLB Act has drawn considerable policy attention. This aggressive and far-reaching tenet gives the federal government an active role in determining teacher quality removing the capacity for local school districts to hire unqualified teachers and pushing states to place a higher priority on teacher knowledge (Cross, 2004; Hess & Petrilli, 2008). Recognizing that teachers have the single largest effect on student learning (Nye, Konstantopoulus, & Hedges, 2004; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Sanders, Saxton, & Horn, 1997) and that a teacher quality gap exists between the rich and poor schools,¹⁰ liberal Democrats pushed to ensure that all students had an "opportunity to learn" from quality teachers. By addressing teacher qualifications, liberal Democrats believed they could address the achievement gap.

Policy language established that, by the of the 2005-06 school year all teachers assigned to teach core academic subjects (stipulated as English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) would meet federal and state guides as highly qualified. To be highly qualified, academic core teachers must hold a bachelor's degree, obtain state certification or pass the state teacher licensing examination, and have demonstrated knowledge of the subject that he or she teaches. No teachers in these content areas are allowed to have their certification or licensure requirements waved on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). Before considering the teachers' views on this aspect of the legislation, let us consider some relevant background.

Debating "quality" led to ambiguous policy language. Hess and Petrilli (2008) note -- citing Ravich (2005) – that while everyone agrees that good teachers matter, there

¹⁰ The gap as reported by the U.S. Department of Education in 1997 was staggering finding 25% of all new teachers hired lacked varied definitions of "proper qualifications" with 75% of those serving in urban schools (Hess& Petrilli, 2008).

does not appear to be any strong correlation between quantifiable teacher attributes and teacher quality. Agreeing upon what measurable training, credentials, or qualities makes a good teacher was difficult as two lines of thought argued their case during the creation of NCLB. On one hand, teacher educators posited that conventional licensure earned through a structured teacher preparation program through a college of education and state certification was essential, while those outside the "educational establishment" believe that academic proficiency (both verbal ability and education in a content area) and on-the-job training lead to good teaching. Both perspectives agreed on strong content knowledge.

But there was a great deal of disagreement over what the "research base" proved concerning other teacher qualities. Some studies on teacher quality found quantifiable correlations between effective teachers and their scores on verbal ability tests (Hess & Petrilli, 2008, p. 66). Research varied in terms of supporting or refuting the effectiveness of licensure versus non-licensure and emergency credentialed teachers (Hess & Petrilli, 2008; Wislon, Floden, & Ferrini, Mundy, 2001). Additional research suggested that experienced teachers were more effective than novices, but a teacher's capacity to improve student achievement increases only for the first few years in the profession (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Hess and Petrilli, 2008; National Academy of Education, 2009; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini Mundy, 2001). ¹¹ After the first four or five years, the advantage of additional experience is not clear (National Academy of Education, 2010). Given the lack of definitive research demonstrating the need for

¹¹ Some research finds that those teaching 20 or more years are less effective than those with less time in the classroom (Hess & Petrilli, 2008, p. 67).

professional education and advanced degrees, content knowledge, verbal ability, and the disallowance of emergency certification/licensure in academic core subjects became components of the definition of the highly qualified through NCLB. The inconclusiveness of the findings on licensure continues to lead to a variety of requirements across the nation and between states.

Background on Teacher Licensure/Certification

Responding to increased demand for educated individuals to teach in the growing number of public schools in the 19th century, local and state agencies began to establish qualifications for teachers to ensure quality hiring (Angus & Mirel, 1999; Sedlak, 200x). By the 1950s states had developed education agencies partnering with emerging schools of education whereby they developed standards for teacher preparation and licensure. The push to professionalize teaching - led by teacher unions and professional associations - sought structured licensure systems coupled with state control. Ultimately every state mandated that public school teachers earn certification with most offering an alternate route to certification to offset teacher shortages and to allow talented people to enter the profession in a more streamlined way, although these alternative routes only began to grow in popularity in the late 1990s (Feistritzer, 2007). Prior to NCLB, if a state certified teacher could not be found to fill a position, local school districts would appoint non-licensed individuals. Although teacher certification is primarily determined by each state, NCLB can be seen as an attempt by the federal government to curtail that practice.

Traditional paths to teacher certification vary; all states require a bachelor's degree and some courses in pedagogy, most require high school teachers to have some course work in their subjects, post-NCLB nearly all states require teachers to take

certification tests (Hess & Petrilli, 2008; NAE, 2009; NRC, 2001; Wilson & Youngs, 2005). Coursework and practicum teaching required for state certification differs between states and within colleges and universities. Those vested in professionalism of teaching seek more formal training, longer internships for teacher candidates, accreditation of teacher preparation programs, and increased professional development. Others concerned with teacher shortages and mediocre student achievement seek deregulation of the profession, reduction of licensure barriers, more consideration of non-traditional candidates, and increased discretion in principal hiring (Hess & Petrilli, 2008; Tamir & Wilson, 2005; Wilson & Tamir, 2008).

One of the initial attempts by the federal government to influence teacher quality came in the 1950s in response to the Soviet's launch of *Sputnik* through the National Defense Education Act of 1958 with the intention of improving mathematics and science education in schools via increased federal funding for teacher preparation in these subjects. Provisions also included forgiveness of college loans for aspiring mathematics, science, and foreign language teachers and professional development in these subjects. In 1964, the NDEA was expanded to include teacher training in the humanities. President Johnson continued this agenda when drafting the original ESEA of 1964 in the Great Society agenda and the Higher Education Act of 1965. The former set aside funds for inservice teacher training and pre-service professional development for those entering the system. The HEA set up the Teacher Corps program designed to prepare prospective teachers to serve in urban schools (Hess & Petrilli, 2008, pp. 70-71).

The standards and accountability movement of the 1990s brought teacher quality to the forefront again with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

(NCTAF) (NCTAF, 1996) that the then-current methods of recruiting, preparing, and developing teachers were insufficient in the face of standards-based accountability. The report stressed an overhaul of the teacher education standards for certification and teacher recruitment. These sentiments resulted in the overhaul of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1998 increasing accountability for teachers and teacher preparation programs. Colleges and universities preparing teacher candidates were mandated to prepare annual reports on program quality and pass rates of teacher candidates on licensure tests. However, the provision did not work as intended and Hess and Petrilli (2008) describe how submitted reports were "vague, incomplete, and utter incomprehensible" (p. 73). It did, however, mark a change in the federal government's role in defining teacher preparation, laying ground work for NCLB.

In 2001, Representative Miller -- a ranking Democrat whose father had a long career as an education reformer in California -- teaming with the Education Trust -- was given the lead by the Republican Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee to draft the language for the teacher quality provision of NCLB to assure bipartisan support. Believing that states had not established rigorous requirements of subject matter knowledge, Miller, his staff, and the Education Trust proposed the same college degree, state certification, and subject matter mastery requirements for both new and experienced teachers. Within the proposal was the caveat that experienced teachers would have to pass a test to demonstrate this knowledge. This enraged teachers' unions. Critics of the education establishment suggested that this reaction was due to union whose members feared of the potential twin consequences of both teacher bashing and mass exodus from the profession. A compromise was reached that differentiated

requirements for new and experienced, as well as elementary and secondary teachers (Hess & Petrilli, 2008).

Both new and experienced teachers must hold a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and demonstrate subject matter mastery. New elementary teachers must pass tests demonstrating both content knowledge and teaching skills in subjects taught at the elementary level, specifically reading, writing, and mathematics. New secondary teachers – those serving middle and high schools - must demonstrate their content knowledge in the subject(s) they teach through a rigorous state academic test or have an academic major or course work equivalent to a graduate degree, advanced certification, or credentialing for each subject they teach. States were given the responsibility of developing the rigorous state academic test, as well as the definition of a major.

Veteran teachers were given a third option not afforded new teachers to meet highly qualified standards as a result of the Miller-Kennedy Compromise. This compromise granted states the opportunity to develop "highly objective uniform state standards of evaluation" (HOUSSE) to measure subject matter mastery. The Department of Education recommended the combination of college credits, advanced credentials, teaching experience, professional development, and student achievement establishing a set of experiences that can count towards subject matter competence. With individual states left to develop criteria, a variety of HOUSSE definitions exist across the country all of them incorporating at least one component of the Department's recommendation (Hess & Pertrilli, 2008).

Of final note was the growing emphasis on "value-added" assessments of teachers. In this line of thought, the quality of a teacher is judged by estimating his or her

effect on student learning over time. Using student test scores trajectories, value-added models predict student achievement outcomes at least two years in the future. Researchers (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997) found that teacher impact on individual student achievement was also substantially accumulative. Consistent with many accountability measures intended to reveal the quality of school and teacher services to taxpayers, the value-added model maintains heavy dependence on mechanistic, scientific reasoning. Critics claim that it is employment on complex statistical formulas often too difficult for school personnel to understand and small sample sizes (of 30 or less) compromise reliability; this offsets the model's added benefit of folding in uncontrollable variables of the educational process like social economic status in the calculations. Some states like Tennessee have been successfully using value-added models to evaluate teachers for some time with other forms of assessments

(http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12820.html).

With the exception of one special education teacher whose certification makes him highly qualified at the elementary level but not the secondary, all of WMHS teachers meet state and federal guidelines as highly qualified. When asked to describe their beliefs about what made a quality practitioner, the intention was to see how closely teachers' values matched that of the legislation and then to test their awareness of the policy language. What follows is a description of their responses to that question, "What is a quality teacher and what would that look like in the classroom?"

Teachers' Perspectives on Highly Qualified Teachers

WMHS teachers see quality teaching as a complex craft. Three teacher traits were mentioned most often: (1) content knowledge and the capacity to translate the

content knowledge through both teacher-generated and district-provided curriculum; (2) engagement and passion; and (3) knowledge of students as learners and as individuals with specific academic and social-emotional needs. Teachers mentioned other traits well: patience, holding high expectations for learners, the ability to communicate with parents, strong classroom management skills; the ability to develop authentic relationships with students; a sense of purpose and commitment to the craft of teaching; creativity; being involved with the school and the community beyond the classroom; and productivity – the ability to demonstrate impact on student learning.

Several individual teachers also mentioned teacher certification with an appropriate degree, and a desire to continuously refine practice through reflection and professional growth. Every teacher identified more than one key characteristic. As teachers described what quality teaching looks like in a classroom, they often called upon their own work and values as examples implying that they have a vision for what good teaching looks like and that to which they aspire (see Table 7.1 for a summary of their responses).

Content Knowledge

Nearly every WMHS teacher feels that a quality teacher needs to know his/her content and be able to translate that content knowledge into meaningful representations for his/her students. It is the most frequently mentioned trait, with 26 of the 32 informants identifying it. JB noted that, "(teachers) need to be...first and foremost knowledgeable in their content." AH noted that "a quality teacher is someone who not only knows the content well but is able to present that content in such a way that his/her students understand and appreciate what is being taught." RH, an English teacher for

Demonstrates Impact	X			X	X					X					X		X	X	X	X										X		10/32
Connected to school commty						X	X																			X		X		X		5/32
Creative		X		X		Х	X				X		X		X			X		X		X	X						X		X	14/32
Purpose Driven		X				X	X	X					X				X		X									X	X	X	X	11/32
Passionate Engaged	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	x	x	x	X	X	X			x	-	X	X	x			x	×	X	X	X	X	X	x	25/32
Relationship w/students	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X			X		X		X	X	20/32
Classroom Management			X	X				X			X		X			X	X										X		X			9/32
Knowledge of Learner	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	24/32
Content Knowledge	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	26/32
Teacher	AH	BW	cc	CT	EH	GK	JA	JB	JC	JF	JK	JO	KB	KC	KG	LB	LG	LR	HM	MO	MT	PCh	PC	RC	RH	SB	SW	TD	TK	TW	ΥΥ	Total

Table 8.1. Whanton Moore Teachers' Descriptions of a Quality Teacher

example, defines the importance of knowing one's subject and knowing how to communicate that to students:

You have to know math to teach math and you have to know science to teach science, and you have to have some historical background to teach history...it is first and foremost important that teachers need to know what it is that they are teaching; they need to be experts in the field...Secondly, they need to have strategies to teach that and that is more experience.

RC, who teaches chemistry, describes the importance of content knowledge:

I don't think it matters how intelligent (teachers) are in terms of their content as long as they understand their content and they have a way of presenting their content in a way that students are going to comprehend that content.

However, several teachers were ambivalent about how important content knowledge was. For example, GK asserts:

I could walk into any class today and I could teach it ...it could be science, it could be math...a highly qualified teacher to me... is 90% psychology and 10% content.

Ultimately, most WMHS teachers believe that teachers must know their content area and do things in preparation to insure their students gain an understanding of that which is being taught.

Engagement

WMHS teachers also described the quality teacher as passionate, engaging, dynamic, high energy, humorous, fun, and enthusiastic. Personal engagement was the second most valued attribute among respondents, with 25 of 32 teachers noting this

characteristic. As most teachers, JB reflects upon his own practice describing this quality:

I, myself, perceive my role as more or less like ...an entertainer. If you are not...dynamic and ...and exciting they are just going to tune you out...Now I am not saying that I am going in...in a clown suit and doing cartwheels and stuff like that...but you are dealing with teenagers...You have to keep them engaged.

For JB, keeping students engaged means using humor (sometimes bordering on sarcasm). Similarly JC – who calls himself a "personality teacher" – tells us what we should see if we watched him teach: "You would see kids participating, laughing...attentive. (And the teacher?) The same thing...smiling, laughing, dealing and interacting with the kids."

Passion was also a theme in the teachers' talk. MH notes that "if you are not passionate about working with students in addition to working with the curriculum that you have chosen then you should not be...a teacher. There are just too many things that occur in a given day that if you don't have a passion for it, then you are not going to make it." Passion leads to the desire to engage and be engaging. JF explains further: "They come and sit and engage with me, with those around them. You would see some consideration that what we are doing has a sense of importance to them; you would see that from me and you would see that from my kids."

The energy is contagious. JA explains it this way:

You would see somebody who is engaged with their kids; that is dedicated to what they do; they are paying attention to what is going on - on both, not just with the kids but what is going on with themselves;...(the teacher) would be

involved in the school, involved with their kids in varying degrees. And communicates with their parents. And, overall, you can tell by looking at them that they enjoy what they do.

Almost all of the teachers' comments interweave the various attributes of the highly qualified teacher. TK a mathematics teacher, for instance, couple the need for content knowledge and proper certification with being "personable:"

A quality teacher one who has all the necessary certifications but more importantly than that is very strong in their content but very personable. A highly qualified teacher goes above and beyond; is passionate about what they (he/she) do; enjoys working with students and makes it their number one priority to help the students in anyway they can.

BW views resonate:

A quality teacher is first of all passionate and engaged. Someone who comes into the classroom and really believes in what they are doing. And really has a reason for being there – not just because it is a job and they get summers off.; someone who is looking to make a difference.

In sum, passion, the ability to find joy in their work, the ability to engage and be engaging, fun, and humorous while accomplishing the assigned task are important qualities to most WMHS teachers. And as is the case with other characteristics, being enthusiastic and passionate is coupled with other traits.

"With the Kids": Knowledge and Commitment to Students

The third most prevalent trait of highly qualified teachers for WMHS teachers is the ability to understand the academic and social-emotional needs of learners, modify instruction accordingly, and be committed to doing so. BW saw that good teachers are:

Knowledgeable...which relates to their content material but also relat(ing) to the students coming into their classrooms, of their needs; being able to adapt to their needs – that is important if you want the output that you are looking for.

She continues to describe a highly qualified teacher as someone "who tries to engage every student sitting there, not just the ones who are sitting there and are high skilled...but also the ones that are sitting there and don't want to learn." She tied this concern for students to the passion mentioned by many participants: A passionate teacher ...is one who will stay after school if necessary to help students; who will also take the time out to talk to students individually about concerns that may be in the classroom academically – socially whatever."

AH points out the value of a teacher recognizing students' diverse needs: A quality teacher is...a person who takes into consideration the needs of a student and the different learning styles of the student and tailors his/her lessons to the learning styles. And also a person who has positive relationships with the students...thinks about what that student might be dealing with outside of the classroom walls...and how those issues you know, the role that they play...on the student success in the classroom. Twenty teachers also noted that qualified teachers build rapport, exhibit genuine caring, and love students. As with other traits, this is always embedded within the context of other characteristics. CT, a science teacher said, "number one…is a love for kids. A love for students depending on the age group or where you are at; you just have to love kids. If you don't, you are not going to enjoy this job." He continues to describe the importance of passion and the recognition that teaching is a paid profession before adding: "it is not about us, it is about the kids. And getting them where they need to be and be successful and reach their goals, whatever those may be."

WMHS's senior staff member and art teacher, TD reflects before expresses similar sentiments: "I think the first thing that any quality practitioner does, is that they have to love kids. And I think they have to care about them; and I think they need to nurture their souls and their intellect. Or at least want to."

Other Characteristics

Teachers mentioned other characteristics of the highly qualified teacher as well, including creativity, purpose, being a good classroom manager, community involvement, and purpose.

There comments often resonate with relevant research. For example, Zimmerman (2009) and others (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Davis, 1992; Feist, 1999; Gardner, 1999) define creativity and creative processes to include the qualities of flexibility, openness to change, and risk-taking. Twenty teachers identified these behaviors as aspects of highly qualified teaching. JA explains:

I look at a quality teacher as someone who is willing to adapt and change – and that is the hardest thing for teachers to look -- change...a quality teacher is one who constantly renews herself and looks at what (she) can do to change. Reflects on who they are and what they have done honestly...and where they can make changes and improve and where they don't need to make changes.

MO, who teaches Spanish, recognized the importance of keeping (her) teaching vivacious: "Well a quality teacher (is)...constantly creative...is not static...is constantly changing...is constantly...looking for ways to improve and adjust." PCs thoughts sound similar: "A high quality teacher is one that is not rigid. A quality teacher has to roll with the punches."

In addition to creativity, nearly a third of teachers (11/32) believe that a quality teacher serves with a purpose and a commitment. For MH, it is the most important element of a quality teacher: "you need a calling to do this." For others purpose is woven through their expressed commitment to serve students. SW aims to develop a strong work ethic, team work and self-efficacy.

Every teacher concerns him/herself with managing the classroom space; some look at this as managing situations, others as how one is able to organize delivery of content in meaningful ways, and some, like SW, believe that an a quality classroom has very little down time and limited overt management because the teacher is prepared. Many teachers expressed their concerns for management by discussing the quality teacher's ability to "control the classroom" where students get along and want to learn (LB, LG, and JK), using time to its maximum potential with little down time for either teacher or learner and the most is gained from the planned instruction to avoid the need to re-teach (MH, TK, and managing situations (JB). JB in particular, talked about how he --a quality teacher -- deals with sleeping students and uses humor to keep students in-tuned

with his instruction. Nine teachers out of 32 stressed the importance of classroom management for quality teaching.

Several other traits were also mentioned, albeit at lower frequencies: five teachers discussed the ability to connect to professional colleagues and the community beyond school in the service of children (JA, SB, TD, GK, and TW); five teachers believe it is important for a quality teacher to be continuously renewing ones practice through research and purposeful preparation (JA, RH, LR, JW, and SW); four believe quality teaches need to have the appropriate degree and certification (CC, KC, TK, and SW); three teachers think a quality teacher works with and communicates to parents (JA, SB, and GK); and one teacher believed a quality teacher is patient (CT). As with other traits described, these values are represented with other components qualities WMHS teachers feel define quality.

Finally, before moving on, I note how intertwined the characteristics and traits were in teachers' talk. LG notes the multiplicity of a quality teacher:

Several of things, right? (Quality teachers) have to be confident in (their) content area; that is important. You have to be able to maintain a classroom setting where students get along and want to learn and you have to (teach)...have a desire to move kids along from one level to the next – always moving them, making sure that to the best of your ability helping those kids move from one level to the next. I think that this teacher...likes (her) content area and (she) like students. And (quality teachers) do things...in their preparation that assures (student) cooperation...

And LR highlighted the importance of a quality teacher who is willing to continuously challenge herself and learn from experience:

Experience...knowledge, and (is) one who will continue to learn. I mean the greatest experience in my life is the hardest...having five preps and three of those were ELL where there were no books...knowing, finding, researching the stuff that is at the level of learning for those students...(that) makes...a (quality) teacher.

The Highly Qualified Teacher: NCLB versus Teachers' Views

Having described teachers' perspectives on the characteristics of a high quality teacher, how do these match up with NCLB's definition of a highly qualified practitioner? First, nearly every teacher (26/32) believes content knowledge and the capacity to deliver the instruction purposefully is an element of quality thus aligning with policymakers. Second, nearly a third of teachers point to evidence of student success as important. Here too, the teachers align with the policy, although no teacher mentions test scores as the way to measure student learning. And while teacher knowledge and student learning are both hard to measure, it is possible to imagine developing measures on which the teachers and policymakers would agree.

In the sample of 32 teachers, only six teachers were "grandfathered" into highly qualified status through HOUSSE provisions where college course credits were counted or master's degrees considered along with their bachelor's degrees and Michigan teacher certifications: JA, CC, PCh, TD, JF, and LR. The remaining 26 have HQ status by virtue of their bachelor's degrees, completion of an approved Michigan Certification Program, credits in their major and minor concentrations, having passed the Michigan Test for
Teacher Certification (MTTC) and content area examinations in their major or their minor areas of study. The completion of these requirements may inform teachers' realities, as 26 of them valued content knowledge and the ability to translate that into appropriate representations for students.

However, this is where similarities end. WMHS teachers' vision of quality teaching also include attributes that are more difficult to measure in standardized, norm referenced ways. Qualities like purpose, creativity, passion, ability to build relationships, flexibility, engagement, these traits are difficult to measure. These perspectives might be due to how these teachers themselves were selected by the district. All of them have been screened using either the Gallop Perceiver or the Ventures Screener. Both utilize scoring systems to rank candidates' purpose/mission, leadership, rapport drive, content knowledge, student centeredness, and ability to engage learners in a safe, nurturing, and appropriate environment. Teachers scoring high in these domains on a pre-screener interview return for more in-depth interviews where the quality of their personality and their "fit" to the broader school community is considered by interview committees representing staff and administration within the school. It is not surprising then, to see affective traits prevail when asking this staff to define quality teaching; they were each screened for it.

Clearly differences exist between WMHS teachers' defining perceptions of quality teaching and a highly qualified teacher; practitioners' value properties of teaching that are more subjective as opposed to the objective, rational definitions outlined by NCLB. Conflicting views seem linked to that which Scott (1998) observed in his study of failed social schemas and their lack of consideration for local, situated knowledge.

State Simplification of Practice

Close examination of the description of a highly qualified teacher evolving from years of political debate, finds it laden with high modernist means and ends (Scott, 1998). First, strong connections are made between teacher content knowledge and student achievement data aligning the tenet's intentions with the singular goal of the policy. Take, for example, the growing emphasis on "value-added" as a means of determining teacher quality based on output measures of student achievement alone. Second, dependence on quantifiable teacher attributes lead policy-makers to limit definitions of highly qualified to a potential teacher's content knowledge and her verbal ability as measured on standardized tests. Reasonable evidence existed during policy formation correlating high scores in these domains and teacher effectiveness. All teachers must have completed state licensure requirements in academic core subjects which include completion of a bachelor's degree; the policy disallows emergency certification and licensure in core academic subjects as a means of insuring quality.

Without quantifiable evidence, the value of teacher education programs remains vague to this policy's authors leaving venues opens for alternative access to the profession and a variety of licensure requirements across states within the nation. This can be seen in the recent Race to the Top requirements that ask states to provide alternative routes into teaching, as well as the unilateral support for Teach for America among those skeptical of the need for teacher preparation. As with other parts of the policy, strong dependence upon that which can be objectively measured dominates the defining properties of a highly qualified teacher. Finally, prospective teachers and local school systems are limited in their capacity to resist to the policy's demands -- in order to

be in compliance with NCLB, they must hire personnel meeting state and federal quality requirements or suffer consequences of sanctions and negative public perception.

Assumptions about teacher quality remain oversimplified and bound in scientific reasoning as with other tenets of NCLB. Stripped clean of human qualities that my informants see as necessary in good teaching, the highly qualified teacher definition purifies the properties of the practice to that which can be objectively measured and verified. High modernist thinking holds the past in contempt. When applied to learning to teach it attempts to purge failing traditions and rituals from the craft (e.g., "traditional" teacher preparation) socially engineering a group of wary skeptics. High modernist logic forgets that those entering the practice do so with years of observations and formed assumptions about teachers' work – pre-service teachers are not blank slates upon which policy makers can leave their indelible mark in order to improve teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975). Danger in the state simplification of teacher knowledge is its heavy dependence on one form of knowledge (undergraduate majors in subject matter) without consideration of the delicate balance practical and professional knowledge plays in the development of a quality practitioner.

Quality Practice: Balancing Universal and Contextual Claims

WMHS teachers' response to the highly qualified teacher provision of NCLB appears a case of their expressed opposition to the technical knowledge informing the policy and their own local, contextualized, and professional vision of practice. They entered the practice with a system of beliefs shaped both by their informal and formal socialization processes (Brtizman, 1986, 2003; Lortie, 1975; Jackson, 1991) affirmed daily when establishing their identities in their individual classrooms.

This appears in a number of ways. For example, they offer personal sentiments about preparedness in the face of uncertainty and work ethic; they emphasize emotion, entertainment, relationship, esteem of doing a hard job well, self-direction against institutional (government) expectations, and the value of practical knowledge over formal knowledge. These traits mirror working class ethos (; Hollingshead, 1949; Willis, 1977) and are reinforced by the fact that these teachers belong to a vigilant labor union. Serving a community heavily populated by individuals employed in unskilled and semiskilled labor with limited educational levels as seen in the previous chapter, WMHS teachers appear to have adopted dominant community values as components of their local knowledge.¹² As professionals, some of their responses contradict their preparation and middle class potential. A closer look at the pattern of their responses makes this clear.

The Power of Emotion and Subjectivity

Nearly every descriptive response given by teachers was emotional and subjective in nature. Multiple examples exist. One of the most frequently cited components of a quality teacher -- the value of strong content knowledge -- is connected to the practitioner's passion for the subject and his/her ability to engage students, rather than guide students to academic proficiency on a state-administered exam. Not once did someone say that teachers needed content knowledge so that their students would get higher test scores. More often than not, WMHS teachers believed good teaching was more about that individual teacher's ability to connect what was being taught in the

¹² This view might also be explained by the teachers' own backgrounds. Several historians of education have described the evolution of U.S. school teaching as a profession dominated by woman, first generation college graduates, and people of color who were excluded from other professions. Having not included research on their own backgrounds, I am unable to judge the socioeconomic histories of my informants.

classroom to life. Others recognize the role an individual teacher's passion for a subject plays in good teaching; good teachers can get students excited about a topic or, at the very least keep them engaged. In fact, for some of the teachers interviewed, having a natural desire to learn about a subject outweighs the value of possessing certified technical knowledge in that domain. These views are orthogonal to those underlying the policy; they are rooted in common sense and collective wisdom of teaching, not the rational, some might claim impractical, world of a state schema.

Several WMHS teachers do not believe that having strong content knowledge is essential to good teaching. For these teachers, content played second fiddle to one's larger goals for students. A quality teacher in these teachers' worldviews includes the capacity to teach students to be problem-solvers and participatory citizens while simultaneously learning how to cope with adversity and learn about themselves within the broad social context outside of school. These properties are not measurable on standardized tests. They express the complex and varied goals of education (Labaree, 1997) and exist in opposition of NCLB's singular goal and this staff's commitment to practical aspirations for their students.

Engagement and Personality Teaching as Entertainment

Many teachers voiced the view that the ability to infuse humor and personality into instruction and content were essential qualities of good teaching. Recalling Anyon's (1981) analysis of how teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning appeared to be shaped by limited parent engagement, student interest, and prior knowledge, it seems plausible to assert that at WMHS, teachers turn to entertaining students with humor and personality as a way of keeping their working class students engaged in the abstract

subjects they teach and to keep order in the classroom (Cusick, 1983; Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, 1986). The immediate need to persevere in the classroom and control involuntary clients takes precedence over the long term goal of improving students' performances on a standardized test. Humor and personality mediate the negotiations that teachers make with students the curriculum, school, and community culture (Cusick, 1976; Kozol, 1991). Essentially, this group of teachers tweaks and adjusts their instruction to meet multiple ends based on negotiated common sense experience with their learners and their own desires and aspirations as practitioners.

Rapport and Relationship

Additional evidence of WMHS teachers' resistance to policy language appears in their collective valuing of building rapport with their students and understanding their diverse social, emotional, and cognitive needs. With 78% of interviewed staff referencing this as a trait of quality teaching it is obvious building rapport and relationships is a value deeply embedded into the culture of their practice. Valuing rapport and relationships function in direct opposition of the mechanistic, technical, simplistic portrayal of teaching in NCLB. In this school, teachers intuitively recognize the importance of considering uncontrollable and unpredictable forces of students' lives brought into their classrooms as well as the need to connect to individual students in order to get them to participate in the learning process.

The capacity to build relationships and unpack students' needs based on observed behaviors and direct interactions with them is not something that can be measured objectively, yet it is an important element in the dynamic process of educating individual and collective groups of children to these teachers and many more like them. It involves

skill and knowledge that evolves and is constructed by individual teachers as they interact with the lives of students, parents, administration, and their professional peers in and out of school. Teachers often do not generate this skill and knowledge in their technical training. These self-described passionate practitioners understand that the work in the classroom is messy, unpredictable, unstable, and complicated business shaped by multiple variables outside of their immediate control to which they adjust their practice. This sensitivity functions in opposition of the policy's high modernist logic of authoritarian control of work.

Esteem of Hard Work

An implicit theme in many WMHS teachers' responses is their collective value of hard work from their students and from themselves during instruction and the preparation processes. Work ethic is a prominent theme surfacing in responses suggesting that good teachers commit to their students and extend their instructional day and professional obligations beyond that stated in any contract. A strange paradox exists between the act of manual labor and the work of a school teacher. The first form of labor separates work done in subordination to an authority figure from the independent self. By protecting the individual's cognitive and emotional self from outside authorities, working class individuals posit that they maintain some sense of control of their lives. Working class learners resist mental labor for the same reason (Willis, 1977). WMHS teachers express similar beliefs (with few exceptions) about their practice. We see this in responses stressing the value of hard work, while at the same time resisting the technical knowledge as it relates to their own practices. That which they have learned, they claim, comes from trial and error and the wisdom of practice (Shulman, 2004); they own it. These rugged

individuals (Britzman, 2003) turn to what they know worked for them as learners and what they have found successful for themselves or their immediate peers not information gleaned from methods courses, workshops, education research or What Works? Clearinghouses that other teachers might value. These teachers' reflections on strategies deployed for struggling students and their personal reading choices void of any professional literature affirm these sentiments. The contradiction between manual labor and mental labor in teaching surfaces when considering teachers' roles as authority figures who design and transform abstractions of disciplinary knowledge into forms within which students must interact for success. The means by which WMHS teachers' work with students is non-intellectual functioning in opposition of the policy aims.

Self-Direction over Institutional Expectations

With NCLB imposing federal authority over their work, WMHS teachers tacitly express oppose and maintain ownership of their practice in several distinct ways. First, despite having been guided through the description and interpretation of the MSRC data, many report being unfamiliar with the document and the information it conveys (recall chapter 5). They hold firm to the fact that information collected in their individual classrooms is far more telling for them than generalizations portrayed in that document. Second, they are confident in methods of instruction and interventions developed on their own – through trial and error and classroom experience and not technical knowledge gleaned from professional literature, workshops, or their college coursework. Intuition and tradition dominate their decision-making. Third, collectively WMHS teachers serve students with a variety of goals in mind, many of which reflect their concern for preparing students for a life after high school as opposed to the monocular aim of

students' performances on a state-designed standardized test. Fourth, they value traits of teaching that are highly subjective and non-measurable positing that while federal and state defined properties are important, they are valued for reasons beyond raising test scores; content knowledge is important for social control within the classroom and its relevant use in the larger world, not test scores used to promote communities and sort schools.

Finally, WMHS teachers' beliefs in the power of creativity in good teaching and behaviors manifested in relationship to creative individuals operate in opposition to NCLB aims of institutional, authoritative control. This becomes obvious when recalling WMHS teachers references to quality teaching that sparks curiosity and active problem solving, remains open-minded, infuses of humor, and is passionate and engaging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Davis, 1992; Feist, 1999; Gardner, 1999; Zimmerman, 2009). WMHS teachers separate themselves from the objective ends and means of the high modernist policy by maintaining values and beliefs distinct from NCLB's intentions; they combine institutional assertions with practical knowledge formed while learning to teach as youths and at WMHS. The question that remains, however, is whether these teachers allegiance to their local knowledge alone will leave them, their students, and their failing school behind.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION:

SEEING LIKE AN ADMINISTRATOR

Study Intentions and Findings

This study offers the research community an insider's view on the perceptions teachers serving in a chronically failing, growingly diverse, urban fringe high school have about standards and accountability, parent empowerment, and teacher quality in the wake of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It builds upon the work of Gersti-Pepin and Woodside-Jiran (2005) in that it examines the apparent conflict between the logic of NCLB and that of school realities. Where Gersti-Pepin and Woodside-Jiran identify NCLB's dependence on "context-purged" research, this study digs deeper to identify the cause of the conflict by situating the discussion around the differences in dominant knowledge forms representative of school culture and how this functions in direct opposition of the objective, universal, knowledge advocated by NCLB. Ultimately, the intention is to offer the research community another explanation -- through the use of social institutional theory -- for some of the policy's flaws, as well as affirm the directions many recommendations take.

The study opens with a detailed description of the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) derived from documents, guidance papers, and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) hosted training sessions. NCLB has many of the same elements of its 1994 predecessor: standards-based accountability, state assessments, achievement targets, adequate yearly progress (AYP), desegregation of student performance data by sub-groups, and requirements to make school performances

available to the public. For schools receiving federal Title I money, program plans linked to building school improvement plans are still required; money still has to focus on the lowest achieving, most needy students; parent participation is still encouraged and a necessary component of program planning; schools can still supplement staffing and pay for professional development with their allocations and building plans as well as provide supplemental educational resources for both teachers serving at-risk students; and it still provides identified students with additional resources such as free early childhood education or health care services. Other federal entitlement funds remain consistent with the previous authorization: Title II can support professional development of teachers and administrators and be used to reduce class size, Title III continues to support limited English language learners, and Title V still provides districts with the opportunity to generate innovative programs. The similarities stop there.

Unlike the previous version of ESEA, NCLB presented schools and districts with an unusual "federal" presence. The four tenets of the policy introduced in Chapter 3 stand out as the most invasive, prescriptive, punitive, and altered. In describing each -standards and accountability, proven practices, parent empowerment, teacher quality – it becomes clear that business metaphors and neo-liberal politics (Hurst, 2007) were creeping into the school landscape. From a practitioner's view, these new agendas felt uneasy and contradictory. Elements of NCLB follow functionalist (Hurn, 1993) thinking – particularly those that address the development of cognitive skills, moral and cultural consensus, and equal opportunity -- but this did not fully explain the policy's authoritative stance, the strong market approach the federal government is taking with schools, or the heavy emphasis on research-based practices. This led me to revisit the

construct of NCLB through Scott's (1998) social institutional theory of high modernism. High modernism is described, explained, and connected to the world of teaching in learning so as to set the study up the description and analysis of key elements of NCLB and teachers' perceptions through this lens.

High Modernism

High modernism, recall, administratively aims to rationally order nature and society through state interventions that plan to improve the quality of the human condition for all of society based on the reasoning of science and technology. Governing authorities accomplish societal ordering through unrestrained authoritarian power (mandates and regulations) and the limited capacity of civil society to resist plans. Policymakers working in the spirit of high modernism vest strong faith in linear progress and preconceived, tangible, and quantifiable goals. The commitment to scientific and technical knowledge promises to liberate society from the myths and irrationalities of the past. The process of social improvement involves the state perceiving society as an object – something upon which the state can design and impose conscious, rational, scientific interventions with the purpose of perfecting its population (Scott, 1998).

NCLB functions as a high modernist policy. It uses tight regulations and procedures, and centralizes federal (and then state) authority over states, districts, schools, and their personnel as a means of achieving compliance. The legislation demands all children achieve perfection on state assessments in reading and mathematics holding schools accountable for producing quality products. Should schools receiving Title I assistance fail to produce expected outcomes, the federal government imposes approved scientifically proven interventions -- stored in the What Works Clearinghouses.

The heavy emphasis on scientifically proven, technically superior practices is intentional – it insures chronically failing schools abandon traditional, intuitive, ritualistic, and ineffective practices of the past or experience severe consequences.

High modernist policies simplify language, people, and spaces – both manmade and natural – for the purpose of authoritative oversight. Simplifications take the form of informational briefs expressed in terms easily replicated across many cases. The abstract representations of people and spaces lose their particularity – and in so doing, fail to portray the complex variations existing within the aggregate data (Scott, 1998). NCLB generalizes teaching and learning, collapsing details and ignoring relative distinctions through the use of aggregate test scores that function as state simplifications. The quality of instruction becomes synonymous with student achievement on state-imposed tests. Data sets label schools settings, differentiates them by poverty, student achievement scores, and ethnic demography. The policy aims to portray education through a series of static, impersonal aggregates, a portrait that conflicts with the assumptions and beliefs that school personal hold about teaching and learning, which is for practitioners, a highly personal enterprise.

State schemas lack the ability to place into a bureaucratic formula the diversity and complexity of natural systems and their capacity to adapt or die. Scott (1998) provided us with numerous examples of how state designs representing people and spaces in broad simplifications failed to achieve their desired outcomes because they could not predict or control unforeseen resistance – human or natural; dismissed necessary diversity and interdependency in these spaces; usurped delicate balances in nature; and neglected to consider the power of local knowledge and customs to shift and make micro-

adjustments for continued existence. Teachers, students, and parents interacting within and with school spaces are such systems.

Local Knowledge. Core to particular contexts are the knowledge structures developed by individuals in particular spaces in response to that specific social, natural, and physical environment. Scott (1998) describes this as local knowledge or mētis. It is the wide arrange of practical skills and ways of knowing developed in response to constantly changing, complex, uncertain natural and physical environments indicative of cultures (Geertz, 1983). People who work in complicated fields of work that involve human interaction in precarious environments develop mētis; they know which "rules of thumb to apply in which order and when to throw the book away and improvise" (Scott, 1998, p. 314). While Scott gives us examples of firefighters, emergency medicine practitioners, rescue squads, public safety personnel, and electric linemen as occupations requiring a high degree of mētis, I add teaching to this list.

All human interaction requires mētis (Scott, 1998). Again, Scott gives us examples of various forms of human interaction requiring mētis, all of which I carefully lay out in Chapter 4 before making direct connections to teachers' social and work lives in classrooms, with curriculum, in schools, and with their community. These include simple acts like learning to ride a bike to more complicated tasks of competitive and cooperative interactions such as athletic contests, dancing, playing music, and dancing; and individual and group problem solving like politics and war diplomacy. Each set of situations places human actors in similar, but never precisely the same situations. Human actors employing mētis often resist the simplification of deductive reasoning learned through formal education as impractical because the environments in which they work

are complex, unpredictable, and messy. It is difficult to resolve problems in these spaces by applying rational decision-making based solely on formal, technical procedures. Successful problem-solving requires individuals and groups of people to translate general, technical knowledge into situated knowledge for local application (Scott, 1998). Schools spaces and social interactions that exist between teachers and their students, peers, administrators, parents, and community require high degrees of mētis – or local knowledge -- for successful navigation and negotiation of their intentions.

Scott's Warning. Scott warns us that those social and environmental reform policies that do not consider the natural, complex variation of natural environments and the capacity of individual and collectives of people (and other living things) to use local ways to convert general rules (laws) into successful applications fail. Failed social schemas net results the policy was designed to resolve or do irreparable damage to the social and environmental systems upon which it is directed (Scott, 1998). NCLB functions along these lines, as it attempts to eliminate local knowledge and purge context in order to impose unrestrained administrative power over the work of schools, establish worker discipline for non-compliance (in the form of punishments and inducements), and illogically apply business metaphors and scientific processes to the complex craft of human improvement.

Failure is a double-edged sword. Not only do policies fail when their design does not consider the local ways of people to adapt and thrive in complex, messy environments, individuals and collectives of people lacking the capacity and will to integrate high modernist expectations into their schemas find themselves at a disadvantage. Relative to NCLB, districts, schools, teachers, and parents who either

unwillingly or are not able to engage in the scientific reasoning or the market game find themselves left behind in failing schools.

Revisiting the Core Findings

The MSRC – Teachers' View of a High Modernist Artifact

Chapter 5 examines the Michigan School Report Card (MSRC), intentionally bogging the reader down with exclusive statistical vocabulary and research processes required to make the report card legible. I make a case that the MSRC is an artifact of high modernist policy because it attempts to organize the activities of schools using complex mathematical reasoning communicated through the Internet in compliance with federal mandates. It fulfills policy requirements to the letter of the law, calculating and communicating to the public the effectiveness of individual schools in a language – that at least on the surface – consumers of education can readily understand. The MSRC letter grade represents a gross simplification of teaching in learning explicitly and implicitly functioning as a market tool for authoritative power over public schools.

The report card markets school performance in a familiar, understandable form – at least on the surface. It advertises the quality of the school product as measured by state and federal products by simplifying the dynamic process of teaching and learning to status scores and letter grades. Gone are the subtle, subjective nuances that differentiate one school from another: program information, the quality and care offered to individual and collective students, or the general "feel" of building are not evident. An effective instrument in marketing a current or prospective school's effectiveness and efficiency, the MSRC provides taxpayers with information the federal government ascertains parents and taxpayers need to make informed educational investment decisions on behalf of their

individual children. Consumers capable of navigating through the MSRC, understanding the complex statistics, and employing Internet research skills can shop for a school that meets federally-defined industry standards for quality in hopes of securing their individual children with an edge in the competitive job market.

Teachers in this study were asked to describe and explain various artifacts representative of school accountability. They answered questions about the MSRC, the school demographic summary, and the individual student summary report. The description and analysis of teachers' perceptions focused on the MSRC.

Overall, teachers in this study found the MSRC useless; they resisted its imposition into their daily lives by refusing to learn how to read and interpret the its results; and struggled to engage in and comprehend the scientific reasoning and statistical formulas advocated by NCLB as a means of making their school legible for all stakeholders. Steeped in technical, political rhetoric and oversimplified forms, information presented in the MSRC was deemed too general and remote to have meaning for the teachers I interviewed. The report card exists in stark contract to the way in which these teachers gather, analyze, and communicate information in their locality about their students. Unlike the practical, situated, common sense knowledge teachers deploy when making instructional decisions, choosing curriculum for students, and designing measures of learning, the MSRC designers rely on technical, universal knowledge to tell this school's story. Serving to generate legible images of public schools for the sake of management from afar, the MSRC's gross simplification removes nuances of schools that make them unique to their localities and in doing so make them unfamiliar to those closest to the school. These teachers claim that the MSRC does a disservice to their

school because it does not balance the technical knowledge bound in the statistical formulas with the local knowledge found in the context of WMHS. The conflict existing between the technical knowledge represented in this high modernist policy artifact and what it does and does not tell them about their school and the local knowledge upon which these teachers rely leads them to reject the accountability measures as at best, unhelpful and at worse, harmful.

Teachers' Views of Parents and their Empowerment

Chapter 6 focuses on the parent empowerment component of NCLB. Recognizing that parents and families have a powerful influence on individual student's school success, NCLB continues to require that schools work with parents to insure each student receive a quality education. Unlike previous authorizations of ESEA, however, the role and expectations for parents changes significantly in NCLB. Framed by market theory and driven by authoritarian high modernist visions, NCLB arms parents of the lowest performing, neediest students with federal Title I funds to exit chronically failing schools, seek supplemental educational services, and demand information about teacher quality, curriculum materials, and assessment. The policy establishes their roles as educational consumers by empowering them to seek out the best possible education for their individual children through diligent research and the use of scientific reasoning.

The vehicle through which parents are to access information about their schools includes multiple required reports schools must generate in compliance with the policy. These include the Annual Report (also known as the PA25), the MSRC, their student's individual test results, as well as documents generated by the school detailing instructional staff's highly qualified teacher status and the alignment of curriculum

materials. NCLB authors assume parents as informed readers and stakeholders will use these state-purified, banal reports to make informed decisions about the best school for their children; that they hold the same value in test results as a singular measure of a school's quality. The policy attempts to break historical and traditional social interactions that inform parents' decisions about school quality replacing it with a more sterile, isolated Internet inquiry with limited access. Scott (1998) warns us that those unable or unwilling to access or discern meanings from state simplifications such as the MSRC are left insubordinate and disadvantaged.

Opening with a description and explanation of the demographic make-up of the school and the surrounding communities, this study aimed to establish an understanding of the social, economic, and educational status of WMHS's blended community as a means of determining se parents' potential for engaging in the policy's intent. Teachers' perceptions of WMHS parents were framed around four qualities Lareau (2000) used to describe parents from differing social class structures and their potential to take advantage of the parent empowerment aims of NCLB. These include: values guiding the place of education in their children's lives; cultural resources afforded by levels of education; dimensions of their work; and their social networks.

Using U.S. Census data to determine the demographics of the immediate and surrounding communities, it became clear that parents sending children to WMHS came from a variety of communities – influenced by school of choice and open enrollment policies -- as the demographic make-up of the school did not resemble the immediate attendance area. School demographics in the year of the study (2008-09) portrayed a diverse school with growing numbers of economically disadvantaged, English language

learners, Black, and Asian students. Teachers perceive changes in the community and recognized their parents came from different educational, economic, and occupational backgrounds. They described some parents as well – educated, who initiated frequent contact, seemed informed about the way school works, were highly visible and participatory, held high expectations for their child's academic performance, and not afraid to challenge teachers or administrators about educational practices. These teachers perceived most parents of the school, on the other hand, as less educated than the teachers; holding jobs requiring limited professional preparation; having limited contact with school staff; exhibiting little understanding of high school curriculum, graduation requirements or how to contact a counselor; and speaking languages other than English.

WMHS teachers held mixed expectations for their school's parents. They want them to be aware of what is going on in school relative to grades, homework, and social interactions; insure there is space and time allocated for homework at home; initiate contact and maintain open lines of communication between home and school; and send their children to school prepared to learn. They do not however, necessarily want parents to interfere with teachers' work in the classroom. Few teachers reported initiating contact with parents.

NCLB invites parents to challenge teachers about the nature of curricula and practices they are using and to push back if their children are not receiving what they believe is a quality education. The policy urges parents to gather information reported on the web-based MSRC to compare school quality. Teachers, when asked directly how often parents with whom they have contact ask them questions about instructional methodology, the quality of curricular materials, or their credentials, reported that not a

single parent had asked them about these matters. Information bound in the artifacts that schools must disseminate to parents is too general and difficult to comprehend for teachers, let alone for parents with limited amounts of education and knowledge about how school functions. Those choosing to leave their failing schools behind and enroll them in WMHS do so because they "heard" the school is better than the one they left behind; a safe, clean learning environment full of students who look like them. Most WMHS parents, teachers claim, are more interested in the subjective qualities of schooling and letter grades earned than their school's or their individual child's performance on a standardized test and subsequent AYP status posted on the MSRC. In fact, evidence exists to suggest WMHS parents are not using the state developed artifacts to choose; if this were the case, more families might leave this failing high school behind.

Teachers' Views of Highly Qualified Teachers

Insuring every child in the U.S. has the opportunity to learn from a quality teacher drives the highly qualified teacher tenet of NCLB. Recognizing the current rhetoric that it is teachers who have the largest effect on student learning, the law requires every district and school to place highly qualified teachers in classrooms as another caveat of closing the achievement gap.

NCLB continues its commitment to objective, rational, technical knowledge forms when defining a quality teacher based on content knowledge and verbal skills measured on standardized tests. Once in practice, quality work is linked directly to the singular goal of the policy: students' achievement on state tests. The lack of definitive research on teacher quality (even the title defies objectivity) left policymakers to negotiate teacher requirements to include not only assessed skills, but also professional

education and a minimum of a bachelor degree, as well as the disallowance of emergency certification/licensure in academic core subjects. The lack of substantive evidence relative to teacher certification programs and the trend of NCLB authors to hold the past in contempt, left venues open in the legislation that encourages alternative access to the profession. As NCLB matures, discussions about teacher quality are being framed around "value-added" measures which define teacher quality as linked to student performance on state tests over time. NCLB oversimplifies and bounds teacher quality in the same scientific reasoning as other policy tenets purifying it of human qualities that cannot be objectively measured and verified.

Study findings sought to determine if NCLB's highly qualified teacher requirement had influenced WMHS teachers' perceptions of what constituted a quality teacher. The average years of service for all WMHS teachers at the time of the study was just over nine; this means that most teachers were professionally socialized during the NCLB era. This study saw some of this effect in that most teachers interviewed claimed that content knowledge of the subject taught and the capacity to deliver instruction purposefully were clear indicators of teacher quality. But no teacher mentioned academic achievement on the state test an indicator of teacher quality, or even student success. Contradictory to the policy, teachers identify elements of teacher quality difficult to measure in standardized, norm referenced ways. These include qualities like purpose, creativity, passion, ability to build relationships with students, parents, and professional peers, flexibility, engagement and esteem for hard work. Clear differences exist between NCLB's rational, objective, technical definition of a quality teacher and these teachers'

subjective, practical views. As with other tenets of the policy, these teachers commitment to their subjective beliefs may leave them and their failing school behind.

Seeing Like an Administrator

Implications for Practice

One might read this study as a condemnation of NCLB. It is, but only in part. While here I document NCLB's shortcomings or design flaws, there are nonetheless some valuable changes happening within schools on behalf of children. More districts and schools are purposefully focusing their resources on training teachers to improve instruction in academic content areas; aligning their instructional curriculum to state standards; using data to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and paying close attention to the achievement gains of students of color, English language learners, those with special needs, and economically disadvantaged. These are some of the policy's intentions, and many of them are laudable.

As a school administrator however, I have concerns about a policy that seeks to remake schools and its stakeholders in the image of for-profit businesses; that purports a monocular goal of education that is incongruent with pluralistic social democratic purposes for education that aspires to prepare participatory citizens; that devalues natural variations of people; that validates only research that has been purged of context; that seeks to control the manner in which people interact and gather information about teaching and learning; or that wishes to dehumanize and oversimplify activities that take place within schools. The experience of conducting this research leaves me with a clear sense that school leaders must meet the policy half way or risk having their school or staff left behind. I conclude this chapter with a discussion as to why.

In the early stages of this study, I believed that WMHS teachers were the only hope this chronically failing school had to overcome the negative influences of the policy. I championed their work ethic and commitment to their students, school, and practice; and recognized the power of their compassion, creativity, and adventuresome teaching methods developed over time to prepare informed citizens despite pressures to cave to test preparation and add instructional time in subjects measured on the MME. I supported their refusal to focus on "bubble kids," reduce sub-group sizes by pushing traditionally low achieving groups of students out of the school, and rally around the singular goal of making AYP. It seems, however, that supporting these teachers' passiveaggressive resistance is shortsighted. In the case of this school, these teachers' resistance to the policy contributes to their collective failure to close the achievement gap between the school's more affluent white population and its Black, economically disadvantaged, ELL, and special education subgroups. They have failed to adapt their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning in response to their changing school environment.

While this and other research studies on the influence of NCLB on diverse public schools demonstrates the need for policy-makers to make NCLB more "mētis-friendly" we must also encourage school personnel to balance research-based practices from a variety of studies -- not just WWCs -- in conjunction with what they have found works in their individual classrooms through trial and error to improve student literacy and problem-solving skills. These teachers, at least, need to understand how to develop program interventions that are well informed and based on needs diagnosed from multiple measures – not just the snapshot assessment information from state prepared

tests or their own personal – and therefore invalidated – personal assessments of those children. Instead of shying away from what the state and federal governments expect of schools relative to student achievement, we need to inspire these teachers to balance this expectation with their shared vision of preparing literate, critical thinkers.

Finally, we need to help these teachers engage and empower parents. This means assisting our parents to learn to read information produced by state agencies with a critical eye to avoid misinterpretations that may come from their lack of research or scientific reasoning skills. We need to hold parent nights that simultaneously showcase good things happening in school relative to curriculum and instruction with teaching them what the MSRC and Annual Report tell them and us about our school. It is not enough to expect them to set aside homework spaces for their children; we need to teach them how. If we want our parents to be truly informed of what is happening in our school, we need to take the time to personally invite them into classrooms, to athletic, social, and performance events. And finally, we need to give those parents with limited cultural and social capital access to the tools they need to truly participate in our schools and in the spirit of NCLB by opening our computer labs, holding informational sessions that teach them how school works, and how to ask the right questions.

It is clear that the logic informing NCLB is spreading to state and local policy initiatives as well. We see this in our state's and district's eagerness to participate in the Race to the Top legislation that linked definitions of teacher and administrative quality to their students' achievement. As administrators, we need continue to educate our communities about both sides of these kinds of initiatives and encourage stakeholders to be active participants and not passive or reluctant observers. Change is upon us.

APPENDIX A INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions

I propose the following interview questions for school personnel framed around the five overarching themes surrounding NCLB. The intent is to ferret out the presence of local knowledge – common sense knowledge in teacher culture in a urban school setting.

Establish teacher background: Years of service, Credentials, Preparation, and Purpose for the interview

Overall Policy Awareness:

- Tell me what you know about No Child Left Behind. (Provide some background if necessary as to its implementation in Michigan)
- Given what you have told me about NCLB, has this policy influenced your work as a teacher? In what ways?

Can you give me some examples?

• How does this policy fit within other policy documents in your work: Michigan HS reform agenda, for example, the HSCE, your own districts and building's documents?

Standards and Accountability

Much of the policy makes teachers accountable for the quality of their educational products through objective measures. This round of questioning aims to examine how teacher common sense knowledge works with (if it exists) objective knowledge to make educational decisions relative to their students' collective student achievement outcomes. (Have a Michigan School Report Card in hand to open questioning)

- Have you seen this document before (show the interview the report card)?
- What does the School Report Card tell you and your community about your school?
- Can you tell me what some of these pieces of information are within the report card: (point to various sections particularly those relative to AYP and school improvement status)
- In what ways is this information useful to you as a teacher?
- What kinds of actions/decisions/discussions are you having as a result of some of things we see on this report card?
- I notice your school received a _____. What does this mean to you as a teacher?

- Do you think this is useful to parents/community members? If yes, in what ways, and if no, why not?
- As a community member/tax payer, do you search out your community's schools' report cards? (*parent consumerism*)

(Have a various outputs of the MME exam to begin this set of questioning) I am holding the demographic summary of the MME from your school. (Show it to the interviewee)

- What does this tell you about students in your school in general?
- What does this report tell you about students' academic achievement?
- Can/do you use this information to make instructional decisions?
- If so, in what ways?
- The demographic summary highlights specific groups of students. What can you tell me about these specific groups in general and within the context of your school?
 - o African American
 - Special education
 - o English Language Learner
 - Economically disadvantaged
 - Female learners
 - o Male learners
 - If statistically significant: Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latino learners?

Upon what do you base your knowledge?

Why do you think these groups are significant?

Let us look to some more specific information from the MME. (Have results of the ACT, WorkKeys and the MME on hand)

- What are your understandings of these examinations' purposes?
- Have you seen this information before?
- What kinds of information can you gather from these results as a classroom teacher?
- Does it inform your practice?
- If yes in what ways, and if no, why not?

Proven Practices

The aim here is to see if upon (common sense/scientific proven practices) what teacher bases his/decisions about teaching, learning, the curriculum, assessment, and professional development.

Curriculum

(Have the teacher's schedule if possible)

I see you teach(identify specific course titles).

- What essentially do you intend for students to gain from the study of these content areas?
- What kinds of things do you consider instructionally, when you plan your lessons? (looking for standards/knowledge of students/content/methods)

- Focus on one class. If I were to observe you in that class, what kinds of things would I see?
- What guides your decisions about curriculum in your classroom?
- Tell me about the students in your classes how would you describe them as learners?
- How do you match your curriculum decisions with the needs of your students? (probe for academic/social/emotional needs)

Assessment

- How do you know that your students have learned what you taught?
- You mention (build off his/her specific examples) these kinds of measures. How do you develop them?
- What kinds of things do you consider when writing those assessments? (Validity, reliable, bias tested?)

Ability to turn to research for interventions

• What do you do when students struggle/do not learn what you have intended for them?

Professional Development

- What kinds of things do you read; do they inform your work?
- Have you attended any conferences/workshops/in-services recently?
- How were you made aware of that opportunity?
- Was the information useful in your work?

Parent Consumerism

The policy requires schools assist parents to become more informed consumers of education and that parents take on an informed (logical decision making) role relative to the education received by their individual children. These questions aim to see what informs a teacher's perceptions/actions relative to parents in his/her community.

- Tell me about the parents of children with whom you work.
- What kind of relationship do you have with your students' parents?
- Are they advocates for their children?
- How often do you contact parents?
- How often do they contact you?
- What kinds of things do they ask for when contact you? Can you give me some examples?
- What are your expectations for them?
- Are they supportive of your work with their children?
- What does that look like/not look like?
- NCLB invites parents to engage teachers in conversations about curriculum and instruction. Are you seeing any of that here? (may have been answered in the context of another question).

• One aspect of parent consumerism is the power of school of choice. It is happening in Michigan as a result of other policy arrangements, but also as a result of parents encouraged to abandon lower performing schools for those better able to serve them. Have you seen any changes here, (in your school) as a result of this policy?

Highly Qualified Teachers – Teaching and Learning

- Tell me about what you believe makes a quality practitioner (teacher).
- What does his/her work look like?
- NCLB clearly defines a Highly Qualified Teacher. (Summarize the description?)
- Are you highly qualified?
- If yes, how was this determined?
- How has this provision of NCLB affected this particular school?

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