ECONOMICS, EQUITY, & BREAKING "THE 11TH COMMANDMENT": A CASE STUDY OF THE MICHIGAN EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AS A HISTORICAL EXAMPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

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ABSTRACT

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This study describes how accountability arose out of the economic arena as a means to bring about educational reform and to increase economic efficiency in Michigan prior to the rise of the national accountability movement of the 1980's. The borrowing strength theory from Manna (2006) can be used to describe how individuals with the Michigan Department of Education leveraged national education rhetoric in light of the realities Michigan school districts faced. Such an approach allowed for successful policy entrepreneurship (Kingdon, 2003) that argued for increased accountability—through the use of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)— as a means of bringing about educational reform. Like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the MEAP started as a census of student achievement at the state level. It quickly became a lightning rod for accusations that the MEAP was an affront to local control. In spite of controversy and challenges to the continuation of the program, Michigan's state-wide assessment has endured for over three decades.

This study used qualitative methodology through a case study approach to deepen the understanding of how educational policy, politics, and organizations have influenced the use of standardized testing as a way to gauge accountability in education. The research questions were designed to explicate career educators' descriptions and understandings of accountability surrounding the creation of the MEAP, its implementation, and the educational landscape's reaction to the MEAP. Interview data plus archival document analysis has led to a view of

accountability that takes into account the educational policy, political science, and historical implications of the Michigan's state-wide assessment.

The MEAP as a tool for accountability was designed to gain information on what students knew in order to guide policy to address the needs of students. What could have been a singular needs assessment became instead a staple in Michigan's educational policy and leveraged change across the educational landscape within the state. By looking at what happened in Michigan during the first ten years of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the field gains a valuable example of the rationale guiding the implementation of accountability policy that has continued to impact the educational landscape at both the federal and state levels since the 1960's. Approaching accountability as primarily an economic-political issue helps to inform modern debates focused on advocating for conceptions of accountability that result in having positive impacts on student achievement.

To my late brother, Valen, who called me “Dr. Moses” years before I entered graduate school, my late father, and other relatives whose encouraging words transcend their time on earth to live on in my fond memories of them.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Cooperative Accountability Project
CSSO	Chief State School Officers
DPS	Detroit Public Schools
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ETS	Educational Testing Service
GTC	Grounded Theory Coding
HEW	United States Office of Health, Education and Welfare
HGM	Hypothesis-Generating Method
MDE	Michigan Department of Education
MEAP	Michigan Educational Assessment Program
MSBE	Michigan State Board of Education
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NDEA	National Defense Education Act
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SEAR	State Educational Accountability Repository
SES	Socio-economic status
WISD	Washtenaw Intermediate School District

Chapter 1

Introduction

Research Problem

Research on accountability has approached the subject as a major movement in America's more modern educational history, yet Martin, Overholt, and Urban (1976) have argued that accountability is more appropriately viewed as a political movement fueled by economic concerns. Calls for accountability from 1960-1980 were consistently external to the field of education, and accountability in education has almost exclusively served an evaluative function that has targeted teachers and schools. There has been substantially more accountability rhetoric than outcomes that substantiate how measuring student achievement has helped to improve the quality of education that students have been receiving in the United States (Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder, 2009).

Knowing more about the origins of accountability policy can inform today's challenges with schooling, teaching, and learning. This study offers evidence that the birth of today's accountability movement in education in the United States can be traced back to the 1960's. The patriarch of accountability as manifested in policy like *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) of 2001 is the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 1965. Politicians have consistently called for changes in education that confront issues of implementation at the classroom level (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). However, research has demonstrated that educators need space to build the capacity required to support teacher's learning that could facilitate the translation of policy into measurable improvements in students' success (Lieberman & Miller, 2008). This study has accepted the challenge issued by Martin et al (1976), that

"educational problems must be considered at their foundations, their political and economic aspects, if they are to be dealt with effectively" (p. 44). Getting to the root of the rationale for accountability—politics and economics—provides a useful lens for re-examining the accountability policies in Michigan as a case for learning about historical conceptions of accountability.

Research Purpose and Rationale

The creation, implementation, and evolution of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) is a case of the economic and political concerns surrounding education overtaking the academic pursuit of state-level data on student achievement that educators had hoped would bring about real changes for students with the most needs. However, school districts were preoccupied with the funding implications of the MEAP. Pockets of reform did exist, but they were exceptions in the midst of controversy surrounding the state government's plan for accountability. This study argues that economics was the driving force behind the pursuit of accountability that guided the development of the MEAP, and it was the economics of education that fueled the intensity of the politics surrounding the MEAP. In retrospect, the MEAP represented a noble yet naïve approach to accountability.

The purpose of this study was to describe how accountability arose out of the economic arena as a means to bring about educational reform and to increase economic efficiency and educational impacts in Michigan prior to the rise of the national accountability movement of the 1980's. By looking at what happened in one state during the first ten years of ESEA, the field gains a valuable example of the rationale guiding the implementation of accountability policy that has continued to impact the educational landscape at both the federal and state levels for the

past four decades. Approaching accountability as more than an economic-political issue helps to inform modern debates, because the MEAP's original purpose was focused on assessment for the purpose of making changes to education in order to have a positive impact on student achievement.

The economic and political premises guiding accountability policies have been transforming the educational landscape in the United States since the 1960's (Berube, 1996; Martin et al, 1976). There has been little discussion in the literature of how prioritizing certain definitions of accountability have impacted accountability policies at the state level before the mid-1970's. For this reason, the review of the literature for this study is less concerned with more recent accountability research that attends to the impact of either *Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) or NCLB, and is instead more focused on notions of accountability that predate these discussions.

Research Questions

It is critical for the educational community to understand better and to attend to the political-economic nature of accountability policies that have been transforming the educational landscape in Michigan since the 1960's. This study used case study methodology to seek a deeper understanding of how educational policy, politics, and organizations were influenced by the use of standardized testing as a way to provide accountability in education. The research questions were designed to explicate educators' descriptions and understandings of accountability surrounding the creation of the MEAP. Data from interviews and documents illustrate the dynamic and charged conversations about education that appeared in the 1960's and 1970's about accountability in Michigan.

There is a richness missing in the current literature on accountability due to the lack of voices from educators working outside the classroom, especially those serving in the field of education during the time period of interest which this study includes. By looking at past examples of the rationale for greater accountability at the federal level, and the emergence of accountability policies at the state level in Michigan, the field of education can better understand today's debates concerning the standards schools are expected to meet for the success of all students. This research, consequently, is guided by the following questions:

1. What insights about accountability, as a means of educational reform, can be gained from the establishment of the MEAP as a policy artifact in 1969?
2. How do educators (K-12, higher education, state department of education) describe and understand the rise of accountability in Michigan surrounding the MEAP, from 1965-1975?
3. What impact did the MEAP have as a policy lever on the educational landscape of Michigan?
    a. What examples exist, if any, of borrowing strength theory in the history of the MEAP?

Theoretical Frameworks

Public policy and political science literatures provide an opportunity to examine how issues are "conceptualized and how subsequent action, or inaction, may be legitimized" (Dery, 2000, p. 39). Problems must be defined, must compete with other problems deemed worthy of attention (Schattschneider, 1975), must be persuasively articulated (Riker,1986), and must be paired with feasible solutions in order to make it onto the government's agenda (Kingdon, 2003).

Education, like health care, is a "valence issue" (Green-Pedersen & Wilkerson, 2006) that is easy for politicians and policy makers to rally around, but how are problems in education defined? How do ideas about educational problems gain traction? Policy or political entrepreneurs are one way to answer these questions because they are individuals who define problems, defend their conceptions of problems, and disseminate their ideas for solving problems.

Disparities in students' educational opportunities are one educational problem. Poverty—a matter of economic standing in society—has been repeatedly cast as a culprit impeding the success of children in school (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The ESEA, a major policy and political move, served as a critical discussion point regarding the financial resources available to schools, as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty (McLaughlin, 1974). Through a descriptive case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Yin, 2012), this research offers alternative conceptions for thinking about accountability in terms of the federal policy precedent set through ESEA that made the history of the MEAP possible.

This research does not attend to the critiques that have been leveled against the traditional policy and political science literature. Stone (2002) raised limits to the rational and objective portrayals of the agenda-setting and implementation process as characterized by Kingdon (2003). She argued that the decision-making that is part of the policy process is itself political, which complicates policy-making and the enactment of policy. However, the use of Kingdon (2003) and Kingdon-inspired research by Manna (2006) is useful because their frameworks are a good fit to describe the organizational bureaucracy that provided the context for the MEAP. While policy creation and implementation are more complex and dynamic than the traditional literature may acknowledge, the models and frameworks chosen help to structure the conversation about

what can be learned from focusing on the MEAP as a case of political entrepreneurship and borrowing strength.

Agenda-Setting Theory and Role of Policy Entrepreneurs

Kingdon (2003) popularized the idea of the policy entrepreneur by highlighting the investment individuals make to bring attention to a problem, and he coupled that problem with possible policy solutions through the use of political processes to increase the government agenda status of the problem. It takes a considerable investment of time, a resource more precious than money in the political context, to define a problem, pair it with a solution, and lobby for its acceptance onto the governmental agenda. The government agenda is "the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Kingdon, 2003, p. 3). Because there are competing ideas concerning which problems should be addressed through government intervention, not all ideas are heard and not all conditions become problems that go on to inform public policy. What problems are given attention increases the likelihood that political action will result to alleviate or eliminate the problem.

Not everything on the agenda gets addressed. In politics, everything on the government's radar does not manifest in policy outcomes. Part of the political process is convincing politicians serving on relevant committees and in other positions of influence to identify with the problem, its definition, as well as the proposed solution to the problem. Finally, the policy window refers to the moments when government is particularly receptive to solutions to problems. This may be during the campaign season, budgetary sessions, changes in administrative offices, or around

commemorative events, to name a few. Whenever the opportunity arises, policy entrepreneurs are ready to act when conditions appear favorable.

Work by Adam Sheingate (2003) builds upon Kingdon's notion of a policy entrepreneur by focusing on the political process that entrepreneurs must navigate in order to bring about solutions to perceived problems. He provides tools for interrogating how individuals serve in this way by presenting three questions: When is entrepreneurship possible? What is the nature of entrepreneurial innovation? How do entrepreneurs transform their innovations into lasting institutional change? First, entrepreneurship is possible when an opportunity arises to "shape the terms of a political debate" (Sheingate, 2003, p.188). Schattschneider (1975) describes in detail that the people who control which definition of a problem receives the most attention and becomes part of the government agenda are the people who possess political power. Returning to Sheingate (2003), this is why the political entrepreneur must narrow the scope to focus the political conversation on the problem as the political entrepreneur envisions it.

Second, political entrepreneurship occurs through people who provide innovative solutions "through the skills of brokering and coalition building, [and] succeed in building the requisite support to get new policies adopted" (p. 188). These innovative solutions are not the result of new ideas, but ideas presented in creative ways that attract the interest of other politicians. Political entrepreneurs know how to package ideas so that they are convincing and appealing to individuals or groups who can help champion the proposed solution to the problem.

Third, Sheingate defines political entrepreneurs as "individuals whose creative acts have transformative effects on politics, policies, or institutions" (p. 185). The creative acts result in lasting change because of the investment political entrepreneurs make. This change may take the form of common policy artifacts (bills, laws, or amendments) but could also include the creation

of new organizations, intra-governmental offices, or spawn increased involvement of consumers or previously under-represented groups into pre-existing avenues for meeting public concerns.

In order to impact what gets onto the government agenda, the policy entrepreneur is also aware the government's license and capacity to address a problem. License involves the soundness of the justifications used to argue for government action while capacity concerns the structures governing bodies have in place or if resources exist to create channels in order to bring about policy changes. Successful policy entrepreneurs, then, are most likely to bring attention to problems when interest and involvement have been established and license and capacity are high.

Policy entrepreneurs matter because of their ability to serve as brokers across government, related organizations, and the general public to garner interest in seeing a problem bringing about policy or policy changes. Politically speaking, success can be construed as moving an item from the governmental agenda to the decision agenda. When this happens, not only has a problem been coupled with a solution, but that problem also becomes formally acknowledge through a bill, amendment, or law to provide a solution in service of the public good.

Policy entrepreneurs are only one of the possible explanations for what brings about political impact. Schattschneider (1975) and Riker (1986), provide examples of how political debates are shaped by the scope of the discussion and definition of alternatives, respectively. What issues are relevant for discussion and what specific examples help to strengthen the argument or counterargument determine how each individual or group of players operate in the political game. Even so, political entrepreneurs are the ones who define the problem, set alternatives, and determine the parameters of the political debate.

While it is understandable that agenda-setting theory focuses predominantly on government officials operating in the political context, other key players may be overlooked. In the context of education, school officials, parents, other community groups, teachers, and even the students themselves can provide insight into conversations pertaining to educational reform. For these reasons, new research is needed to explore the inter-relatedness of government officials beyond the federal level in order to better understand educational reform.

Dery (2000) distinguished himself from the traditional focus on agenda status like Kingdon to emphasize problem definition as of vital interest to policy analysts. It is in this spirit that Manna (2006) proposed a theory to explain how ideas gain traction by focusing on the actions of political entrepreneurs. Like Kingdon (2003), Manna valued the roles that key individuals play in bringing about political change, while theorizing that compelling ideas are borrowed across governmental contexts in order to legitimize certain solutions to problems over others. It is Manna's borrowing strength theory that served as the theoretical framework for this research and that explains how the idea of accountability in education took hold as a way to reform American and Michigan schools.

Borrowing Strength Theory

Manna coined "borrowing strength" as a theory to describe the considerations made by the policy entrepreneur in order to leverage ideas from other levels of government in order to build a persuasive rationale for new policies or policy changes. To successfully borrow strength, the policy entrepreneur must be attuned to what problems are of governmental concern (referred to as interest) and have been addressed in some manifestation of governmental action (referred to as involvement). Government officials may espouse their interest through public speeches but

not all rhetoric results in a showing of government involvement as demonstrated by the passing of laws, regulations, creating departments/organizations, or disbursing funds.

As a theory, borrowing strength describes the considerations made by political entrepreneurs and the process of leveraging from other levels of government in order to build a persuasive rationale for new policies or policy changes (Manna, 2006). To borrow strength successfully, political entrepreneurs are attuned to what the problems of governmental concern are (interest) and which problems have been addressed in some manifestation of governmental action (involvement). Government officials may espouse their interest through public speeches, but not all rhetoric results in a showing of government involvement, such as the passing of laws and regulations, creating departments/organizations, or disbursing funds. In order to impact what gets onto the government's agenda, policy entrepreneurs are also aware of individual/group license and the government's capacity to address a problem. "License" involves the soundness of the justifications used to argue for government action, while "capacity" concerns the structures that governing bodies have in place, or if resources exist to create channels in order to bring about policy changes.

Successful political entrepreneurs, then, are most likely to bring attention to problems when interest and involvement have been established, and when license and capacity are high. Manna emphasized that the timing and sequence of events matter, which lends importance to attention to the socio-historical contexts that political events are embedded within. Manna originally used his theory to show how federal politicians used actions at the state level to galvanize educational reform. This research shows how policy and political entrepreneurs in Michigan borrowed strength from the federal policy, ESEA, in order to reform education through accountability. In this study, the MEAP emerges as an example of a policy artifact that became a

policy lever. As a result of the complexity surrounding the creation and implementation of the MEAP as a tool for accountability, the MEAP is both a failure and a success in the impact it has had on the educational landscape in Michigan.

Analytic Tool

This research features another use of the Johari Window, a model that comes from the field of psychology. The model's name is a combination of the first names of its creators, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. It was first presented in 1955 as a result of research on group dynamics at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the research was expounded upon in book form by Joseph Luft (1963). The original model was fashioned in terms of a four-paned window. Each quadrant corresponds to a level of awareness that an individual has about himself or herself. The original model from the 1950's focused on the unknown and known in terms of what is known to someone, contrasted with what someone can learn from their interactions with others. This model has been adapted across the decades to facilitate the understanding of relationships as an extension of studying the individual to include dynamics within and across groups of people.

The version of the Johari Window used in this study was developed by David Hillson (2007), who has gained international renown as the "Risk Doctor" for his expertise in project and risk management. Hillson's adaptation of the Johari window was designed with organizations in mind, and it focuses on the existence or absence of knowledge. When organizational knowledge exists and there is awareness of this knowledge, conditions are more certain for that knowledge to be capitalized upon or exploited. As awareness decreases, conditions merit more cautious

actions on the part of the organization. Where there is caution, action is less sure, and certainty is replaced with exploration.

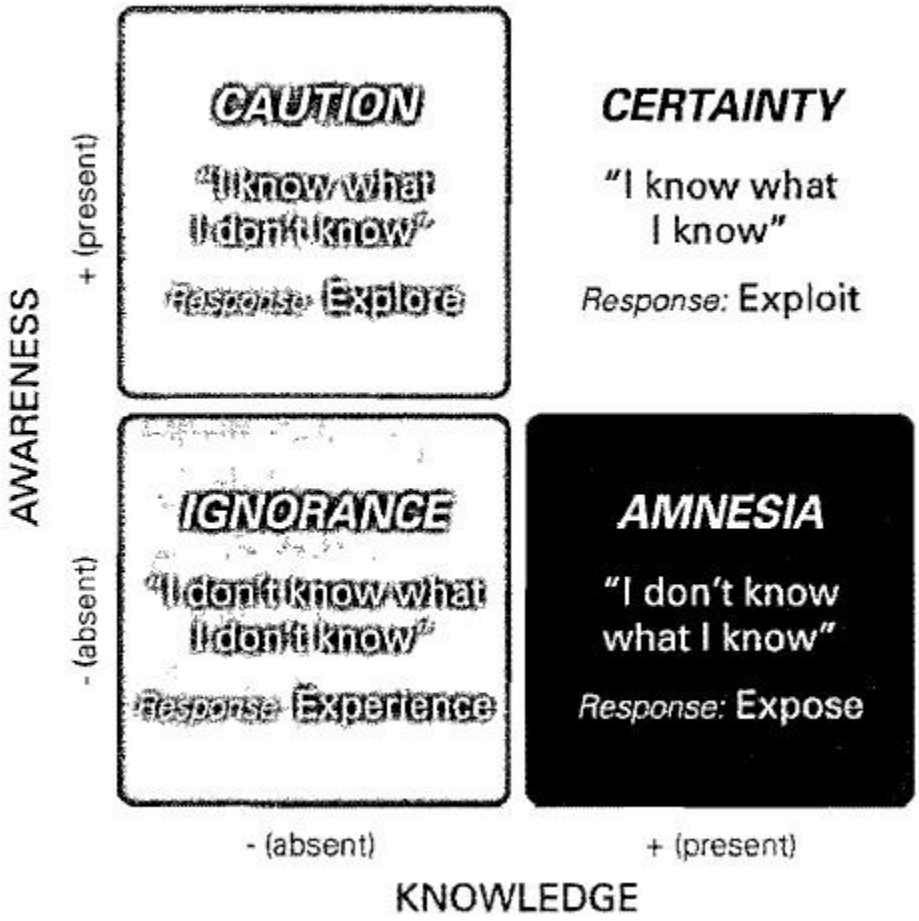

Figure 1. Hillson (2007) Adaptation of Johari Window

Hillson (2007) recommended that organizations be open to using contingency plans to prepare for how the organization responds when novel situations arise. This is an ideal situation for risk management. When an organization has knowledge without actively using that knowledge, the organization has amnesia, and actions should be taken to unearth or expose that dormant information. Finally, within the model is a condition of ignorance. In this case, an

organization lacks awareness and knowledge. An organization in this condition has high risk, and the antidote becomes seeking experience in that area to lessen future risks.

The reason for using this model as an analytic tool is that it helps to address a gap in the policy analysis literature that Hand (2011) described as a need for research that goes "deeper into the nuts and bolts of policy design" (p. 6). Exploring Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Hand argued that "policy action changes the context within which the policy is expected to act" (p. 10). The MEAP as a policy solution—through its very existence—created new realities for the educational landscape. What was known or unknown shifted according to context, and it depended on what changes were made to the MEAP at large or to the assessment itself. In spite of policy initiators' best of intentions, the MEAP came with political consequences that both hindered and helped the case for educational accountability in Michigan. Educational stakeholders from parents to elected politicians raised their voices in opposition. The story of the MEAP is an example of how the traditions of assumed rationality that have guided economics, politics, and political science theories, such as those of Kingdon, cannot forecast implementation outcomes. This assumed rationality is what researchers like Stone (2002) challenge: not only is implementation political, but the "rational" policy design process is also political.

Both the original and adapted models are inherently dynamic. The proportion of the window panes in the model changes to fit the context and the phenomena of interest. For Luft (1963), what is known and unknown for an individual depends on the context and the composition of the group or groups to which an individual belongs. Organizations—like people—have learning curves, and the nature of organizations depend on the context and group composition, too. Organizations confront what is known and unknown, and they act accordingly. As organizations mature, their expertise grows, and they are able to exploit the

knowledge they have gained. The Hillson (2007) adaptation of the original model serves as an analytic tool to describe what the Michigan Department of Education, the selected school districts, and teachers at particular schools knew or did not know about accountability. Depending on the context, what knowledge existed or was absent brought about anticipated and unanticipated consequences, both within and across contexts.

As an analytic tool, the Hillson (2007) variation of the Johari Window has been selected to serve two purposes. First, this tool organizes discussions of the MEAP as a policy act, artifact, and policy lever, overall. Second, this tool represents the answers to this study's research questions from the insights gained from educators reflecting upon their work in state, district, and school contexts. The history of the MEAP as a tool for accountability presents a powerful lesson in how impactful the unknown-unaware quadrant of the model—representing an organization's ignorance—can be on how teaching, learning, and schooling are imagined, lived, or never fully realized.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature focused on accountability. Typically, research on this topic begins in the mid- to late 1980's. Though several authors have mentioned federal policies from the 1950's or 1960's, the emphasis has been on growing federal involvement in comparison to the reach of NCLB. Because of the significant impact of NCLB, it has dominated the discussion of accountability to the demise of historical conceptions of the term. In reviewing the literature on accountability, the chapter emphasizes the gap in the literature that this study addresses. In addition, the literature explores how accountability has been defined in the past and contrasts those definitions with the way accountability is defined today.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology for this study. Situated within qualitative methodology, case study and document analysis are utilized along with semi-structured interviews. Case study is presented as useful in gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, making it a strong avenue for exploring the history of the MEAP.

Chapter 4 gives an introduction of participants in this study. Each individual is a career educator who has worked at particular levels of the educational system in Michigan. Each participant provided information concerning their educational training and personal background that reflects the unique perspective he or she contributed to the study. The background of each participant helps the reader to situate the interviewee's perspective in the context of the participants' experiences and views on education.

Chapter 5 is the first data chapter that features the insights gained from archival research. Four documents were selected for detailed analysis to counter the notion that the MEAP was a flash-pan idea designed to help the state government to overtake local decision-making. The specifics guiding the MEAP from the legislative perspective were clearly articulated, if not always implemented, by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) as envisioned. The sequence of events incited opposition, but the criticisms of the MEAP gave those within the MDE the opportunity to use their expertise in measurement and policy to plan strategies for diffusing arguments against the MEAP.

Chapter 6 is focused on the analysis of interviews under the themes of assessment as activism and assessment for equity. The MEAP was a way of challenging the status quo of education that left the students with the most needs without access to a quality education. Assessment had the power, according to policy initiators of the MEAP, to build the case for greater equity in the funding of Michigan schools.

Chapter 7 details the resistance to MEAP from two perspectives. The MEAP was an accountability tool that school districts viewed as being an invalid and unreliable measure of student achievement. Because the MEAP was a state-level policy, its existence was seen as an affront to the autonomy of local control. Regardless of the opposition to the MEAP, its genesis is traceable to the ESEA and is connected to the history of the NAEP, which supports the innovative qualities of the MEAP as a state-wide assessment.

Chapter 8 is the final data chapter that explains the implications of the MEAP across multiple contexts. First, the MEAP linked the state assessment with goals for greater educational accountability. Because the test was designed to be an accountability tool, different stakeholders perceived the MEAP uniquely. The implications of the MEAP for legislators, schools, teachers, and students are explored.

Chapter 9 is the discussion. The study's findings are summarized and conclusions are drawn in relation to the literature. The data is more strongly tied to Manna's (2006) theory of borrowing strength, Kingdon's (2003) notion of political entrepreneurship, and the analytic tool of Hillson's (2007) adaptation of the Johari Window. Finally, future directions for this research are listed in the areas of theory, research, and practice.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

I argue that my study is necessary in order to explore the inter-relatedness of government officials beyond the federal level with non-elected decision-makers to understand better educational reform. This creates an opportunity for different fields to be in conversation with each other, i.e., educational policy, history of accountability, and political science research. The political science literature can focus on the pre-decision and decision-making processes. Education policy, on the other hand, is also concerned with the implementation of the policies resulting from such processes. Together, these bodies of literature can provide a more complete picture of the context leading to change, and they can follow the sequence of events that have resulted from waves of educational reform.

Research on Educational Policy

McDermott (2007) collected data on four states and analyzed the implementation of each state's accountability policies. Focusing on sanctions, this author compared policy intentions with outcomes through a historical case analysis methodology. Because the events under inspection had already happened, data sources included an array of documentation from governmental entities as well as applicable popular media accounts surrounding measures of standards-based reform. The power dynamics between the selected state and local education agencies were selected based upon the enforcement of accountability sanctions before NCLB in 2001. Like McDermott, my study values historical documents as a source of data to learn from pre-NCLB notions of accountability. However, McDermott's work was a policy analysis that did

not seek to address why accountability became a desirable course of action decades before NCLB. While McDermott was trained as a political scientist, her background is less evident in this particular work. My study drew upon political science literature to address the process by which accountability was seen as a solution to address the perceived problems with education during the time period of interest.

Superfine (2005) also examined policy implementation, but took a more interdisciplinary approach by delving deeper into the politics behind accountability policy. The selected paper examined the pre-NCLB reauthorization of ESEA under the Clinton administration. The Goals 2000 legislation of 1994 was an attempt to encourage states to create aligned standards and assessments. In addition to detailing the shape the policy took on before and after it became law, Superfine argued how debates regarding the locus of control for specific educational decisions at the state versus the federal level undermined the fidelity of the policy's enactment. In the author's words, the study was an exercise in joining the ranks of the "few [who] have precisely traced these sorts of problems to their underlying political roots" (p. 12). Superfine used his law background to trace the federal government's growing role in education as part of the pursuit for systemic reform in spite of the highly decentralized arrangement of the American educational system. Superfine named political pressure as a powerful force in the sustainability of policies and the critical role the legal-historical context plays in understanding the shortcomings of policy implementation at the federal, state, and district levels. In doing so, Superfine's work highlighted the usefulness of examining how the climate policies are birthed into and are developed within. While Superfine's work built a strong case for the political issues giving rise to the implementation issues that undermined the intent of Goals 2000, the research presented accountability as a more modern focus in comparison to the preceding standards-based reform

movement. There is a need for research to address historical notions of accountability and research that capitalizes upon the opportunity to trace modern notions of accountability back to ESEA. However, it is important to discuss accountability in more detail before moving on.

Research on the History of Accountability in Education

Kirst (2000) traced accountability in the educational context back to England, where a system analogous to merit-pay arose in the mid-1800's before the American version of accountability manifested itself in New York's Regents examinations in the late 1870's. Ohmann (1999) argued that before the late 1960's, accountability was a term that was typically unattached to education in the American context and that was generally about responsibility and liability. Accountability is a business term that means to give an account in order to provide a description of how resources have been used. The 1970's brought about an explosion of discussion and literature pairing accountability and education (Kirst, 2000). Kirst presented an organized way to think about accountability as a movement extending from the 1970's into today by encouraging the field of education to adopt a business model, value standardized measurements, and seek cost efficiency as a means to reform education (p. 321).
Such a perspective on accountability pairs well with the idea that accountability is a political movement fueled by economic concerns.

The context surrounding aid to schools through the ESEA of 1965 provides an illustrative example of the political and economic roots of accountability. Such is the focus of the paper by Kantor (1991). ESEA is the legislation that successfully initiated the increased federal presence in schools through the allocation of funds to offset inequitable access to educational opportunities by the poor and disadvantaged. Through this policy, the federal government

impacted what local schools—with states as the channel for flow-through funds—did to resolve the problems attributed to poverty. It was the economic formula behind ESEA that made it such a success, even though Kantor documented the less than ideal impact money had on students with the most needs. The hope was that ESEA and Title I funding would drive schools to innovate their practices, much like a business desiring to stay competitive in the marketplace would change in order to persist. Unfortunately, this innovation did not occur. The policy mandated that schools change, but could not force local schools to prioritize the learning needs of the poor and disadvantaged beyond the provision of typically isolated programs. The question became: How can the federal government encourage compliance without challenging the tradition of local control and education as the state's Constitutional responsibility?

An initial conception of accountability at the federal level meant the creation of a system for states to report back to the Office of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), in order to give an account of how districts were using ESEA funds. To give an accounting of the money is the most basic of definitions for the accountability construct (Kantor, 1991). Providing funds to states and requiring them to oversee how the money was used created an accountability ethos. It is important to note that accountability at this time was not connected to student outcomes via test scores, as it often is today. The focus was on documenting how districts were spending ESEA money (Clifford and Guthrie, 1998). Title V of ESEA created provisions to fund state department of education to build their capacity to offset the limited capacity of the HEW. As a result, the role of these departments became more influential (Kantor, 1991; Kirst, 1978).

From Kantor (1991) is evidence that the economic formula behind ESEA was the reason the bill became law. It was a political miracle, of sorts, to work out a policy that did not exclude any locality from qualifying for categorical aid. This research hinted at the calls for evaluating

the effectiveness of the programs funded by Title I monies, and it more directly stated the capacity shortcomings at the federal level to police the intent of the act, which was to meet the educational needs of the historically disadvantaged.

McLaughlin (1974), too, described the fear that money would never make it to the intended students, and how Title I quickly became an issue of local control as well as a state's rights with the federal government as the financier of educational reform. What seemed most important to politicians was getting a clear sense of what programs worked, as measured by increases in students' achievement. It was the evaluative component of ESEA, as inserted into the bill by Senator Robert Kennedy, which sparked conflict over how to hold states and localities "accountable."

Research by Kantor (1991) and McLaughlin (1974) are rich historical essays that demonstrate the complexity involved in studying policy creation, implementation, and analysis. What is missing from both of their studies is a sense of what research methods were employed to produce such detailed accounts. My research can make a contribution by detailing data selection, collection, and analysis.

After ESEA, research by Levin (1972, 1974) documented the growing presence of accountability in the literature of the day. In his New York Times article, Levin (1972) connected the calls for accountability to reports of ESEA programs being well-funded but largely ineffective, based upon reports coming from the United States Office of Education. He challenged the assumption that there was agreement on what educational objectives school should meet, what tests would show that these objectives had been met, and what actions (incentives or sanctions) would ensue after the dissemination of assessment results. This was at a time when educational testing was determining its own methods to increase reliability and

validity. Levin also critiqued whether or not the scores would be as informative as reformers hoped. Levin (1974) created four categories for accountability: accountability as performance reporting, a technical process, a political process, and as an institutional process. If accountability was viewed as the solution, then the educational problems accountability would seek to resolve—using Levin's categories—would include a lack of information to stakeholders to help them assess schools' performance, a lack of services to improve reaching outcomes or appraising the outcomes themselves, lack of responsiveness to stakeholders' needs, or lack of trust in the institutional makeup of schooling, respectively.

Accountability, as a search for solutions, has resulted in promoting assessments to provide missing information, offering compensatory programs, contracting educational services, and abandoning the traditional school structure. Levin concluded that no single category is sufficient to reach the goals for accountability in schools, with teaching, and for learning. For Levin, accountability is a closed system with internal feedback mechanisms to reflect the creation of options to explore, options to reject, or options to refurbish. In taking a systems approach to accountability, Levin privileged the importance of understanding the political dimensions of accountability, because it had been through political processes that education was being called to produce outcomes. What complicates the matter is the bi-directionality of the relationship between schools and society. Any action will create outcomes, but whether or not those outcomes are acceptable is debatable, and it continues to be debated decades later.

Research by Mazzeo (2001) has provided a model for the systematic study of state assessments. He complicated the previous focus on the intentions of key actors and group interests to incorporate the ideas about policy frameworks that use tests as a form of intervention or policy instrument. He pointed to a lack of research on the history of assessment policy at the

state level. Mazzeo's work has stimulated attention to questions such as, "why do state and national governments find tests attractive tools in the first place?" (p. 371). In looking at assessment policies, there is an opportunity for what he refers to as critical scholarship on educational testing that aims to understand why tests are used, how they are used, and the impact that they have had on what is seen as quality education and learning.

Kirst (2000) extended Levin's work into a modernized reframing of accountability. In providing explicit examples of the different categories of accountability, Kirst provided an example from the Michigan context. Like Levin, Kirst presented the assumptions undergirding accountability policies. What he referred to as the "Michigan State Assessment" (Kirst, 2000, p. 326) was actually the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Kirst cited a study by Murphy and Cohen (1974) that demonstrated the difficulties surrounding the MEAP in terms of selecting goals, agreeing upon them, and measuring students' achievement of these goals as articulated at the state level for local school districts.

The intended audience for Kirst's (2000) research was policy makers in need of a scaffold to organize accountability research. The paper accomplished this end, but it did not provide a detailed analysis of any one case or provide an example of one case spanning multiple conceptions of accountability. There is a gap in the literature to be filled with research that focuses on the political nature of accountability policies beyond issues of implementation (education policy), yet also recognizes the roots that modern accountability has in ESEA (history of accountability). I believe my research will help to fill such a gap.

Research on Accountability in Michigan from the 1970's

My study is not the first to look at accountability in Michigan during the time period of interest. However, in presenting two studies from the 1970's about the Michigan context, I am able to extend that research to make connections more explicit among accountability, ESEA funding, and how accountability as a means of education reform was articulated by Governor Milliken as a political entrepreneur.

The study by Murphy and Cohen (1974), which Kirst (2000) referenced, laid bare the attractiveness of accountability to politicians on both sides of the spectrum to community activists, educational researchers, and to some parent groups. No matter the group, accountability became the means to address concerns over the size of education, its growing costs, and whether or not the taxpayer's money was being well-spent. The paper was organized around the idea that assessment data was an objective and scientific way to inform decision-making about the educational direction the state should take.

The study explicitly addressed economics as a chief motivator in the political decisions surrounding education in Michigan in the 1960's. The paper went on to detail the political upheaval concerning a quest to correlate increases in school expenditures with increases in student achievement, to no avail. Moreover, Murphy and Cohen (1974) reported that the data initially collected by the state was complicated and of little use to schools. Attempts were made to collect better data because of the prevailing belief that more information would lead to reform (i.e. the point made by Levin, 1974). However, without school-level support, the union influence precluded teachers from being on board with the way accountability seemed to attack their professionalism. While Murphy and Cohen (1974) provided an excellent source from the time period of interest to get a sense of major organizations, their research questioned the

sustainability of the MEAP and was biased in favor of the opposition. Their research presents only one side of the story behind the MEAP.

The creation of the MEAP, the collection of the data, and the discussion of the results enlivened different interest groups to contend for access to the data. Although members of the press initiated requests for access to the first MEAP results, "[T]he strongest pressures for release of the comparative data came from state government—in the persons of the Governor [Milliken] and State Legislators" (Kearney & Huyser, 1971, p. 8). Legislators believed the publicly funded assessment program ($250,000 from the August 1969 budget to the MDE) necessitated public disclosure of the results, yet the educational community—from district superintendents, to school principals and teachers—disagreed. The data allowed comparisons to be made between schools in and across districts, which had previously been impossible on such a large scale. This was in direct conflict with the MDE's initial promise not to release results to the public.

The Michigan story can still be mined in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the success of the Governor's plan for education over that of the MSBE and MDE. I believe there are useful lessons to gain from taking additional looks at Michigan during this time that can benefit modern discussions of accountability.

Historical Conceptions and Definitions of Accountability in Education

Today, searching the research literature on accountability yields a plethora of topics focused on merit pay, value-added models, high-stakes testing, and is a topic discussed in every field and subfield within education. Looking before *No Child Left Behind* and the standards-based reform movement presents an opportunity to explain historical definitions and viewpoints

concerning accountability. In the paragraphs that follow are four different sources from vintage research journals and other publications that provide insight into how accountability was being talked about during the time period surrounding the MEAP before contrasting these definitions with more recent versions.

The October 1969 issue of *Theory into Practice* featured several articles on accountability. One of three pieces by Cunningham (1969) introduced the reader to the prevalence of accountability discussion across society, especially in the public sectors. In fact, the article positions accountability within education as an extension of a national mood that public servants should be held accountable to the public they served. Such accountability prioritizes information and performance evaluation of the public servant in light of the constituency being served. Accountability was described as a process where the information being gathered on how well or poorly a job was done created an opportunity for the public servant to respond to the feedback. In the context of education, increased accountability would lead to educational improvements in response to the public dissemination of performance data. At the heart of accountability as discussed in this article was the responsibility of giving an account of the money invested into education through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Because of federal legislation to fund the improvement of education for students from resource-challenged backgrounds, there was an expectation for results.

> In this Congress, with a new administration, the accountability consciousness appears to be at an all-time high. Congressmen in general, but especially the education committee, are asking hard, penetrating questions. They want to know what has happened to strengthen public education as a consequence of stepped-up federal

> investment. They have a right to ask, they need to ask, and they should expect to get solid, definitive answers. They apparently are not getting those answers. (Cunningham, 1969, p. 288)

Cunningham went on to describe the lack of data on improvements in students' literacy or employment status after high school as disparaging proof that more funding to schools may not be the simple solution to the educational problems that were facing the nation. Ultimately, there was no data on student achievement to justify the substantial educational expenditures provided through ESEA.

In the same issue, Briner (1969) couched accountability in the concerns that the public had about education. He recounted how the public continued to believe that schools served two important functions or purposes: contribute to the ability of an individual to succeed and equip an individual to contribute to the social fabric of society as a productive citizen. The educational constituency—federal and state levels of legislators, school board members, parents, and tax-payers at large—wanted to know where the responsibility for accountability fell and what was being done to ensure that schools were serving the aforementioned purposes. He articulated the following viewpoint on accountability in education:

> Accountability is, thus, a matter of knowing and using cooperatively both public and governmental, as well as professional resources…We, the public at large; we, the governmental representatives; and we, the educators, know too little about how to guarantee maximum educational achievement for all. The nature of human capability to learn is still something of a mystery, as are the political, administrative, and teaching

> arrangements required to realize individual potential. (Briner, 1969, p. 204)

The desire for holding schools accountable for the quality of education they provided their students was again focused on results but would require increased participation of the public with the educator community. Accountability was the means to produce information that educators and stakeholders could use to evaluate the quality of education in order to improve the education for the good of the students as well as society.

Lessinger (1970) wrote what Kirst (1990) and others considered to be the definitive work on accountability during the time. Lessinger's book, *Every Kid a Winner*, described accountability as a way to ensure all students received the basic skills while in schools that would help them excel academically and as a future member of the workforce. Students leaving schools illiterate and lacking basic computational skills were signs of the failure of schools. Lessinger (1970) suggested that solution was educational engineering, a way to change how schools were managed by emphasizing education for results. Here, too, the author cited an increasing demand from tax-payers to know what kind of education their dollars were providing. Gone were the days where general statistics would suffice—salaries paid, teachers hired, students enrolled, or buildings opened—because there was an interest in finding better indicators that students were learning. Lessinger (1970) explicitly addresses what accountability entailed: "Money available for responsible investment in teachers, students, and non-school-affiliated persons and organizations to produce results in the form of student accomplishment is the energy of accountability" (p. 16). Once again accountability was rooted in the economic costs of education. The money spent on education was the inspiration in seeking more information on what the money was enabling schools to do to meet the needs of all students. Lessinger (1970)

used the accounting term audit to describe the process of ensuring schools were meeting agreed upon purposes like reading and mathematical abilities as a way of describing accountability (p. 79). Education was not to be exempt from the critique and expectations of other public institutions to be held accountable to the public.

Within a year, Lessinger co-edited a book with Ralph Tyler, one of the leaders who helped develop the national assessment known as the NAEP (Lessinger & Tyler, 1971). Tyler also wrote a foreword to Lessinger's book. While Tyler presented a very simple definition of accountability, it is rooted in the public having a right to want an "accounting" of student learning and make the findings public (Lessinger & Tyler, 1971, p. 3). Tyler positioned accountability as "an aid to understanding the school situations and one basis for guiding new plans and efforts" (p. 6). Within this definition is a low-risk kind of accountability that is about gathering information as one—not the only—source for determining courses of action to improve education. The widespread push for accountability emerged out of the rationale that the public should see the benefits of the increased resources going towards education. The budget for education or economics was a driving force behind the emphasis on accountability.

Two individuals from the Michigan context are featured in the Lessinger and Tyler (1971) book. Governor William Milliken and Superintendent of Public Instruction John Porter each present definitions of accountability. Their inclusion in the book was a nod to what I believe was the significance of Michigan's undertaking in administering a state-initiated assessment as an accountability tool. For Milliken, accountability could be a matter of internal evaluations by educators or a measure of how well educators were teaching determined by those external to the school building. For Michigan's Governor, accountability could be a means to restore confidence in American education and that the state government was being called to play

an active role to ensure that local school districts would be able to provide the best education possible to all students. Out of all the definitions presented so far, Porter had the most specific one.

> Accountability is the guarantee that all students, without respect to race, income, or social class, will acquire the minimum school skills necessary to take full advantage of the choices that accrue upon successful completion of public schools, or we in education will describe the reasons why. (Lessinger & Tyler, 1971, p. 42)

In specifying student characteristics, Porter's definition was inclusive across the most discussed categories that research pointed to as reasons for the differential educational outcomes among student populations. It all includes an emphasis on minimum or basic skills that schools would be expected to ensure all their students acquired in a demonstrative way. Porter even leaves room for the failure to meet the minimum skills but in the spirit of giving an account, schools would provide an explanation of why the goals for student learning were not met. Such a view of accountability would necessitate what Porter went on to detail as a need for "data gathering information systems and analytical assessment of the data gathered" (Lessinger & Tyler, 1971, p. 45). By the time this book was published, Michigan was deep into the second season of giving its state-wide assessment that sought to do the very thing that Porter had been espousing.

The final source presented here involved the distinguishing of assessment and accountability in a publication by Frank Womer (1973) as part of the Cooperative Accountability Project (CAP). This consortium was coordinated through the United States Office of Education, funded through ESEA, and included the following states: Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, and Wisconsin. Womer was a key player in the early history of

the NAEP and would serve as a consultant for the development of the MEAP. On the page preceding the *Forward* was this straightforward and simple statement: "The Aim of Accountability is to Improve the Quality of Education". Terms like testing, assessment, evaluation, and accountability all involved the collection data, but the intent for data collection and the use of that data was important to clarify. Rather than equate assessment and accountability, Womer (1973) and colleagues suggested the distinguishing factor of accountability was its inherent value judgment.

> But accountability, as a concept, focuses first upon goodness or badness, adequacy of performance or lack of it. It is a broader concept than assessment since it encompasses all of the information gathering of assessment plus information about inputs into the educational process, about methodology of instruction, about philosophy of education and so on. Accountability represents a process that is systematically applied in the education system. (Womer, 1973, p. 3)

Here, accountability is presented as a systematic undertaking of gathering and analyzing the information gained from assessments. While tests had been historically used to rank students (Womer, 1973, p. 2) the idea of assessment was a newer term thanks to the emergence of the NAEP. Interestingly, some educators adopted the new terminology to reflect the older practice. Accountability would go on to be considered on the same level as tests or assessments without educators or legislators thinking of accountability in terms of its grander implications. As a result, educators and legislators limited conception of accountability informed their reaction against or naïve belief in accountability.

Taken together, these definitions of accountability lend evidence to support the conclusion that the beginnings of accountability in US education were concerned with the economics of education. The rhetoric here is less about efficiency and more about effectiveness. However, both of these descriptors are predicated upon a system for gathering information on student performance or achievement. This means that student learning had to be captured and compared to some set of goals that would help the public decide whether or not schools were making good on the public's investment into the education of all children. Moreover, these select sources suggest a prevalence of discussion of accountability on a level that most scholarship of today—even on the history of accountability—does not describe. I believe it was the prevalence of the public push for accountability and the growing awareness of the increased spending for education that created the accountability ethos that has evolved since the 1960's and 1970's.

Today, accountability is synonymous with high stakes for students, teachers, schools, and administrators primarily as the result of student performance on standardized tests. Accountability still provides information on schools, but not because there is a dearth of data. Rather, the provision of test data is a codified process (Anagnostopoulos, Rutledge, & Jacobsen, 2013) that is necessary for schools to demonstrate they have met the criteria set forth by NCLB—ESEA's most recent reauthorization—or risk losing autonomy at the district level or risk jeopardizing precious federal funding. With over a century's worth of history regarding testing in the U.S. and considering the concept of accountability is far from novel in this country, the challenge to reach an agreed upon definition for accountability remains. Nevertheless, three definitions of accountability are presented below to highlight the shift in the goals for

accountability in the 1970's in contrast to some of the goals that have been articulated since the turn of the 21st century.

The RAND Corporation has presented the same definition of accountability in two of its publications, one from 1992 and another from 2004. The non-partisan and non-profit organization defined accountability as "the practice of holding educational systems responsible for the quality of their products—students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes" (Stecher and Hanser, 1992, p. 5; Stecher and Kirby, 2004, p. 1). This definition is very concise and makes it clear that the systems providing education are to be held responsible for what students know, do, should be able to do, and what dispositions students exhibited. Because of how ubiquitously discussed the impact of the NCLB policy is present day, it is worth noting that the 1992 publication was focused on vocational education. Even so, President H.W. Bush's administration of the 1990's had goals for holding schools more accountable through administrative support for the creation of goals or standards for education in the United States. The study mentioned that vocational education was easier to measure than non-vocational education because of the emphasis on post-secondary employment. From the 1992 report, economics was in terms of labor and of key importance was how students transitioned into the workforce. However, by 2004 the same definition for accountability was focused on NCLB when George W. Bush was President. The key change in the times was that NCLB made test-based accountability a requirement for schools to receive federal funding. The ESEA of the 1960's-1990's remained focused on the provision of educational services. Through NCLB, the focus shifted to emphasize student performance on standardized tests (Stetcher & Kirby, 2004).

The next definition for accountability, ten years after the passage of NCLB, appeared in a chapter on school accountability in an edited handbook on the economics of education. Figlio

and Loeb (2011) acknowledged the growth of state accountability systems in the 1990's that was one of the key factors in the swift passage of NCLB. The authors defined school accountability as "the process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures" (p. 384). Here, the definition has increased in its specificity. Accountability was not about the educational system at large, but about the responsibility for students' education at the school level. What is consistent between this definition and the one presented by Stecher and Kirby (2004) is the use of student performance measures. The assessment of students is integral to making judgments about the quality of education students receive from the schools they attend. Figlio and Loeb (2011) went on to describe the far-reaching applications of accountability within education. Again, accountability leaves no sector of education untouched, yet the common thread continued to be the use of student achievement data.

> Accountability in education is a broad concept that could be addressed in many ways, such as using political processes to assure democratic accountability, introducing market-based reforms to increase accountability to parents and children, or developing peer-based accountability systems to increase the professional accountability of teachers (and now, especially following the "Race to the Top" initiative of President Obama, using similar tools to evaluate, reward, and sanction individual teachers as well). The most commonly considered definition of accountability involves using administrative data-based mechanisms aimed at increasing student achievement. (Figlio & Loeb, 2011, p. 384)

Hargreaves and Braun (2013a) released a 47-page report for the National Education Policy Center along with an introduction to this larger publication in blog form on Valerie Strauss's page through the Washington Post. In explaining accountability to the general public, the authors did so as follows:

> Accountability is seen as a strategy for improvement, by rewarding the successful and eliminating or intervening forcefully with those who are not. And it is mainly enforced through indicators of student achievement derived from standardized test scores. Test scores purport to reveal the successes or failures of students, teachers, schools and even entire educational systems. (Hargreaves & Braun, 2013b)

Such a view of accountability highlighted the use of student test data to determine consequences for multiple actors and across various levels within the educational system. The language captures just how high the stakes can get because the modern implementation of accountability policies since NCLB have impacted student promotion and retention, teacher attrition or tenure, and the autonomy of district-level decision-making.

Overall, more recent definitions for accountability are in response to the emphasis on student outcomes over the provision of support services. What is common practice today in terms of the prevalence of assessment data, reporting requirements, the articulation of standards, goals, and objectives for learning was not always the case. In the 1970's, these systems were under construction under a definition of accountability that focused on providing a justification for the increased revenue being allocated towards education. Today, the focus of accountability is on generating data to decide who gets the credit/blame or what level of the educational system

receives the credit/blame. The goals for accountability have changed from its initial focus on merely obtaining information to using the information to change how schools operate from the individual to the institutional levels (Mazzeo, 2001). While this is true for accountability at large in the US context, Michigan is a unique case because its accountability policies were designed to provide information on education using student outcomes and using that information to change the quality of education students received. Nevertheless, Michigan was the exception to the rule. It was not until NCLB that the entire American educational system was legislated to prioritize student achievement data.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This research used qualitative methodology, more specifically a case study approach with interviews and document data, to ascertain the history surrounding the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Qualitative methodology allowed this research to pursue a deeper knowledge of the economic foundations of accountability, in order to understand better how accountability has become such a powerful and impactful idea in education. Data collection was designed to create as rich a portrait as possible of the dynamism within and across the contexts that shaped accountability as a means for educational reform in Michigan. In addition, data collection was sensitive to evidence that would demonstrate connections of the MEAP to ESEA during the 1960's and 1970's. The analysis of the data followed the standards in the literature for coding qualitative interviews and synthesizing information from multiple documents in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What insights about accountability, as a means of educational reform, can be gained from the establishment of the MEAP as a policy artifact in 1969?
2. How do educators (k-12, higher education, state department of education) describe and understand the rise of accountability in Michigan surrounding the MEAP, from 1965-1975?
3. What impact did the MEAP have as a policy lever on the educational landscape of Michigan?

    3a. What examples exist, if any, of borrowing strength theory in the history of the MEAP?

This study is a hybrid of two qualitative approaches, case study as methodology and hypothesis-generating research (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003); these approaches are described in the following paragraphs.

Case Study

Case study has been recommended for topics that are exploratory in nature for the specific purpose of gaining an "in-depth understanding of something—a program, an event, a place, a person, an organization. Often the interest is in process…" (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 43). In the practicum research preceding this study suggested there was much more to learn about the origins of the MEAP that could help explain how and why the MEAP was developed. Case study as methodology is a flexible approach. For example, at the dissertation proposal stage the researcher saw Governor Milliken as the policy entrepreneur behind the MEAP based upon the limited number of documents reviewed. The preliminary conclusions made the role of the organizational context, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), seemed ancillary to the Governor's plans for reform. In casting a wider net for data and being open to information gained from interviews, policy initiators and actors within the MDE became a focal point in this study while Governor Milliken became a more peripheral player in the story of the MEAP. Case study as methodology gives the research the ability to "…remain open to the nuances of increasing complexity" (Stake, 1995, p. 21).

The MEAP was a specific policy event that case study as methodology creates an opportunity to investigate the MEAP as a decision. As explained by de Vaus (2001), the case can be a decision that looks at additional events (assassinations and riots), individuals (Superintendent of Instruction), organizations (schools and associations), policies, etc…

connected to a decisive act (p. 220). For this study, the MEAP was such an act. Case study also enabled this research to incorporate theory as a tool for studying the MEAP as a specific policy event that could provide a deeper understanding of accountability in its historical context. Case study allows room for theory and authors like de Vaus (2001) assert that case study must have a theoretical dimension, even though theory tends to play a less prominent role in traditional historical research. This study incorporates political science theory on agenda setting, like Kingdon (2003), to guide the study of the MEAP as a decision. Not only is the MEAP an event and a decision for case study research, the methodology provides room for looking at the consequences of the MEAP that is traditionally discussed as an issue of policy implementation in the educational policy literature.

What makes the case of the MEAP unique and the Michigan context significant? While the specific histories of tests in other states were beyond the parameters of this study, the story of the MEAP is unique even in light of the existence of the well documented existence of the long-standing and state-administered New York Reagents Test (Giordano, 2005; McGuinn, 2006; Reese, 2013; Rhodes, 2012; Spring, 2002). While this study's investigation of historical notions of accountability brought to light activity in other states, research completed to date supports the conclusion that no other state approached accountability in the way that Michigan did. Cunningham (1969) referenced the release of student assessment data to the public by the Columbus Public Schools in Ohio. Kearney, Crowson, and Wilbur (1970) mentioned the creation of educational goals that Pennsylvania was planning to use to guide their assessment efforts. Michigan was a member of the Cooperative Accountability Project (CAP) along with six other states and was listed as the only state where assessment was the result of a legislative mandate (Womer, 1973). Although an explicit listing of states where assessment originated from

state departments of education did not include Michigan, this research concludes otherwise. This study posits that it was the efforts of individuals within the MDE that led to the funding of the MEAP by the Michigan legislature. In light of evidence reviewed as part of this study, the MEAP was the only state-mandated test approved by the Michigan legislature to use ESEA monies to increase educational accountability. Because "a case study is about a set of circumstances in its completeness and the case it describes—marked out—by those circumstances" (Thomas, 2011, p. 13), the story of the MEAP lent itself well to case study in order to describe the particularities surrounding the creation and implementation of the MEAP as an accountability tool to bring about educational reform.

Two documents have played a significant role in this researcher's decision to focus on the state of Michigan. First, was a bibliography produced by the State Educational Accountability Repository (SEAR) that was housed within the Colorado State Department of Education in Denver and sponsored by the United States Office of Education (Hawthorne & Hanson, 1972). This secondary source provided a compilation of the accountability-related publications produced in all 50 states and five territories. Michigan has two full pages plus one page with four entries in the bibliography, making Michigan second to only New York in terms of quantity of reports. Compared to other states like Pennsylvania or Ohio, Michigan was submitting publications years beyond pending legislation concerning assessment like many other states in the bibliography. Michigan included reports stemming from the administration of the MEAP itself. In fact, Michigan had created its own bibliography of publications in 1971, which would have extended its entries in the SEAR bibliography substantially. This claim was corroborated through documentation found at the Archives of Michigan concerning the numerous reports produced in 1971 through the MDE. By the date of the SEAR bibliography, Michigan was

preparing for its fourth administration of the MEAP. Michigan's Superintendent of Public Instruction, John Porter, served as a member of the Operations Board for the CAP that produced the SEAR bibliography along with Associate Superintendent C. Philip Kearney (interviewed as part of this study). This was significant as no one from other states mentioned by the research literature like New York, Ohio, or Pennsylvania served as representatives in the aforementioned capacity. Only Florida had a member on the CAP Operations Board out of the states that research literature from the time period of interested had mentioned as being active in accountability efforts.

Second, research by Mazzeo (2001) on historical examples of state assessment policy provided examples of tests administered prior to the 1970's, but these tests served very different purposes than the MEAP. These tests were primarily concerned with selecting and sorting students according to what content students would go on to learn. State-administered assessments existed as long ago as the mid 1800's to determine if students were academically ready for high school, for promotion beyond eighth grade in Kansas circa 1905, and in a multitude of states between the 1920's and 1960's to guide students into different curricular tracks within high schools along with suggestions for career paths based upon students' standardized test performance (Mazzeo, 2001, pp. 375-377; 380-381). It was also important for Mazzeo (2001) to note that, "During this time period [1900-1930], the high school came to be defined increasingly in non-academic terms and schooling generally took on a social and custodial function" (pp. 379). By the 1940's, Mazzeo provided evidence for a growing disillusionment starting in the 1930's with state-administered tests as the population of student enrolled in schools swelled to unprecedented numbers. Even though state-delivered examinations did exist in numerous states, Mazzeo chronicled what seemed to be two competing

sides of the same coin: that standardized tests should not be used only to sort students but standardized tests could reveal the limited, "fixed", or innate abilities that students possessed (Mazzeo, 2001, p. 380). Consequently, testing to guide curricular decisions became the most acceptable use of testing and was determined at the district and or local level. Considering the MEAP was designed to gauge student achievement in order to delineate the quantity of educational supports schools received and to inform future state educational policy actions, this made Michigan and the MEAP unique cases for continued exploration.

Case study provides the chance for an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon (in this case the MEAP), while paying particular attention to the complex interconnectedness of actions, actors, institutions, and context (Stake, 1995). In discussing the politics of education as a burgeoning sub-field of study, Kirst and Mosher (1969) referred to the case study as an appropriate methodology that could increase the validity of educational-political study and provide an "analytic understanding of the decision process, the organizational and political framework, and the substantive policy problems to be found in a 'slice of government life'" (p. 635). Indeed, case study as methodology affords the researcher with the means to emphasize the uniqueness of a case, not for the sake of generalizing, but to better gauge what is known, what is unknown, the relationships involved, and the interplay between/among actors and their actions (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Not only do the political, social, historical, and personal contexts matter, they are integral to the investigation (Thomas, 2011). The time period of 1965-1975 embeds the MEAP within the context of federal education policy, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This legislation provided the funds that helped to build capacity (positions, bureaus, and departments) in the MDE that developed the assessment program that created the MEAP as tool for increasing educational accountability.

Hypothesis-Generating Method

The hypothesis-generating method for research features the gathering of narratives through interviews so that the research gains insights from others' lived experiences during the time period of interest. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) discussed how this method provides an avenue for addressing the research questions through audio-recorded and transcribed interviews. My process for grounded-theory coding (GTC) systematizes the process of being able to keep the evidence from interviews in the foreground. These narratives, then, become the evidence that supports the generation of a hypothesis about the events surrounding the MEAP. The research questions themselves serve as an organizing tool—along with the themes that emerge from the interviews—to ensure that the research stays focused yet grounded in the phenomenon as described by the participants. The section on analysis provides additional detail on GTC and what themes emerged from the interview narratives.

Data Selection and Collection

Data from Documents

It is appropriate for case studies to use two or more data collection methods (Hakim, 2000). Consequently, the data for this study came from documents and interview transcripts. Accountability, school reform, evaluation, and testing were keywords to assist in locating documents of interest through communication with archivists at the Archives of Michigan, as well as catalogue searches at the Library of Michigan, both located in downtown Lansing, Michigan. The 1965-1975 time-frame narrowed the search for records at each of these locations. Correspondence between the MDE, Michigan State Board of Education (MSBE), and the Office of the Governor was also valuable. Using public records of past events provided a sense of the

way each of these educational institutions operated, helped identify the major actors in the implementation of the MEAP, and illuminated new insights in the history of the MEAP. Because such documents were the result of daily efforts to "move the wheels of government and business" (Cantor & Schneider, 1967, p. 63), they capture a reality that is realistically complex versus the more tidy versions of events as represented in memoirs, commissioned reports, or period literature. Documents from the archives included letter correspondence, intra- and inter-departmental memos, legislative bills, meeting minutes, newspaper clippings, drafts of intra-and inter-departmental reports, and copies of official reports.

Data from Interview Participants

The interviews focused on participants' descriptions and understandings of accountability, the creation of the MEAP, and their reflections on how the MEAP impacted Michigan's educational landscape. Agenda-setting theory and problem definition studies have traditionally prioritized the voices of elected government officials. While this is understandable, the voices of other key players are absent. In the context of education, elected school officials, teachers, parents, other community groups, and even students themselves can provide insights into conversations pertaining to educational reform. Individuals who served as practitioners in schools, conducted educational research with schools, and worked in or with the Michigan Department of Education were the desired interviewees. The voices of these participants are typically minimized or non-existent in the political science literature, which tends to focus on measuring the attention given to an issue (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) or is understandably over-shadowed by the voices of those working directly within the political system (Manna, 2006). Intentionally interviewing career educators has provided these individuals with the

chance to reflect on accountability beyond the issues of implementation that characterizes much of educational policy research.

Individuals approached for interviews were selected based upon their active service as educators during the 1960's and 1970's who could address the MEAP or provide insights about the social milieu of the times. While the period of interest did limit the number of individuals who were available for interviews, this challenge was overcome through the use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling enabled individuals to be selected who met a certain criteria (i.e. educator during the time period), who emerged opportunistically as a result of following a lead, or who were mentioned by other interviewees in a process referred to as snowball sampling (Glesne, 2006; Oliver, 2006a, 2006b; Siegle, n.d.).

Each interviewee was emailed a copy of the study's letter of consent (see Appendix A) to review in advance and was asked to set aside up to one hour for the conversation. The semi-structured interviews were guided by a protocol (see Appendix B), but the interview conversations were flexible, to give room to participants to share their understandings of the evolution of accountability. This study included initial interviews with nine participants for at least an hour across April and August of 2013. While each participant agreed to follow-up interviews, these additional conversations were strategically chosen, because many of the initial interviews gave sufficient information to answer the research questions. However, follow-up interviews were conducted once with Stuart Rankin and twice with Ed Roeber, Dan Schultz, and Phil Kearney, to ensure the researcher's proper understanding of events surrounding the MEAP that were mentioned in prior interviews. Some member-checking was done over email correspondence with Ed Roeber (March 20, 2014) and Phil Kearney (March 17 and March 26, 2014), to answer a single question to get clarification on information shared in their final

interviews. A complete list of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix C. Of the nine participants, Grace is the only person who requested anonymity for her participation in this study, and this was a pseudonym the researcher assigned.

The interviews began with Grace, who had shared informally that she had administered the first MEAP as a teacher in 1969. This admission happened during a meeting for my practicum research that later led to this dissertation topic. She met the criteria for the time period of interest, and she agreed to participate in this study. During her interview, she mentioned another individual who she believed could provide insight regarding the history of the MEAP. This is a perfect example of snowball sampling, a study participant recruitment technique in which those who participate in the study suggest potential participants. However, one of the richest sets of interviews emerged in a more opportunistic fashion. The study transcriptionist nominated Ed Roeber and supplied his contact information. Within 24 hours, an interview date was set. Conversations with Roeber across two consecutive sessions led to five additional interviews through the process of snowball sampling.

Data Analysis

Document Data Analysis

Data from archival documents, vintage journal articles, newspaper articles, and reports produced by the MDE were analyzed according to historians' heuristics for the review of artifacts as evidence. For Cantor and Schneider (1967), "[T]he goal of history is to explain 'how' or 'why' the facts came to be" (p. 92), and it starts with placing a document in its historical context. Close reading (Nokes, 2013) is the process of reflecting, note-taking, attending to textual details, and reviewing text repeatedly in order to determine patterns in the text as

evidence that can justify one story of the past over alternative interpretations. Specifically, three of the historians' heuristics utilized in this study were sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization (see Table 1). Determining the source of a document helped in decisions about how well it fit with the goals of the study. Going through a variety of types of documents allowed the research to corroborate and disconfirm events surrounding the MEAP as mentioned by interview participants, along with providing the research with a better idea of the sequencing of events. Throughout this process, contextualizing helped to focus the research on the time period of interest and to gain a better appreciation for the tone or timeliness of documents tied to specific events that could have impacted how the MEAP was perceived or received. Together, these heuristics structured the selection of documents on visits to the archives.

Table 1. Definitions of Historian's Heuristics for Artifact Analysis

Historian Heuristic	**Definition**
Sourcing Focus on the purpose of the text	Determining the type of document (i.e. public record, letter, etc…), the source's author, why written, and the intended audience
Corroboration Focus on the reliability of the text	Determining the reliability of a source through other sources, looking out for "omissions…unique inclusions, or outright disagreement on basic facts" (Nokes, 2013, p. 73)
Contextualization Focus on the context of the text	Determining when the document was written and what events were surrounding its creation; envisioning the historical context in terms of "geography…time of year, cultural and social setting of the event…biographical awareness of participants…" (Nokes, 2013, p. 73)

Interview Data Analysis

Interviews over one hour in duration become tens of pages of text to analyze. How, then, does one handle such volumes of data? Qualitative research texts frequently feature the constant-

comparative method, thematic coding, open coding, or other terminology stemming from grounded theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), but few provide explicit instructions like Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). To organize, code, and analyze interview data systematically, this study used grounding theory coding (GTC), as described by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Key to this detailed and systematic process was reviewing each transcript, with the research questions in mind, to ascertain the relevant text. This process was similar to open-coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first reading of each transcript included the analysis of sentences and paragraphs for within-case analysis. A list of topics was created to become the source material for cross-case analysis. The topics were compiled and grouped by similarities to get a sense of the broader ideas about accountability and the history of the MEAP that emerged from the interview data. A second return to the transcripts used these broader ideas to select excerpts from the interviews to serve as examples of possible themes. Finally, a return to the research questions solidified the main themes that were grounded in the evidence provided from the interviews. Three themes emerged: (1) Assessment as Activism and Assessment for Equity, (2) Resistance to the MEAP, and (3) Implications of the MEAP. Each theme and their sub-themes are presented in detail as the findings of this study in Chapters 6-8.

Table 2 is a research methodology matrix showing the relationship among this study's research questions, data sources, and theoretical frameworks. A variety of data sources in addition to the qualitative interviews helped the researcher gain a richer sense of the events leading up to the MEAP, surrounding the MEAP, and in response to the MEAP. The Data sources and subsequent analysis are organized according to the study's research questions.

Table 2. Research Methodology Matrix.

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis Methods	Theoretical Framework	Analytic Tool
1. What insights about accountability, as a means of educational reform, can be gained from the establishment of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) as a policy artifact in 1969?	Qualitative Interviews Pre-1980's research on accountability Governor's Commission on Education Report Speeches by Governor William Milliken US Congressional Testimony by Ira Polley	Open & Thematic Coding of Interviews Document Analysis Grounded-Theory Coding (GTC) Hypothesis Generating Method (HGM)	Agenda-setting (Kingdon, 2003) Borrowing Strength (Manna, 2006)	Johari Window (Luft, 1963)
2. How do educators (k-12, higher education, state department of education) describe and understand the rise of accountability in Michigan surrounding the MEAP, from 1965-1975?	Qualitative Interviews Newspaper articles MDE Internal Memos and Reports Vintage journal articles about the MEAP or accountability in Michigan Vintage publications on accountability	Open & Thematic Coding of Interviews Document Analysis GTC HGM	Policy entrepreneurship & Agenda-Setting (Kingdon, 2003)	Johari Window (Luft, 1963)

Table 2 (cont'd).

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis Methods	Theoretical Framework	Analytic Tool
3. What impact did the MEAP have on the educational landscape of Michigan? 3a. What examples exist, if any, of borrowing strength in the history of the MEAP?	Qualitative Interviews Newspaper articles MDE Reports produced for public Reports on the MEAP from the MDE to MSBE, to/from schools & to academia Vintage journal articles	Open & Thematic Coding of Interviews Document Analysis GTC HGM	Policy entrepreneurship & Agenda-Setting (Kingdon, 2003) Borrowing Strength (Manna, 2006)	Johari Window (Luft, 1963)

Study Limitations

Because the events under investigation occurred in the past, there are two major challenges that created limitations for this study. First, the interviews required people to recall events that occurred over thirty years ago. The interview data were impacted by whether or not individuals could remember specific dates or names. Second, there was an immense volume of archival documents available because the research topic involves several governmental offices that have a great deal of records of their official and everyday correspondence. As a result, the researcher had to choose what sources to review. It is possible that pieces of evidence exist that could support or counter the claims made in this study that were not part of the documents reviewed. An additional discussion of this study's limitations appears in the final chapter.

Chapter 4

Introduction to Research Participants

Nine individuals participated in this study. Each one is a career educator who started working in the field of education sometime between the 1965-1975 time period. All of those interviewed did not request anonymity as part of their inclusion in this study, except for one female participant. The researcher chose the pseudonym of Grace. By reviewing some of the background information that surfaced during the interviews, it is hoped that the reader gains a sense of the perspectives and contexts the individuals represent.

Individuals Representing the State Level of Education

C. Philip Kearney

C. Philip "Phil" Kearney began working for the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in 1968. Before joining the MDE, he had served in the Marine Corps for four years, taught Latin at a high school in Vancouver, Washington, and earned his doctorate from the University of Chicago. His dissertation focused on the blue ribbon panel created by President Lyndon B. Johnson that shaped the ESEA legislation. He interviewed individuals like Frank Keppel, the US Commissioner of Education, who Kearney credited as being the man behind Title V of ESEA. This was the portion of the law that dedicated funding for the strengthening of state education departments. During his final year of graduate school, Kearney assisted one of his professors—J. Alan Thomas—who was conducting a study of school finance in Michigan. This is how Kearney met Superintendent Ira Polley. Although Kearney spent a year as a public

school assistant superintendent in Cleveland, Ohio, after earning his doctorate, Polley never stopped recruiting Kearney to work for the Michigan Department Education (MDE). Polley's persistence paid off, and Kearney was hired to lead the newly reorganized Division of Research, which would go on to be the home of the MEAP. Phil Kearney hired two of the remaining interviewees who worked in the MDE, Ed Roeber and Dan Schultz. He has authored papers on the creation and implementation of the MEAP and has authored two books about educational reforms in Michigan. In reflecting on the assessment program, Kearney described it as a story that took on a life of its own that has lasted for over 40 years:

> …It's a story that started out in a small way that moved into a larger way with the actual first implementation of the assessment program itself. The story got broader as other kinds of concerns came up and the notion of: What were your objectives? What were your goals? What value was there in this information for teachers or for local school districts in addition to gaining information that might be useful to legislators or to the general public or to parents? So it's a story that took on, in a sense, a life of its own and it grew as the years went by. I mean, in one sense, you can look back at those beginning years and say, my goodness, what, what really were we setting out to do and we didn't have it totally thought through…(personal communication on March 11, 2014)

Edward Roeber

Edward "Ed" Roeber began working for the MDE as a consultant. Roeber's position focused on the MEAP. By 1974 he became the MEAP coordinator, and in 1976 Roeber was the supervisor over the MEAP. Roeber had always paid attention to the difference education could make. His father was a well-known psychology professor at the University of Michigan who wrote textbooks and trained thousands of counselors. In fact, his father testified as part of the hearings for the National Defense Education Act in order to argue for the important role that guidance counselors could play in the selection of America's best and brightest. Roeber's father, too, was also at one time president of the American Personnel and Guidance Association that became the American Counselor's Association. Roeber believed many of his educational experiences were connected to his father's status and his sister's academic excellence. He was placed in courses that exceeded his test performance. Roeber was assumed to be college material, yet when he attended the University of Michigan he shared that he was surprised he did not "flunk out" (personal communication on April 13, 2013).

Roeber went on to get his Ph.D. from the same institution. Frank Womer was one of his professors, and when the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) moved from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Denver, Colorado, Roeber went as well. His experiences working with the national assessment greatly influenced his perspectives on testing. Roeber is one of two interviewees in this study who had jobs with NAEP. He viewed himself as possessing a sense of activism, and he believed that assessment had the power to make a positive difference in the lives of students. Roeber was passionate about dispelling the notion that students with better test scores were inherently better than those students whose scores were lower. He went into assessment to get rid of norm-referenced tests like the SAT. Although the SAT did not go away,

Roeber was able to help teachers overcome their misconceptions about students' abilities and work with teachers to use MEAP data to improve their instruction. When it came to testing, it was not about sorting out the winners from the losers. For Roeber, testing was one step in the process of education changing children's lives:

> …Nobody's a winner or loser. Everybody has something they can work on. Some have more than others but everybody has something to work on…this was about changing kids' lives. It wasn't about running a government program. And so I wanted to go out and I wanted to talk with teachers to try and change their mindsets, to show them how to use the data. (personal communication on April 13, 2013)

Like Kearney, Roeber has written several publications—both inside and external to the MDE—to chronicle the history of the MEAP, in addition to different lessons learned during his career about the use of assessments as a means of bringing about educational reform.

Dan Schultz

Dan Schultz began working for the MDE in 1972, after having earned an undergraduate degree in economics. He was offered a job after a lecture taught by Phil Kearney. Schultz started with the MDE through an entry level position. He began in the research unit and shared an office with Ed Roeber. Schultz spent time conducting data analysis, program evaluation, and aiding in the streamlining of data requests to school districts or the information the MDE

received from schools. There were reporting requirements from the federal government to attend to as part of the ESEA and the Civil Rights survey. The US government wanted to gather demographic information on racial minorities in schools. Shultz credited his strong writing background as a product of his liberal arts training, and it was valued and aided his promotion into the executive office in the MDE, alongside individuals like Superintendent John Porter and Phil Kearney. In this capacity, Schultz was more involved in the policy work happening among the MDE, MSBE, office of the Governor, and members of the MI Congress. His time at the MDE was vibrant:

> …this was an incredibly stimulating place to work at the time. State government in the '70s and I would say into the mid '80s was hiring on a competitive basis with universities across the country. Michigan really was seeking to get some of the best and brightest people that they could find….. it was a really rich intellectual environment…(personal communication on April 16, 2013)

Shultz found his passion with policy and has been working with graduate students for decades, helping them to understand the worlds of educational politics and policy in his work at the state level.

Individuals Representing the District Level of Education

Stuart C. Rankin

Stuart "Stu" Rankin had been in education for over 60 years before he retired from a professorship at the University of Michigan in the summer of 2013. From the late 1960's through the 1980's, Rankin was assistant superintendent for research, planning, and evaluation for Detroit Public schools (DPS). He self-identified as a reluctant educator who came from a long line of those in the profession. He joined the education "business" during the Korean War. Several of his fellow soldiers wanted to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, and they knew that Rankin had attended college. They talked him into serving as their teacher, to refresh them on their high school coursework, and they paid him with free beer several times each week. Rankin enjoyed teaching so much that he enrolled in a teacher training program at Wayne State University at the end of his military service.

Rankin's father was the deputy superintendent for DPS, and Rankin knew that his father's prestige helped him gain access to several opportunities. He started as an elementary school teacher and went on to teach at the junior high level, before becoming an elementary school assistant principal. It was in this role that Rankin was mentored by the principal to learn about curriculum. This invaluable experience informed his later service as the director for the Michigan-Ohio Regional Education Laboratory, before he became assistant superintendent within DPS. Rankin also mentored another interviewee, Sharon Johnson-Lewis.

Sharon Johnson-Lewis

Sharon Johnson-Lewis joined the central staff within DPS as a result of a desegregation order to diversify the research aspects of the department. As a Black woman and Detroit native, Johnson-Lewis was passionate about the power of research to meet the educational needs of the city. She received a National Merit Scholarship as a result of her outstanding test performance. She could not afford the bus fare to attend one of Detroit's more reputable high schools, so she attended the closest option. After winning the prestigious distinction, she chose an institution of higher education based upon what she knew at the time. In retrospect she realized she could have gone to any college in the United States, but she chose Wayne State University. It was one of the few experiences she had in going to another part of Detroit.

Johnson-Lewis was the first in her family to attend college. Her college degree was fully funded until she made the choice to get married, but by that time she had made enough connections with people at Wayne State that they helped her with the finances necessary to finish. She found a mentor in her high school math teacher, and she eventually became a math teacher for a few years. It was in graduate school, however, that Johnson-Lewis discovered her passion for measurement and research. This decision opened a new door of opportunity and connected her with a mentor, Stuart Rankin. However, it was Ed Roeber who suggested an interview with Johnson-Lewis. In spite of the racism and sexism she faced while earning her bachelor's and master's degrees, her race and gender proved to be desirable characteristics when it came to her training. Johnson-Lewis eventually was the director of the research and evaluation office for DPS. In addition to her love of research, Johnson-Lewis shared her belief in the power of public schools. She spent her years in DPS and in several additional capacities—including leadership within the Great City Schools consortium—to ensure that public schools are doing

their part as institutions "that are supposed to close the gap between those who have and those who don't have" (personal communication on August 12, 2013).

Marjorie Mastie

Majorie "Marge" Mastie is the second person in this study who worked with NAEP. Mastie recalls finding out about the opportunity to work with the assessment program via a flyer on a bulletin board on her way to take a two-hour oral exam in statistics. She was nervous, and in her pacing around her professor's office, the announcement caught her attention. Mastie's interest in the call for employment overwhelmed her nerves and completely changed the mood surrounding the seriousness traditionally associated with her statistics professor, Dr. Collette. That class turned out to be the last one in Mastie's doctoral program. Mastie saw herself as a risk taker. Getting involved with NAEP while in the middle of a graduate program—and choosing not to finish her degree—is a testament to how she viewed herself during the 1960's: "willing to just defy what's been done before and carve a new path" (personal communication on May 3, 2013). Mastie did exactly that. At a time when fewer women were pursuing graduate degrees at large, and especially not in the area of measurement, Mastie was valued so much as a member of the NAEP team that provisions were made for her to work long-distance when the NAEP moved from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Denver, Colorado. Mastie was a proud wife, devoted mother, and highly-skilled career woman. Because of Mastie's background in assessment, she was able to work with the Washtenaw School District to focus on using achievement data to inform and transform instruction.

Individuals Representing the School Level of Education

Grace

Grace was the first interviewee in this study because she had mentioned a year prior to my data collection that she was in the classroom when the first MEAP test was given. After the 1969-1970 academic year, Grace served in a variety of roles: counselor, assistant principal, principal, school district leadership positions, and responsibilities within the MDE. When it comes to education, Grace had this to share:

> …this is really serious. That's what it is. This is really serious. And there is, there's no other way than the, than we have to be accountable that the student learns the material. And we have to take a look at the fact that students learn in many different ways and we also have to look at the fact that it's not totally about bringing them into a classroom, teaching them and testing them… (personal communication on April 4, 2013).

Grace was and continues to be a champion for public schools who has dedicated the past four decades working with schools to meet the needs of all of their students.

James McConnell

James McConnell was a social studies teacher, who earned his master's and doctorate in the field of history. While participating in this study, he offered this advice on the usefulness of

history: “You cannot use the past and the present to predict the future, but you definitely can benefit from an understanding of how things work” (personal communication on June 11, 2013). McConnell remembered the start of the MEAP, but he was extremely transparent about the little impact it had on his world, the world of social studies. It was through funding from the NDEA that McConnell received money to attend a training institute. He noted the outstanding educators who attended from Detroit and surrounding cities. The experience was so life-changing that it inspired what led to his doctoral studies in curriculum change.

Perspective on the Rise of Accountability from Wayne Urban

Wayne Urban is a highly respected historian of education today who was one of the three authors of the book, *Accountability in American Education: A Critique*. Urban co-authored this work with two of his fellow graduate students while attending The Ohio State University. He shared that it was Don Martin’s idea to write a critique to challenge the views on accountability as espoused by Leon Lessinger. The three authors were at Georgia State University at the same time as Lessinger, who held a position as an endowed chair. Urban and his colleagues balked at the idea of Lessinger’s self-proclaimed status as an educational engineer. Their book pitched the idea of “radical empiricism” that reduced learning down to its most manageable pieces under the fallacious notion that any aspect of learning could be easily measured (Martin, et al., 1976). Urban shared more about the prevalence of accountability as a means to reform education during the 1970’s.

> I think the notion was they had this idea, if you, if you broke everything down into little pieces that you would somehow

> eliminate the subjective factor and then, I mean, you know, it was a catchy title. *Every kid a winner*. See? We still do that. We're gonna teach all the kids. Trouble is we don't know how to do it. And that's our problem. But these people running around saying, well, if you cut it up this way or dice it that way, that you're gonna be able to teach them. I don't think so. I mean, we know stuff now that we didn't know then about learning styles…(personal communication on April 28, 2014)

Urban did not wholeheartedly describe Lessinger as a charlatan, but he did share that Lessinger capitalized upon his service as the former Association United States Commissioner of Education to disseminate his views on the need for schools to be held more accountable. Lessinger received the attention he pursued, but Urban commented how there are many "true believers" in accountability today. The book features an explanation of how an individual's learning could not always be observed or captured through a testing instrument. Urban's commentary provided a more federal perspective that reinforced an understanding of accountability being a part of the national conversation concerning education that aids in developing a richer understanding of the case of accountability for educational reform in Michigan.

Chapter Summary

Overall, the participants in this study represented four different perspectives on accountability. Phil Kearney, Ed Roeber, and Dan Schultz worked at the Michigan Department

of Education during the time period of interest and represent the state level's perspective on accountability. Stu Rankin, Sharon Johnson-Lewis, and Marge Mastic shared their experiences based upon their roles at the district level perspective. Grace and James McConnell offered their perspective as teachers during the time period of interest. These three perspectives are specific to Michigan, yet the study also benefited from the broader perspective that was shared by Wayne Urban. Together the study was enriched by the variety of backgrounds each individual came from that informed their views on accountability.

Chapter 5

Insights about Accountability from Archival Research

This chapter presents four artifacts from archival research that provide evidence of the economic roots of accountability in the case of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). First, Superintendent Ira Polley's testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, where he strove to convince the hearing committee that states like Michigan depended upon the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) money to build capacity. This money would not only hire staff but also fund the creation of an assessment program. Polley used accountability rhetoric to present the idea of assessment as a way to ensure that the money was being appropriately spent by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Second is a copy of the actual law that solidified the importance of the MEAP to the desire for educational reform through increased accountability, as articulated by Michigan's Governor, William Milliken, and of course, Michigan's legislative branch. The law clearly states the use of the MEAP in making funding decisions to provide services to disadvantaged students. Third is one of the few pieces of evidence in support of the MEAP that was an artifact from a popular media outlet. This document illuminates what some of the underlying issues were concerning the MEAP from the school and teacher perspectives. The objections raised from these contexts seemed to be more about the potential loss of funding if the MEAP scores were going to play a significant role in school finance decisions. Finally, is an example of the type of talent MDE was able to recruit to work with the MEAP and how they skillfully attended to crafting an inter-departmental response to the criticisms of the MEAP, the fourth artifact serves as a counter to the frequent claim by MEAP resistors that the assessment was a last-minute and haphazard under-taking that was

spending exorbitant amounts of money. In total, these four artifacts support the idea that the MEAP was intended to meet reporting requirements for ESEA while providing the state with never-before-seen information on the educational attainment of students within Michigan. Economics was at the root of the rationale for the MEAP, and ultimately the economic factor is what most concerned schools because of the role that the MEAP would serve in determining district funding.

The Archives of Michigan, located in downtown Lansing, yielded several documents that provided an enriched understanding of how the MEAP became an accountability tool as part of state-level educational reform. In the paragraphs that follow, we learn that Michigan was a high-profile state on the educational scene in the late 1960's. The testimony by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. was no small matter. In that speech, Ira Polley (1969) emphasized the importance of financing education, and he alluded to Michigan's plan to conduct its own state-wide assessment. Through the financing of Title V of the ESEA, state departments like the MDE were able to increase their capacity to carry out such an assessment. Within a short amount of time, Michigan was administering its first state-wide collection of student data from its schools, and within a year had a law to back the continuation of the assessment program. While there was plenty of opposition to the MEAP, the archives reveal additional points of view on the possible root causes of the dissenting opinions. Nevertheless, Superintendent Porter, the Governor, legislators, and the well-educated staff within the MDE were in favor of accountability in order to provide more equitable funding and to set higher standards for Michigan schools.

Testimony by Ira Polley to US House of Representatives

Michigan's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ira Polley (1969), was invited to speak to the US House of Representative's Committee on Education and Labor. This is the first of three artifacts to be discussed. It was March 6, 1969, when Polley presented an abbreviated version of the 20 pages he had prepared as part of his testimony to detail how much the MDE had benefitted and hoped to benefit from continued ESEA funding. The point of the presentation was clear: budgetary appropriations mattered to the work happening in Michigan, especially Title V. This portion of the ESEA legislation was designed to support the capacity necessary for state departments like the MDE to implement ESEA Title I (increased opportunities to the disadvantaged), Title II (libraries), Title III (educational centers and services to supplement classroom instruction), and Title IV (innovative programming). Replete with statistics on what school populations the MDE served and how that service was provided, Polley's testimony built a strong case for Michigan's commitment to making progress and documenting that progress. He spoke of the impact that decreased appropriations had from year to year. He advocated "forward funding" or fund disbursement, that preceded the eleventh-hour availability of money, which created chaos for local schools as well as the MDE (Polley, 1969, p. 9). Specifically, Title V enabled state educational agencies like the MDE to "strengthen their leadership capabilities and their abilities to identify and meet educational needs," through the following activities:

> …planning and evaluation on a statewide basis, the development of information processing and information reporting systems, educational research, programs to improve the quality of teacher preparation, statewide programs to measure the achievements of

> pupils, staff training and development and the provision of technical assistance to local educational agencies. (Polley, 1969, pp. 14-15)

The money funneled to Michigan through ESEA was used to hire personnel like Phil Kearney and other individuals who helped to carry out these activities. Polley pleaded that Michigan—like other state departments—needed increased funding to realize fully the hopes for Title V. The MDE had undergone some restructuring to increase coherency and collaboration across the state department. Next, Polley wanted to see the MDE modernize its practices so that the department ran more efficiently. This could be achieved through additional staffing and "the development of procedures for the comprehensive, systematic and continuous planning, evaluation, and program coordination at all levels within the state—including a statewide assessment of educational progress" (Polley, 1969, p. 15). In his summary statement, Polley reiterated the importance of Title V. He stated that Title V was the reason that the MDE was able to "move toward a degree of capability it could not have achieved without these funds" that ultimately would enable states to report "meaningful data to Congress, to state legislatures, to the schools, and to interested citizens" (p. 18). By strengthening the MDE, Congress would position itself to receive "convincing data and information in full justification of the funds granted." Polley's final portion of his testimony addressed the fear that this increased federal support would ultimately have a negative impact on the local control of schooling. Polley suggested that increased income to the states would free the localities to concentrate on "establishing goals, defining purposes, and evaluating progress" (p. 20), rather than investing precious time to secure millages that would provide tax revenues for the financial security of local education.

Polley's testimony is evidence of how prominent Michigan was during this time on a national level, and how financing education within the state was of paramount concern. Polley presented on the second of three days of testimony, focused on extending ESEA funding provisions. The Committee on Education and Labor was chaired by Democratic Congressman Carl D. Perkins from Kentucky, the namesake for vocational and technical education legislation as well as the Perkins loan that has increased access to higher education. Representative Perkins served in said capacity from 1967-1984, and he was a champion for education to those from less privileged backgrounds. Also part of a 200-page document that records a portion of the testimonies, statements, and supplemental materials from these hearings was the participation of four additional Michiganders: the President of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO (Mrs. Mary Ellen Riordan), ESEA chairman for Kalamazoo Public Schools (John R. Cochran), Michigan State University Professor of Marketing (Eli P. Cox), and Kalamazoo Christian High School librarian (Henry J. De Graaff, II). It is noteworthy that the Committee on Education and Labor included three representatives from Michigan, joining the ranks of California and New York, which had the same number of seats on this very important committee.

Polley (1969) made it clear that the "responsibility and accountability for education" was centralized at the state level through the MDE and the Michigan State Board of Education (p. 3). Polley situated Michigan as an urban state, and he pointed out that the problems facing education in Michigan were "all urban problems" (p. 2). Michigan had gone through the process of consolidating districts, from 1, 227 in 1964 to 644, in order to make the provision of services more efficient. In carrying out its constitutional responsibilities, the MDE was governed by the MSBE as a result of Michigan's 1963 Constitutional Convention. Members of the MSBE were

citizens elected to serve. Polley, as Superintendent of Public Instruction, was appointed by the board and served as executive officer of the MDE. The MDE made recommendations to the MSBE that were then passed on to the Governor for approval before actions requiring funding were given legislative consideration. The point is that Michigan desired to do its job right and well, and to have the funding to enable the state to report the results back to the U.S. Congress.

In Polley's testimony was evidence of an explicitly stated plan for a statewide assessment as early as 1969. The rationale included collecting information across the state in order to disburse funding to localities in a more equitable way. Governor Milliken's Commission had espoused its interest in statewide testing, and to the relief of Polley and Kearney in the MDE, Milliken approved the MEAP at large. The 1969-1970 administration of the MEAP was made possible as a Title I needs assessment, and budgetary approval from the legislature was a part of the MDE's budget request that was approved by the MSBE. While position papers by Phil Kearney 's team had outlined a three-year development plan, the time-frame became a 6-month legislative mandate to create and administer an assessment.

However, some members of the MSBE were in favor of non-public schools, like parochial schools, receiving public funds. The Governor was in favor of such a move, but Superintendent Ira Polley was not. The MSBE went from being 5-3 against state funds to all schools to being evenly split on the issue. Polley was so strongly opposed public money for parochial aid that he quit. The MDE had received funding for the state-wide assessment—a major undertaking—and the leader of the department and board had resigned. In Phil Kearney's words, it "was a dark day" (personal communication, March 4, 2014). The MSBE selected John Porter, the assistant superintendent over higher education, to serve as the acting superintendent,

making Porter the first Black man to head a state department of education in the country. Polley had initiated the state assessment, but Porter would become its most ardent supporter.

Public Act 38 of 1970

In less than a year after Polley's testimony to the US House of Representatives came the first administration of the MEAP. With an alarmingly short window, the MDE had partnered with the most highly-recommended test-making company, Educational Testing Service (ETS). A few months later, Michigan House Bill No. 3886 transformed the MEAP from a *policy artifact* into a *policy lever*. Originally, the MEAP was an artifact of policy. It was the result of a line-item addition to the MDE budget request. Without further action, the MEAP would have to be voted upon as a yearly appropriation. However, Governor Milliken favored increased educational accountability. The idea that MEAP test results would be used by the Michigan legislature to make funding decisions made the MEAP more than a policy artifact. Milliken and the legislature elevated the MEAP to a policy lever status. It was hoped the MEAP would provide the means to determine which schools and districts could benefit most from state funds, in combination with funds through Title I of ESEA. The money for the MEAP, plus funding from Title V of ESEA, had increased the capacity of the MDE to launch into a stronger role as a state educational agency.

Public Act 38 of 1970 (State of Michigan, 1970) contained five sections that outlined the following: establishment of statewide assessment within the MDE, annual testing of at least two grade levels, development of remedial programs to raise basic skills, and the last three sections dealt with vocational education. For the purposes of this study, only three of the six sections are discussed.

First, this law gave the MEAP license to serve as an accountability tool that would assess the schools across the state in order to determine "educational progress and remedial assistance" in the designated subject areas. The MEAP began its focus in the areas of reading and mathematics, but it was not legislatively limited to only these areas. The MEAP would guide the delineation of goals for the assessment of basic skills, which would serve as guidelines to inform the allocation of "state funds and professional services…to equalize educational opportunities for students to achieve competence in such basic skills" (State of Michigan, 1970, p. 1). These portions of the law were the most aligned with the original purpose for the MEAP, as articulated by MDE staff.

However, other aspects of the first section of the act delineated just how much was expected of the MEAP. As an assessment program, it was to incentivize programs to improve student performance and to designate model programs in schools that demonstrated success in elevating student achievement. The MEAP results were envisioned as being the basis to determine what worked, what did not work, and what could work to improve education within the state. Perhaps the biggest change from the MDE's original plans was the last portion of the first section: the public reporting of MEAP results. The MDE originally had told districts that scores would be sent to districts for their use, and the use of the MDE only. Part of the law, however, made it a matter of time before the MDE would have to break its promise.

Second, the law put the MEAP as a chief activity of the MDE. The MDE would create, disseminate, and evaluate the MEAP in partnership with other test-makers or specialists. The MDE was given the power to ask questions beyond reading and math content, providing it could justify the usefulness of the information. Again, the MEAP was to help identify students whose performance on the assessment merited supplementary educational support, and to pass this

information on to schools who could make the necessary changes to provide for the students' academic shortcomings.

Third, the information collected by the MDE was to be specific to meet the needs of individual students better, and to suggest specific remedies that those students' districts could follow. The law created a new charge for the MDE. It was already a feat for Michigan to pursue a state-wide test, but now the expectation was to have a measure sensitive enough to detect the instructional needs at the student level. This portion of the law goes into detail about how the remedial programs suggested by the MEAP data would guide the "provision for selection, adaption, and installation of instructional systems that take account of individual student needs"; program evaluation of existing school programs; newly formed programs; and MDE-facilitated assistance to school districts. This assistance entailed setting the guidelines for programs, pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training, and "demonstration projects in basic skills," and the external audit of MDE to provide the suggested remedial programming (State of Michigan, 1970, p. 2).

It is important to raise the following question: What evidence is there from the law that leads me to discuss it in terms of 'accountability'? In returning to Womer's (1973) description of the difference between assessment and accountability, he mentioned the tendency of educators and legislators to confound the two terms.

> Assessment can be a most valuable tool—an indispensable tool—for education accountability; but it is a part, not the whole. In like fashion, one may think of traditional standardized testing as a potential tool for assessment, but not its sole resource. The natural

> progression for testing to assessment to accountability has led too many educators to assume that the reverse sequence is equally valid. *It is not correct to assume that accountability is simply assessment and that assessment is simply testing*, so that initiation of a traditional testing program could be assumed to constitute the complete educational accountability process. Unfortunately, too many legislators have made this assumption as they drew up assessment legislation. Unfortunately too many educators have encouraged them in that belief. (Womer, 1973, p. 3)

Considering legislators wrote this bill, it is plausible that the use of assessment in reference to the activities of the MDE were really about accountability if we accept the idea that accountability is the bigger picture that addresses more than the administration of a single test. For Womer and those who were a part of the Cooperative Accountability Project, accountability was a systematic process encompassing multiple aspects of the information gathering process surrounding schooling and student achievement.

Overall, this thorough and ambitious legislation gave the MDE full license to continue with the assessment program. Between the passage of Public Act 38 and the beginning of 1971, the MDE was increasingly barraged with complaints about the MEAP's construction, content, and criteria for using the scores to determine state funding to school districts. The following two sections describe two sides to the debates surrounding the MEAP.

Detroit Free Press Editorial and Superintendent Porter's Response

The dissension against the MEAP accelerated in intensity just in time for the second administration of the test. For the 1970-1971 testing cycle, newspapers, television, and radio stations aired examples of socio-economic (SES) questions to raise the issue of whether or not such questions were educationally significant (Blank, 1970; Newton, 1971). Detroit Education Association sent a Western Union telegram about their objections to students answering the SES indicators (Detroit Education Association, 1971). Jessie Blank, a reading consultant at Forsythe Jr. High, wrote a piece for the Ann Arbor Education Association's *Chalkboard* publication. In it, she lamented how the MEAP was not providing information that schools could use. Blank noted that the high cost for the testing program was indefensible, considering the output it produced. Blank (1970) also noted that other panelists shared her sentiments: reading items were not within the abilities of most Michigan students, and they were biased to favor white students from middle SES backgrounds, and the directions for the test were not clear for students, let alone the teachers who were expected to administer the test. Claims even arose that the MEAP was part of the MDE's plan to create a state-wide curriculum. Superintendent Porter debunked such an idea and alerted readers through the *Grand Rapids Press* that a proposal was going to allow for select districts to experiment with curriculum to meet the needs of struggling students (Cote, 1971). Several school districts even banded together in protest by withholding their score reports.

In the archives and even journal publications' perspectives on the MEAP, there was no shortage of negative commentary surrounding the testing program. Senators sought a moratorium on the MEAP a few weeks into the first administration of the assessment (Lansing Associated Press, 1970). Curiously enough, there did not seem to be as prevalent a record of legislators rising up to defend Porter, the MDE, or the MSBE as loudly as those who joined in the critique

of the programs, likely in order to represent their constituencies. Even though gubernatorial and legislative support had birthed the MEAP—the continued survival of the program and assessment was a less collaborative effort.

However, one editorial in the Detroit Free Press (1971)—presumably between February 7th and 15th of 1971—captured and categorized the main arguments schools raised against the continuation of the MEAP. What makes this artifact stand out, however, is that it named what seemed to be two underlying issues concerning the privacy of information on student achievement. Some dissidents bemoaned the use of SES indicators on the test as an invasion of privacy in the face of evidence from the 1969-1970 MEAP that it did matter how much money districts had to spend towards educational programs for students outside the wealthier districts. Then, some educators believed that making test results public would lead to an increase in the misinterpretation of the achievement data in addition to the SES factors and other statistics about students. Here is the idea that lay people did not have the expertise like educators to understand the MEAP results. However, educators were also complaining to MDE that they had difficulty making sense of the MEAP data.

The editorial (Detroit Free Press, 1971) pointed out the possible fears that gripped certain districts. The use of SES indicators created the possibility for "a reallocation of spending [that] would bring low-achievement districts up." The use of the MEAP scores by the legislature could cause districts that had received more money to receive less if their students did well on the MEAP. The focus, then, was not so much on student achievement as it was on the portion of the money schools received. The editorial was quite blunt on why some educators disliked the idea of widely disseminating MEAP results. Deeply entrenched in the everyday practices of schools was the idea that "laymen cannot be trusted to measure the schools." Anybody outside

of the school—including those within the MDE—did not understand students enough to assess them. The editorial provided shortfalls of the MEAP, but signaled that the problems could be resolved over time. The MEAP was, according to the author, the right step towards holding Michigan schools accountable for reaching some standards, however imperfect they had been.

Porter's response to the editorial appreciated the sensibility of the author in recognizing the need for assessment while acknowledging the need for improvements. Porter (1971) noted that a meeting was underway with district representatives who were opposed to the MEAP in order to get their suggestions for amending the test. Most poignantly, Porter emphasized a three-fold need for accountability. First, he argued "…we need to determine as exactly as possible whether or not the taxpayers are in fact getting the maximum return for every tax dollar invested in public education." This was a view of holding schools accountable that was very focused on viewing education as an opportunity for securing "a more profitable return on our educational investment." Second, Porter identified how basic skill attainment could counter illiteracy or below-grade level performance. Third, standards for schools were a means to explore why schools were not able to "guarantee" students' acquisition of basic skills. In his response, Porter laid out his belief in the power of assessment for the sake of accountability to improve Michigan schools.

MDE Response to MEAP Critique by Oakland Schools

On Thursday, March 4, 1971, the MDE met with districts who were withholding testing materials. Part of this meeting involved the presentation of a report compiled by the Superintendent of Oakland Public Schools, Dr. William Emerson. The original critique (MDE, 1971) listed eight issues with the MEAP testing cycles. This report to the MDE on how to

respond to the objections about the MEAP is information that has had significantly less exposure in the telling and re-telling of the history of the MEAP. The disagreements have been well documented but archival and online searches have unearthed another side of the story from the perspective of those within the MDE.

In leveling its criticism against the MEAP and the MDE, school districts discounted the talent within the state agency. During his tenure as Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ira Polley had recruited the best Title V ESEA funding money could hire. Statisticians, analysts, curriculum specialists, and more had come into the department with a focus on ensuring that all of Michigan's students received the best education possible. Individuals like Phil Kearney were trained in educational policy and school finance. He shared his desire to redistribute funding in the state so that schools had a more equitable share of the resources. When districts accused the SES questions as being unreliable, those within the MDE explained how the measures were reliable regardless of how short or long a list of SES questions students answered. The MDE staff had the same abilities in determining test item validity. The report detailed the response to claims that the tests were lacking in either of these areas, by citing the most current literature on the topics and the results of analysis the MDE conducted in order to address claims raised by Oakland schools.

Additional school districts also attacked the MEAP on the grounds that it did not provide useful information to the schools or student-specific data. While this was true, these expectations were set by the law for the future of the program. The initial MEAP met its initial charge, and districts were not giving the MDE time to live up to the legislation. The MEAP could not provide information that it was not designed to collect. The 1969-1970 test was a start far from perfect that enabled the state to get its first data on schools across Michigan. ETS and

MDE specifications targeted school level data. Even the contentious SES questions were not to pin-point individual students, but school level needs. Moving forward, the MDE was expected to evolve to meet all aspects of the law.

Perhaps one of the strongest points in the critique levied against the MDE by Oakland schools was the notion that not even New York Public schools, with its long-standing Regents exam, used an assessment to determine school funding. The MDE paper disputed this idea with evidence that reading competency from the 1969-1970 tests in that state were partial determinants for the dispersal of school funding. The report noted the same trend for California and Washington, D.C. (MDE, 1971, p. 15). Like the Detroit Free Press (1971) editorial, the MDE paper raised a potential root issue: schools disliked the idea of having another means to determine school funding, which created the possibility that districts could lose money. The MDE concluded that "It is clear that the paper was written from the position that test results are not an appropriate basis for distributing aid for the education of the disadvantaged" (p. 15). The MEAP would help districts with lower local revenues get assistance from the state that would not otherwise be possible.

Chapter Summary

The archival documents presented in this chapter are evidence against the notion that the MEAP was a hurried attempt at accountability. Plans for the MEAP had been in progress since at least 1968—when Ira Polley hired Phil Kearney—or at the latest, 1969, when Polley testified at the nation's capital. The MEAP did not have three years to plan out its debut, yet the assessment program was innovative. Moreover, the idea of linking assessment and accountability appealed to Michigan's Governor as well as the legislature. This political

commensuration proved difficult to overcome, even when school districts began to realize what the MEAP test could mean for the funding they had become accustomed to receiving from the state. Were school districts more upset at being tested, or how the test could be used? The evidence has pointed to both, but for several reasons. Districts feared that the tests were not reliable or valid enough to guide funding decisions. Others were worried that the SES questions in particular were unnecessarily invasive. Many school districts believed the test was a waste of money since it did not provide information specific enough to meet a school's immediate needs. However, none of these documents addressed one blatant reality: schools had always been testing their students but almost none had been using the data to inform or transform instruction. With this in mind, the MEAP was a stark contrast from school testing as usual. The MDE was collecting data from all districts to be able to gain some sense of what education in Michigan meant for its students. Educators were afraid of what the scores would reveal and what money could be at stake. From the first archival document to the last, the theme is money, which makes the economic roots of the accountability story in Michigan a driving force behind educational reform.

Chapter 6

Assessment as Activism and Assessment for Equity

President Johnson, who assumed office after the assassination of President John Kennedy in late 1963, touted education as paramount in order to obtain the American dream (Kantor, 1991). The 1960's included a confrontation of the status quo in the form of Civil Rights legislation and the increased federal presence concerning the affairs of education. The War on Poverty legislation, as heralded by Johnson, brought about the passage of ESEA, which made financial provisions to schools serving the disadvantaged in order to change educational outcomes. Education was cast as the avenue through which America would become the Great Society it could be. Again, the hope was for schools to provide educational opportunities that could equip children to overcome the effects of growing up in a socioeconomically poor home or neighborhood, thereby protecting future generations from impoverished living. The passage of ESEA in 1965 increased the federal reach into schools on an unprecedented scale (Kantor, 1991; Kirst, 1978; McLaughlin, 1974; Robelen, 2005).

Designed with the intent of ensuring that students with the least resources were provided educational opportunities to offset the constraints of poverty, the federal level dispensed money to local districts through state departments of education. This significantly increased the states' education budgets, making the ESEA literally over a billion-dollar allocation. Such expenditures became a cause of concern for Senator Robert Kennedy. He was skeptical of schools' ability to be more responsive to disadvantaged students. Kennedy was a chief proponent for an amendment in the ESEA bill to ensure that states would delineate a process whereby the effectiveness of educational programs would be evaluated (McLaughlin, 1974; Kantor, 1991).

Senator Robert Kennedy's distrust of schools increased interest in holding schools and states accountable.

An initial conception of accountability at the federal level meant the creation of a system for states to report back to the U.S. Office of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), to give an account of how districts were using ESEA funds; this was the most basic of definitions of the accountability construct (Kantor, 1991). Giving money to states and requiring them to oversee how the money was used created an accountability ethos. It is important to note that accountability at this time was not connected to student outcomes via test scores, as it often is today. The focus was on how districts were spending ESEA money (Clifford & Guthrie, 1998). Because the federal level could not undertake such an administrative task on its own due to the limited capacity of HEW, Title V of ESEA made provisions for funding to each state department of education. As a result, the role of these departments became more influential (Kantor, 1991; Kirst, 1978).

The ESEA was the reason the MDE had the capacity to develop its assessment program. Manna (2006) defined capacity in terms of the structures governing bodies have in place, or the existence of resources to create channels in order to bring about policy changes. ESEA Title V funded the hiring of qualified individuals, like Phil Kearney and Ed Roeber, to strengthen the research the state conducted on its own system of education.

This chapter presents the notions of assessment as activism and assessment for equity. Several interviewees talked about the power of assessment to change the status quo of schooling, which involved testing without the intentional use of the results. The existence of state-wide data sparked new dialogue concerning education. The MEAP as a means for educational reform was an attempt at using the test as an accountability tool to improve the quality of student's

education. While the policy initiators and implementers of the MEAP saw the test's potential to redistribute limited financial resources to schools by collecting information on the socioeconomic status (SES) of students' families, several groups within the educational community reacted with hostility. Although the intensity of the school response was unexpected, members within the MDE anticipated resistance from schools because the MEAP was about establishing a new system to provide for all the educational needs of students across the state.

Historical Context of the MEAP

The history behind the MEAP provides a glimpse into the "nuts and bolts" of policy design and implementation that is less common in the educational policy literature. Ira Polley, as Michigan's Superintendent of Public Instruction, was interested in having a way of gauging students' academic achievement. The Michigan State Board of Education (MSBE) was debating whether or not it should be in charge of accrediting schools, which was something the University of Michigan had been doing since 1871 (Addonzizio & Kearney, 2012). Accreditation provided a formal acknowledgement of the course of study available at a high school, but it provided no information on the content or quality of the instruction students received. Getting student achievement data from all Michigan schools—data that the accreditation system was not providing—was a selling point for the creation of an assessment program through the MDE's Bureau of Research.

Talking to Phil Kearney was a rare opportunity to talk with one of the policy initiators who helped draft the proposals that led to the creation of the MEAP. Kearney presented details about the process that led to the birth of the MEAP in a 1970 paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association. In it, Kearney described how the proposal papers to the

MSBE suggested three years for the Bureau to formulate an assessment program. The MSBE agreed that a program would be useful, but shortened the time to one year. Ira Polley came up with the idea to fund the program initially as an addition to the MDE's budget request. By adding a line item to the budget, it would not be so obvious to the legislature that it was a new program up for funding. While the Governor did not veto this line item to the budget, the legislature wanted the assessment program to begin and to administer a test in as little as six months. Incidentally, Kearney had interviewed members of President Johnson's blue ribbon panel who played a role in the passage of ESEA, which was national legislation that had gone from idea to law in record timing (personal communication on May 9, 2013). At the MDE, Kearney had a legislative mandate to meet and was in the middle of the fast-pace of policy on the state level. With so little time to meet the legislative deadline, Kearney began exploring options in order to produce a state-wide assessment.

How was Michigan going to administer this novel test in such a short amount of time? Kearney got on the phone to get recommendations from professors across the state and country. Several recommendations were made, but the Educational Testing Service (ETS) was consistently at the top of the list. It was important that the test contain measures to help ascertain the SES background of students. By choosing ETS, the MDE was eliminating the time to validate items through pilot testing. This saved the MDE precious time. This process and the resulting policy actions, though, had enormous implications. Kearney and others realized that "professional educators"—teachers, principals, and superintendents—would have some reservations. Individuals involved with the MEAP could not have imagined, nor did they anticipate, the range of resistance and outright attacks that would arise in response to the testing program and its assessment instrument.

Assessment as Activism: The MEAP for Educational Reform

The MEAP, like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP), was originally intended to supply information to gauge education, for the sake of learning more about the educational landscape. The same mindset behind NAEP was later present in the beginnings of the MEAP. Both assessment programs were rooted in the notion that the resulting data would create a basis for informed conversations around education. When he met Tyler as a graduate student, Roeber sensed that Tyler did not have a political agenda guiding his involvement with NAEP. While Tyler or others associated with the NAEP may have been accused of trying to have increased federal involvement over what was occurring in schools, this was not the intent.

> ER1: So in those early years, there was this naïve, very naïve belief in the power of collecting data that we can find out how well people are doing and, you know, it's almost kind of a scientific…that we can study it, we can determine where the needs are, we can fix them. It's…totally devoid of the politics of the thing… (personal communication on April 12, 2013)

The history of the MEAP is a case of policy that attempts to document the unknown by assessing what information existed, in the hopes of mapping out a course for improving the education for all of Michigan's students. Concerning his position within the MDE, Kearney was an educator serving as policy initiator, policy entrepreneur (Kingdon, 2003), and policy actor. He had a direct impact on the decisions of the MSBE as a policy-creating body which got legislative approval to fund the MEAP at large. The overall program gave rise to an assessment

that was going to provide data that the state had never had. Kearney wanted to address the inequitable funding of school districts. Roeber went into testing to challenge the underpinnings of norm-referenced tests that helped to put students intellectually, into boxes of smart or not smart, based upon narrow indicators. Both Kearney and Roeber believed that assessments were a means to changing the educational experiences of all students for the better. Dan Schulz used his background in economics to comb through data from school districts that came into the MDE. Marge Mastie used her background with NAEP to inform her time working with school districts to understand the MEAP, and Grace was a teacher at the time whose educational career since then has helped her see just how significant the MEAP was for its time.

The MEAP challenged the tradition of local control whereby schools administered their own tests using assessments made available through district-level contracts. Because schools had collected their own data on their own schedules, there was no way for the state to have comparable measures to talk about student achievement across schools in Michigan. The intent was not to compare schools to each other for the sake of ranking schools just for such a list to exist, but to use that information to address what the differing educational needs of students might be across the state.

Roeber shared his belief that politics is involved in everything that is important and "certainly everything that is public" (personal communication on April 13, 2013). Roeber shared this statement while describing accusations that the MDE was injecting politics into education. The reactions of the "professional educator" community and the media to the MEAP revealed just how political education already was in the Michigan context. Educators began articulating how some children would not be able to do well on tests and that districts with large numbers of

poor students did not deserve additional money because of some educators' foreshadowed failure of those students.

> ER2: Am I okay because I have more money than somebody else? Am I better than somebody else because I bought $100,000 car and went into debt? Or am I better because I drive a clunker and it's paid off? …There's [a] mindset that is prevalent in schools. Don't help Detroit. Don't spend money with kids who are low achievers. You're rewarding failure. You're taking money from the people who could really use it, the high performers and giving it to kids who have already shown us their failures. All of these things I kept hearing and I'm thinking, I had that sense of activism. It was, this is the Vietnam era. This is where mine wasn't to blow up a building or to, you know, to destroy a government. It was to change, you know, to me, helping kids learn was the focus. And I don't know how I fell into it but I did. Still have it [sense of activism]. (personal communication on April 13, 2013)

One way of identifying schools was to look at the proportion of students who did not perform well on the MEAP by awarding an extra $200 per student for those below certain target levels. Roeber shared how this policy action by the state was viewed as rewarding students' failure on the MEAP. Professional educators voiced their concern for the resources going to schools that did not deserve it, instead of to schools that had demonstrated their success.

Professional educators were suggesting that all children could not learn and would not learn. From their perspective, the focus should be on the students who had shown they could learn and would learn, rather than invest in helping all students achieve. In opposing the policies supported at the state level, professional educators were aligning themselves against the changing tides. As the Superintendent of Public Instruction, John Porter inherited the MEAP, but he was an ardent supporter of what assessment and accountability could do for students. In focusing on their fears of what accountability could mean for their job security and working conditions, educators did not take advantage of what could have been an opportunity for them to utilize the MEAP to the advancement of their own professionalism. Instead of looking at opportunities to change instruction, the problem from their perspective was the assessment program that was encouraged by the state government through the MDE.

These ideas behind norm-referenced tests—students who do well are smart and those who do not are not—was why Roeber pursued a career in education. Roeber's dissertation investigated the impact that teacher expectations and perceptions have on student learning. He was motivated by his dislike for tests like the SAT. Such tests perpetuated notions that intelligence was more about a student's innate ability and less about the impact of any teacher's instruction. Are the students with the higher scores on achievement tests better than those who have lower scores? Does a higher score mean a student is a better person and/or in a better school? These are the implied questions that professional educators were indirectly answering in the affirmative, to the chagrin of people like Roeber. He and others within MDE believed that schools could benefit from additional funding when academic need had been demonstrated.

In challenging the status quo regarding data on student achievement in Michigan, Kearney agreed that he—like Ed Roeber—was participating in assessment as activism.

I: And the second idea that I ran by Ed, especially reading over some of the things he was recounting, is the idea of assessment as activism or assessment for activism and was really inspired by this idea that through assessment, through data, through evaluation, you could bring about changes in how schools looked, how they operated. So what do you think about that idea?

PK2: Yeah. Well, that was very much a part of it and that was that if you were really going to make some changes and try to improve education, you first needed to know what was the status of education, particularly in terms of academic achievement for kids. And that was gonna give you some clues and some good information to start to make some decisions about what it was that needed to be done. Where did you have problems? In reading? Did you have problems with mathematics? So the whole notion there was the belief in the sense that information was absolutely important if you're going to try and do something with this thing…the other thing we wanted to do was in a sense throw the windows open. (personal communication on March 4, 2014)

What made the MEAP controversial? This word kept surfacing across interviews in conjunction with descriptions of what the MEAP was ultimately trying to accomplish: equitable funding. This was one way the MEAP was throwing the windows open, as Kearney put it. The

primary rationale for the state-wide testing initiative was to provide achievement data to guide decision-making about the allocation of state funding. The MEAP was controversial because it was going to challenge the tradition of local control in terms of data collection from students. In addition, the MEAP stirred controversy because the scores would be a determining factor in deciding which schools received what share of money dedicated to programming for disadvantaged students. Testing was now intentional, and there was a purpose for the data it produced. This practice also challenged the unspoken reality that schools in Michigan—like many schools across the nation—had always had achievement tests, but traditionally did not use that data in meaningful ways.

Assessment for Equity: The MEAP and Measuring SES

Education accounted for over half of Michigan's budget, and federal money through ESEA was pouring into the state. At its core, accountability is a financial term. It is about accounting for the use of money, but in the context of educational accountability a key question became: How would Michigan decide what money and how much money schools received to help students in need? Providing measures or information on the outputs of schooling was the original intent behind the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. Schools had been administering tests all the time. However, that test data was not made available, and district test results were not comparable enough to make any estimates about what students were learning. As a result, there was an opportunity to have a system for collecting information from schools across the state. The MEAP was (and is) a program, not just an assessment test, and this program was part of a larger, intentional conversation that became synonymous with accountability. Being more accountable for the money being spent on schooling and allocated

towards education—by the federal and state governments—was a means of reforming education in Michigan. Educational reform was part of Governor Milliken's agenda, Superintendent Ira Polley's agenda, and Superintendent John Porter's agenda.

Some schools did not have the money to build new buildings or make additions to existing structures. With education as a substantial piece of the state budget already, Governor Milliken's argument—as embodied through his Commission—became, Why give more money towards education without a sense of what was happening in schools? Why not gather data from schools to inform decisions about what changes need to occur in schools and how those changes would be funded?

The MEAP's selling point was the need for additional measures of students' SES to aid in program development, in the absence of census data or needing to rely on local schools to supply such information. First, census data at key points would be outdated. Second, how would schools garner or fund the time and the expertise in order to "obtain statistics that are clearly indicative of educational deficiency" (Thomas & Kearney, 1966, p. 106)? The authors also noted that Title I funding would benefit children who were outside the typical school-going population: those who had dropped out, those whose parents are migrant farmworkers, or those who are part of a transient population that move from district to district for a variety of reasons (p. 107). The role of the state government was made quite clear, however; both the state and local schools were challenged to work a great deal to meet the funding requirements. The charge of ESEA was challenging all schools in the country to care about a particular group of children, instead of treating every child the same. Doing so created new conditions for all levels of government to address, in the identification of the children with the most need in order to implement programs to provide for their needs.

While Manna (2006) used his theory to explain education agendas that benefitted from federal policymakers borrowing strength from political actors at the state level, in this study, the theory can explain how state entities leveraged national education rhetoric and realities facing local school districts within the state to argue for policies to promote increased accountability for education in Michigan. Concerns arose in Michigan in the late 1960's, just as they had at the federal level, regarding the ability of money to solve educations problems, considering the substantial disbursement of funds to schools through ESEA (Kantor, 1991). Findings from what became known as the Coleman Report were used to argue that money given to schools did not improve the quality of education. Officially known as the *Evaluation of Equality of Educational Opportunity*, the mainstream interpretation of this report that more money did not improve student's success in schools was part of a much larger story. While the report tried to emphasize the impact that non-school factors like socioeconomic status played in predicting school success, many held fast to the ideal that schools could serve as an equalizing force.

> PK2:…they [ETS] built an SES measure for us. And they built an attitudinal measure so that we could, at the same time, get some sense of what kids' attitudes were towards math and what they were toward English language arts. And the SES portion, of course, would give us some sense of the relative socioeconomic status of these groups of kids that they were testing. (personal communication on March 4, 2014)

The SES indicators as part of the ETS-contracted design of the MEAP was to help the test serve as a Title I needs assessment. Not only was the Michigan legislature funding the MEAP, the federal government was also funding the MEAP through the ESEA appropriations. The $250,000 through ESEA helped to fund the hire of three individuals trained in measurement. Although the MDE recruited the top test-making company of the time and hired bright minds in the field of measurement, the SES indicators sparked the most controversy, once the test hit the Detroit Public Schools (DPS). These were the questions, though, that really mattered to the case that Kearney and colleagues wanted to build. Kearney's passion for educational policy was rooted in the notion that achievement data plus school finance data would help the state see the areas where there was the most need for additional resources.

> PK2: We got ourselves in a real pickle on this SES thing. We almost lost the program.
>
> I: cuz the one question that kept, that surfaced was the dishwasher question.
>
> PK2: …Detroit called us just before we were going to administer and said, look, we've got a problem. You say the administration date is common across the state the same day, couple of days but we have our spring break at that time so can we test a week earlier or two weeks earlier? Well, like fools, we said sure, so we went into Detroit a week or two before the full test and of course, they gave that and some people got ahold of that SES test and what they thought, of course, or what somebody gave them the idea is what

> these guys are really doing is they were coming in there and they were gonna get this information to see how much we had in our house…(personal communication on March 4, 2014)

The first MEAP had 26 questions about SES and another set of statements designed to understand students' attitudes towards school. One of these infamous questions asked students if there was a dishwasher in their home. Grace recounted students asking her about this question as a teacher outside of DPS. In the context of Detroit, though, these questions raised suspicions. People had a difficult time understanding what such questions had to do with education. The SES questions were not to find out literally what students had in their homes. The questions were not designed to report back to social services or to the federal government in order to challenge a school's or district's free or reduced lunch classification, as some feared. For research purposes, these questions were to give a picture of poverty levels across the state. The desire was to collect data to help build a case for where state monies should go. In trying to ensure that all districts were included in the initial run of the MEAP, the media capitalized upon Detroit's disgust at the SES-related questions. Kearney recounted how the persuasion of one Senator Coleman Young saved the MEAP. Senator Young was a Black senator who worked along with Superintendent John Porter to calm members of the Michigan legislator who were considering the cessation of the MEAP less than a week into its first administration. In trying to adjust the testing dates to accommodate the DPS schedule, the MDE was unexpectedly shoved into the media spotlight as invading the privacy of students, schools, and parents.

PK2: Coleman Young…was in the state Senate at the time and John Porter went over and told Coleman Young what we were trying to do with that and he became convinced that these guys were out to do something that was worthwhile. Cuz they would get this information and then they would use this to put more money into the school districts…And he saved us by convincing the Senate and members of the House, who were ready to can the program. So we breathed a sigh of relief. We learned our lesson. We threw the SES test away and haven't used it again.

I: Yeah, so that first MEAP had a lot of things in it.

PK2: yeah, we made a lot of dumb decisions.

I: But I think it goes back to…like there's kind of the academic sense of what is it we want to know or what is it that we don't know?

PK2: Our intentions were good. (personal communication on March 4, 2014)

Good intentions collided with the Detroit context, where racial tensions were likely still high after the riots of 1967. There were few Blacks in measurement at the time, and it is possible that some in Detroit saw the state establishment as wanting to get extra information on the district that was rapidly becoming predominantly African American.

Phil Kearney and Dan Shultz credited the MEAP for giving another basis for deciding what districts got additional money, but with added assistance came increased calls for

accountability. Increased state involvement due to the financial soundness of the district was not a problem for all districts in Michigan. There were those districts which had their own money. This raises again the idea that accountability was tied to economics. The more money a district got from the state, the more the MDE had the license to become involved in the affairs of the schools within that district.

> CE1: We had a funding formula that gave, districts would fund their schools based on the value of their property. And so wealthy districts didn't have to listen to the state because they did not get money from the state. But poorer districts that had low property, lower property values had to, had to not only tax their people but they, they then got money from the state if they were poor enough that they could not deliver adequate education. That gave the state the right to seek greater accountability because they were paying part of the bill. So it was actually poorer districts that had, that had, you know, that received state money. So these were called in formula districts and it was, and it's that relationship that really started this accountability piece moving. I don't know if this is what you wanta know but…
>
> I: this is all great [information]
>
> CE1: Okay. So what happened is that if you were an in formula district, which meant that you got money from the state, you had to do what the state wanted to keep getting money. I'm simplifying

this but that's the big idea. If you were an out of formula district, which meant you lived entirely on your own money, generated by property taxes from your, you know, from your district, then you, some people didn't pay any attention to what the state was saying because they had their own money. So it was connected to money and that's the accountability system, one, you know, one big piece of that. (personal communication on April 4, 2013)

Local districts, however, were accustomed to holding themselves accountable. Grace shared that the common practice was for people to run for the school board if they did not like the way decisions were being made. Every district had its own accountability; as Grace put it, accountability was "highly localized [and] varied from community to community." The conflux of the changes to the Michigan Constitution that created the MSBE and the capacity-building money for state departments like MDE created an environment for educational reform powered from the state level. The MEAP was an accountability tool to provide greater equity in school funding. Grace helped to administer the first test and remembers the controversy the MEAP caused, especially because of the SES questions.

I: …when it comes to other conversations about accountability, how did people in the school feel about it, like closer to when you were in the school setting?

CE1: Okay, in the school setting, we gave the, as I told you before, we gave the MEAP test and actually, I was a teacher then

> and became a counselor soon after that. But when the very first MEAP was given, I was a brand new, I was a young teacher and I didn't get quite what everybody was so upset about because I didn't know any different. We just gave this test. But in the first MEAP, first of all, the idea that the state would give a test to our students was, was really controversial. That was controversial. And then what they included in the MEAP were all kinds of socio economic indicators. They asked kids questions like how many magazines do you have in your house? How many books do you read? How many books are in your house? Do you read, you know, does your family read? They were asking all these… Do you have a dishwasher? That was the big one. I wanta know where that question came from. But they were, you know, there was a pushback because people thought that was pretty invasive, asking kids those kinds of questions and I remember giving the test and the kids were saying to me, why do they need to know if I have a dishwasher? I mean, this was, this was a suburban community but it was kinda modest means, you know, working class families and so they were a little put off by the, those kinds of questions. (personal communication on April 4, 2013)

As Stone (2002) so aptly put it, "measuring social phenomena differs from measuring physical objects because people, unlike rocks, respond to being measured" (p. 177). The

socioeconomic questions came from ETS, but they were important for the goals of the MEAP. The MEAP was an accountability tool aiming to gain direct and specific information on students' SES backgrounds. The MSBE and MDE had conducted studies that revealed an inequitable distribution of resources among schools in the state (Kearney, 1970; Kearney, Crowson, & Wilbur, 1970). Wealthy districts were providing a better quality of education for their children, and the students in these districts out-performed students in economically poorer areas. For Michigan's top education groups, the purpose of the assessment program was to provide information for a more equitable distribution of educational resources (Kearney & Huyser, 1971). Again, this was in line with the intentions behind ESEA and the funding it provided. Governor Milliken, the legislature, and members of the MDE and MSBE believed that the test could provide valuable data for state decision-making. Manna (2006) described license as the soundness of the justifications used to argue for government action. While the state, through the MDE, had the legislative license to administer the test, students, teachers, parents, unions, and some legislators did not like the very questions that were necessary to provide the desired information.

Chapter Summary

The establishment of the MEAP makes the program an example of borrowing strength (Manna, 2006). The MEAP was the MDE's innovative solution to the problem of deciding upon criteria that would determine which schools were awarded state funding. MDE received Title V monies to build its capacity in the hiring of individuals with the passion and expertise for educational reform. In fact, several of the interviewees had a sense of activism concerning the role assessment could play in changing the status quo by redistributing resources to the schools

that needed them the most. Equity was part of the legislative intent behind ESEA. Although the MEAP caused controversy, the assessment effort was an ambitious undertaking for the MDE as the idea of making student assessment data a matter of state oversight was challenging the traditions of local control.

Chapter 7

Resistance to the MEAP

The history of the MEAP is a case of the unanticipated and unintended consequences of linking assessment—i.e. student achievement data—with accountability, during a time when the idea of educational accountability itself was slowly being articulated at the national level. The passage of ESEA had shifted the country's attention to the teaching and learning needs of students from resource-challenged backgrounds. Before the MEAP, schools in Michigan had grown accustomed to receiving money without being held accountable for the achievement of its students. While the MEAP results were intended to show which schools could benefit the most from additional programming aimed at the needs of those students who performed poorly on the assessment, schools interpreted the MEAP as a means for the state government to increase its influence at the local level.

Resistance to the MEAP as an Accountability Tool

Milliken was Michigan's Governor, and he supported the funding of the program through an appropriation added to the budget for education. The most rushed aspect of the MEAP was the first test administration. The legislature and Governor Milliken wanted the MEAP to be given as soon as possible. The Educational Testing Services (ETS) was chosen in order to benefit from its already valid and reliable question bank. ETS developed a test of attitudinal as well as socioeconomic indicators to include on the first MEAP, along with some content-related questions. While schools were conducting their everyday operations, the MEAP soon became state law within months of the original appropriation that made the MEAP possible. Michigan's

state-wide assessment provided an opportunity to have another measure to investigate learning at the district level, and over time the desire was to gauge the effectiveness of the education students were receiving in Michigan.

The assessment portion of the MEAP was a tool to help the overall program hold school districts accountable. By the time Dan Schultz joined the MDE, school districts and teacher organizations were very vocal about the implications the MEAP could have for schooling, teaching, and learning. The MEAP assessment provided information that the public could draw upon to have conversations about what was happening in schools. When Dan Schultz joined the MDE, he recalls that accountability was frequently discussed, and plans for accountability were made clear.

> DS1: Well, it was a fairly regular topic of discussion because it was being debated in the press. It was being debated in the legislature. It was being discussed at, regularly at meetings of the State Board of Education, the constitutionally charged body in the state. So we would talk about it at senior staff meetings, at the executive staff meetings. There was a focus on accountability. There were early questions related to the use of an instrument like the Michigan Educational Assessment Program as an accountability tool. Our state superintendent during that very, very active period of time was Dr. John Porter, and Dr. Porter adopted what was known at the time as a six step accountability model. (personal communication on April 16, 2013)

Participants like Kearney described Porter as a very rational and logically minded person. As a result, he "ordered" the chaotic variability that represented conversations about accountability into six steps. When talking with Kearney about this model, he shared that the six steps represented an amalgamation of information that many individuals contributed that Porter consolidated into a model. These six steps were the creation of common goals, performance objectives, student assessment, service delivery, program evaluation, and recommendations for improvements (Keller, 1977). The model was to be a blue-print for the way the MDE would approach educational reform. However, the third step of the model was enacted first. This became an easy target for opponents of the MEAP and the reforms it represented. Critics raised their concerns over the MEAP as an accountability tool that had tested students without schools being made aware of the goals and performance objectives that the MEAP valued. Although the law included these provisions, the implementation of the MEAP seemed out of sequence. In abiding by the tight legislative deadline, the MDE could only ready itself to defend its course of action.

Rankin did not hesitate to communicate with the MDE about the MEAP. He was one of many members of district leadership across the state who voiced their concerns about the limited information the MEAP was able to capture. Rankin and his colleagues informed the MDE about the quality of the data that the MEAP produced. Some of this was likely the residual effects of having a test contracted through ETS in order to meet the legislative goals and timeline for the initial administration. Rankin shared his views about measuring student achievement. If assessments are snapshots of learning, then assessments would provide a limited view of instruction. However, if assessments are given as a part of a larger plan for evaluation, then the

quality and quantity of information will present a richer picture of what is occurring with student learning.

> SR2: …there are some people who believe the two words [evaluation and assessment] are interchangeable and that, you know, they mean the same thing. I don't happen to be in that camp. My view is assessment is something at a given moment, a given time. You measure something and then maybe you've got several different assessments and as time goes on, you can do an evaluation, you know, to see whether you'd learned since then or more. So I think there's a little difference. I see assessment as a subset of evaluation. I see evaluation as a subset of research. I see research as a subset of inquiry.
>
> I: That's nice.
>
> SR2: And I see inquiry as a subset of curiosity. There's less measurement as you get up the line, you know what I mean? (personal communication on June 13, 2013)

The evaluative process is one way to conduct research—a process of finding out about the world that is rooted in the asking of questions—which is essentially inquiry. The desire to know is a matter of curiosity, and if pushed, how would you assess a learner's curiosity? Thinking about assessment in the way Rankin presented calls into question the idea that a single

assessment should serve as an accountability tool, or at the very least, there are things to be valued about learning that are difficult to assess through a standardized test.

School districts and teacher unions challenged whether the MEAP was a reliable or valid measure. Critics capitalized upon the short time frame that led to the first MEAP, the invasiveness of the SES questions, and the lack of professional educator involvement in the development of the MEAP. The MDE would go on to involve educators in the design of goals and objectives. However, the MEAP continued to be given to schools more quickly than the educator input could be incorporated. This created an air of frustration within the professional educator community. Given the chance, the teacher unions and some school districts wanted the MEAP to disappear; however, the push for accountability was too strong to abandon the desire for data on Michigan schools.

Resistance to the MEAP as an Infringement upon Local Control

> I: …with the MEAP happening, what are some of the reactions that you remember that different communities had? So you mentioned teachers…
>
> PK1: Oh, they threw rocks at us. And brickbats and tomatoes and everything else. There was a violent almost… violent is the wrong word. There was a strong negative reaction from professional educators. And particularly not so much from teachers as such, although teachers were involved with this through the NEA [National Educational Association] in particular, but from

> superintendents and assistant superintendents and curriculum directors. At that time, the notion of local control was like the 11th commandment. So that nobody oughta stick their nose into a local school district and tell them how to run their business, much less the state and much, much less the federal government, okay. So you had that sort of thing going on and we, I remember getting up on stages to talk to groups and it was tough. There were people who just, they thought you were the devil incarnate… (personal communication on May 9, 2013)

Testing in Michigan schools was not a new phenomenon in the 1970's, and Kearney pointed out that the state government was charged with ensuring the educational soundness of local school districts. Before the MEAP, however, testing was done for the sake of testing, and it was the jurisdiction of local school districts. Although Ronald Reagan was given credit for the phrase "the 11th commandment" to describe the practice of never speaking ill of a fellow member of the Republican party (Reagan, 1990, p. 150), Phil Kearney's use of the phrase addresses the power of local control as if it were an unwritten commandment, the law of the land for school districts on the same level of sanctity as the ten commandments were for the children of Israel in the Judeo-Christian belief system. The idea of local control was so pervasive to the culture of schooling in the United States, that any hint of authority getting involved in education outside of the local school district had the potential to cause concern or outright controversy. Such was the case with the passage of the National Defense Education Act and ESEA (Giordano, 2005; Kantor, 1991; Manna, 2006; McLaughlin, 1974; McGuinn, 2006; Reese, 2013; Rhodes, 2012;

Spring, 2002). In fact, calming fears about infringing on local control was part of President Nixon's special message on education reform in March of 1970 (Lessinger and Tyler, 1971). The idea of the state test and the implementation of the MEAP was what Kearney likened to the idea of "breaking the 11th commandment", the unwritten law for educational policy to never intrude upon the aspects of education (i.e. student assessment) that had been traditionally under the purvey of the local school district. In this context, the MEAP broke the 11th commandment of local control.

Testing was what "good" schools did, but most times, the tests would be taken, only to be filed away (Ed Roeber, personal communication on April 12, 2013). Occasionally, someone would look over the testing report and have a conversation about it at the school level, but rarely did discussions make it to the local school board concerning what the tests revealed about student achievement. The major difference between those tests and the MEAP was that the MEAP was designed to be used to increase the state's knowledge of schooling in Michigan. Because MDE was in charge of the MEAP, it was the logical target for the backlash against the MEAP as a tool for accountability.

> I: …and why do you think they were so opposed to it outside of the issue of local control?
>
> PK1: Well, primarily it was local control. Primarily it was just a reluctance to let anybody get a hold of any kind of comparative data. That if you were going to get the information on assessment, then you had some information which would let you rank school districts and schools, if not teachers at some point. Primarily, the

> business of school districts, the notion of putting out a report in Michigan at that time which would say here's how the school districts of the state rank, they'd've shot you and they tried to. Not literally but they were just utterly opposed to this. They were utterly opposed at that time to sharing information on academic achievement with the public in their districts. They were opposed to sharing it with anybody but a "professional educator," and that usually meant somebody in their district so don't let anybody know anything about these scores. (personal communication on May 9, 2013)

There seems to be a distinction between those working for the MDE and professional educators, especially as defined by the unions. Phil Kearney was once a teacher, and so was Ed Roeber, but their positions in the MDE removed them from being considered as members of the educator community. Those at MDE were seen as part of the problem rather than the solution.

The reactions of the "professional educator" community and the media to the MEAP revealed just how political education already was in the Michigan context. Instead of focusing on the innovative nature of the MEAP, professional educators reacted vehemently to what they perceived as an infringement upon local control. Individuals like Kearney were asked to serve on an ETS advisory group, as other states considered assessment programs. The 1970's were ushering in a "second state of accountability," as Kearney described it. The first state was back in the 1920's, in what Callahan (1964) described as a period focused on efficiency. The 1970's, then, was the start of looking at student assessment data. This move from testing within districts

in Michigan to testing by the state across districts is one of the reasons why the history of the MEAP is an instructive case for understanding the evolution of accountability.

Chapter Summary

The perception of the MDE, MSBE, and the leadership of John Porter as the Superintendent of Instruction was that the state was against the schools. The school districts no longer had absolute control over their data. As Phil Kearney reiterated across interviews, "the doors had been thrown open." Groups like the Michigan Education Association saw the MEAP as an affront to teacher autonomy, and they feared that the MEAP would be used to evaluate teachers. Those at the state level did not consider the possible fallout from the educator community, and consequently they did not approach the unions in order to explain the partnership that teachers could have had with state-level leadership during this time of increased desire for educational accountability

Chapter 8

Implications of the MEAP

This chapter discusses the various implications of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) that made it a significant event in Michigan education, and it connects the story of the MEAP with the national conversations occurring around accountability. The MEAP has an interconnected history with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but it departed from the national assessment in that the MEAP was intentionally designed to serve as an accountability tool. The MEAP linked assessment and accountability. This challenged the conventional ways schools and teachers approached data on student achievement. Over time, the MEAP was re-designed in ways that made it easier for districts to gain more useful information that could help students improve their achievement. The MEAP impacted every aspect of the educational system in Michigan on a level that had never previously existed.

Implications of the MEAP: Linking Assessment and Accountability

The NAEP was designed to serve as an educational census (Vinovskis, 2008). When Frank Keppel went into office as the US Commissioner of Education under President Kennedy, he was stunned by the fact that in the 150 years his position had existed, there had never been a system established for surveying education across the nation. Keppel recruited Ralph Tyler to lead the creation of such a program. A leading curriculum theorist and statistician, Tyler was influenced by George S. Counts and W.W. Charters while earning his PhD at the University of Chicago. Counts was a sociologist and activist. Charters considered himself a "curriculum engineer" and was a proponent of educational reform. In fact, Tyler joined Charters at The Ohio

State University to serve as an assistant for the "Bureau of Educational Research and as the director of its division on accomplishment testing," before Tyler went on to lead the group that developed what became known as the Eight Year Study (Finder, 2008). Tyler combined his curriculum design training and statistical abilities to measure the achievement of 30 schools across the nation in the 1930s. This research went on to shape the development of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Many colleges also amended their admission credentials to align with the findings of Tyler's study.

The story of the MEAP is connected to the development of what became the NAEP. Before joining the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Roeber had received his doctorate from the University of Michigan. Dr. Frank Womer was one of his professors who spent time with Tyler and was able to move the fledging NAEP from the University of Minnesota to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Roeber and Marge Mastie were two of the five individuals who got to work on the NAEP. Their experience with student achievement at the national level influenced their work in Michigan in connection to the MEAP. Frank Womer consulted with the MDE in its creation of the MEAP. Ed Roeber had the chance to meet Tyler, and their interactions left him with an awareness of Tyler's belief that acquiring information would stimulate conversations within the educational community that would lead to change. The interconnected histories of the NAEP and MEAP are noteworthy for at least two reasons. First, Tyler's view about accomplishment or student achievement was an academic pursuit that was not fueled by a desire to demarcate standards for student learning. According to Roeber, there was an "intellectual curiosity" that Roeber (personal communication on April 13, 2013) attributes to Tyler's approach to assessing student learning that was not tied to the concept of accountability. Second, both assessments came about as the result of a lack of information on

student achievement. What set the MEAP apart, however, was the explicit use of the assessment as an accountability tool. When Ed Roeber joined the MDE in 1972, it was the first time he had heard accountability being applied to measurement or assessment.

I: …what talk if any do you remember about accountability ever coming up inside or outside the context of education?

ER2: I didn't even know that the term was until, until I joined MDE.

I: And so that's about '72 or later?

ER2: Yeah, '72, because they had officially an accountability plan, a plan for accountability and it was basically that we would define standards, we would measure kids, we would determine how well they're doing, schools would take action and then we would evaluate, what's called a six-step accountability model. I'm missing one of the steps but basically define outcomes, develop measures, determine kids' performance. I guess we'd review that performance, make changes in instruction and then evaluate the success of that. So that was the first time I'd heard of accountability. I didn't, I have to say I didn't really understand it because I'd come from this NAEP background where you weren't even telling people these are things that kids oughta know and be able to do.

I: because you're collecting the information for the sake of knowing?

ER2: It's kinda like a census of what things a lot of kids, some kids and no kids can do and then go into an environment where it's now these are the minimum competencies and so that was a first time that I'd heard the word accountability applied to measurement. (personal communication on April 13, 2013)

The story of the MEAP, then, is a case of linking assessment and accountability. There would be no way to know what students in the state should learn (accountability) if there was no way to measure what students were learning (assessment). Conducting a centralized assessment would stimulate data-informed conversations about the educational needs of students in the state of Michigan. Teachers, principals, and superintendents in Michigan schools were accustomed to not having any external pressure to ensure that all students were achieving. Test scores were the business of those in the school building, maybe those on the school board, and parents on rare occasions. The creators of the NAEP had gone through great lengths to calm fears that the federal government was aiming to control education, since it was constitutionally a matter of states' rights. The NAEP was the collection of information to foster dialogue among educators. However, the intent of the MEAP was different from its conception. The MEAP was to serve as an accountability tool.

Implications of the MEAP as an Accountability Tool

The MEAP really was a cutting-edge assessment that arose in response to increasing calls for educational accountability. School and society are interconnected. What happens in society is instructive for understanding what happens within schools, and with schooling (Dewey, 1902/1990), just as schools are microcosms of what is occurring at the societal level. With the sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts in mind, the time was ripe for a critique of American education. For Grace, the push for educational accountability could be traced back to the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. Grace remembers that Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was the topic for her high school debate team, because the educational community saw the law as a controversial one. The 1960's brought civil rights to the stage as a prominent concern, and the federal government was positioned as the best level to ensure the rights of all its citizens.

> CE1:… around the early '60s when the Civil Rights movement started, the federal government saw that they had to get more involved in the quality of schools because, and we're still dealing with this, that a good education is more and more defined as a civil right. So that got the, that got the ESEA started and Title I and, you know, we're still using that…but it was controversial at the time. I mean, in some places probably still is somewhat controversial, about…if the constitution gives the states right to develop their own system, educational system, we have more and

more and more and more of federal impact. (personal communication on April 4, 2013)

Sputnik and citizen struggles for civil rights were reason enough for the federal government to lend more attention to education. The passage of the ESEA in 1965 included reporting requirements. State departments of education, like the MDE, were expected to conduct need assessments to determine student performance levels as a means to inform programs to remedy any curricular shortcomings. Senator Robert Kennedy fought to have these reporting measures as part of the ESEA legislation that created the system for funding to flow from the federal government, to the states, which decided how much money to disperse to its school districts (McLaughlin, 1974). This has been an under-emphasized event in the history of the ESEA, and the story of the MEAP has provided an opportunity to trace the rise of accountability with this significant federal policy of the 1960's. Ultimately, the MEAP emerged as an accountability tool to satisfy ESEA requirements.

ER2: But there was a needs assessment requirement in that [ESEA], and that was the official excuse for that first year of MEAP.

I: Okay

ER2: and so it literally was a Title I needs assessment. In subsequent years, it was paid for out of state funds but, and I think that was an impetus for the Cooperative Accountability Project (CAP), other states, a few other states engaged in collection of

> achievement information in the late '60s. There wasn't this political or even any kind of accountability bent to it. It was just we need to find, literally, to me, needs assessment isn't, isn't you're starting from the bully pulpit. You're just going out and saying, well, what is the status? How good or bad are things? The negative meanings of accountability really came up after things got released…(personal communication on April 13, 2013)

The ESEA was another instance of an expanded federal reach, this time to ensure quality education to overcome the negative impact of poverty. Just as ESEA expanded the federal reach into states, within the state of Michigan, the MSBE would have more control over educational matters. The MDE was strengthened by Title V of ESEA along with the additional money flowing from the federal government through states as a part of Title I monies. The financing of education was a huge concern during this time, because many cities were experiencing population growth, and the rising costs associated with providing an education. Because of the times, the funding of education was in the spotlight, because it accounted for well over half of the state budget. The tax structure could only do so much at the local level through school districts, so the state would need to become more involved in educational affairs at the state level.

The information provided by the MEAP would make the assessment more than just a policy artifact; the MEAP became a policy lever. In linking assessment and accountability, the MEAP would direct the state in making funding decisions based upon student achievement. Lower scores on the test would qualify districts for more of the state's limited funding. ESEA's

success was predicated on the notion that students from economically depressed environments likely attended schools with lower budgets that impacted the quality of education attending students received. The MEAP would direct money to fund the programming that such schools needed to provide a more equitable education. This made the MEAP a bold venture that was sure to ignite some controversy simply because it was a departure from local schools having complete control over information on student achievement.

Implications of the MEAP for Legislators

Grace suggested conversations about assessment and accountability started with the passage of the NDEA of 1958. The launching of Sputnik by Russia in 1957 sent shockwaves throughout the educational community, especially concerning the mathematics and scientific preparation of students in the United States. However, education has always been constitutionally within the jurisdiction of the states. The legislation was able to pass due to a convincing argument that the education of the citizenry was an issue of national defense. This logic justified the federal government's involvement, and it started a host of programming to select the nation's best in math and science. Curricular programs were initiated, higher education scholarships were provided, teachers were gathered to learn about the latest advancements, and counselors were trained to help guide students into careers that fit their intellectual proclivities. Another interviewee nominated an additional influence during this time that got the nation talking about education in public schools.

> JM: I do need to point out historically that it was in the late 1950s that a book came out, *Why Johnny Can't Read*

I: Really? That book hasn't come up yet.

JM: That's interesting. Because again, looking at things in a broader, longer historical perspective, I think that what you're dealing with, or what you should be dealing with is the impact of Sputnik and the impact of this book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*. And I think it was in the mid to late '50s…The '50s were the golden years, if you will, in American culture. There was a concern about the quality of education and I think at that time, both the state and the national government, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare I think was created about 1953. I think it was in the early Eisenhower [administration]

I: that sounds about right. (personal communication on June 11, 2013)

James McConnell was a social studies teacher who earned his master's and doctorate in the field of history. Like Grace, McConnell situated accountability within a larger context. In 1953, the Office of Education, formerly housed in the Department of the Interior, was part of the United States Office for Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) during President Eisenhower's tenure. A few years later, *Why Johnny Can't Read* was released in 1955, written by native Austrian turned naturalized US citizen, Rudolf Flesch. A *Time Magazine* article from March 14, 1955 promised that the book would "shock many a U.S. parent and educator," because it faulted American schools as the culprit to students' struggles with literacy. "Education and Freedom," by Hyman G. Rickover in 1960, was another book that added to the sensationalist idea that

American schools were failing to fulfill their purpose. Both books were by immigrants who rose to notoriety within their respective fields, i.e., Rickover invented the nuclear submarine and Flesch developed two widely-used literacy instruments. The popularity of these books fueled concerns about education and contributed to the definition of education as a problem that deserved political attention.

Part of the political process is convincing politicians serving on relevant committees and in other positions of influence to identify with the problem, its definition, as well as the proposed solution to the problem. Because there are competing ideas concerning which problems should be addressed through government intervention, not all ideas are heard and not all conditions become problems that go on to inform public policy. What problems are given attention increases the likelihood that political action will result in alleviating or eliminating the problem. In politics, everything on the government's radar does not manifest in policy outcomes. The launch of Sputnik was definitely a problem, and increased spending geared towards science, math, foreign language from secondary schools through graduate schools became the solution.

Although there might have been initial alarm or trepidation surrounding the increased role of the federal government in education through NDEA, the law did not require schools to make fundamental changes. In the 1960's, however, schools were asked to combat poverty, discrimination, and inequity. More people from every age group were being educated in American schools than ever before. After World War II, K-12 schools experienced rapid growth. Schools in Michigan, in particular, faced this reality, along with the migration of many Blacks from the South to take advantage of manufacturing jobs. By 1958, the US Congress had passed NDEA. It was through this bill that McConnell received money to attend a training institute. He noted the outstanding educators who attended from Detroit and surrounding cities.

The experience was so life-changing that it inspired what led to James McConnell's doctoral studies focused on curriculum change.

Marge Mastie remembers accountability being prevalent in discussions, and something that states were very interested in gaining information about. Mastie was the second person in this study who worked with NAEP in its early years. Considering that Leon Lessinger—the man credited as the father of accountability—was the U.S. Associate Commissioner of Education, it is not surprising that accountability was a term familiar to Mastie. The times, like others in this study have mentioned, were ripe for accountability. Mastie spoke to the context that made accountability relevant.

> MM: So we learned a lot about the American education system in the early days of NAEP and the states were getting hungry for this kind of information. Accountability was growing. Their population was saying, you know, we need to know, are these schools we're paying for doing any good and there was restlessness. It was all, you know, the '60s and '70s were a very restless time in this country and we've seen it all. I mean, we lived in Ann Arbor in really violent times on the campus and so there was just an outcry for accountability in any public institution. And so the states were starting, Michigan was the first or one of the very first [state] assessments…(personal communication on May 3, 2013)

The "hunger" that states had for this information corresponds with what Ed Roeber—who worked with Mastie on the NAEP—shared about assessment at the time. Roeber brought up a report produced by a consortium of 35 states which were looking into state-wide testing. This is more evidence that accountability was being more widely discussed than much of the research literature concedes. Maybe it was this hunger that Mastie referenced that motivated the Michigan legislature to demand the administration of an inaugural state-wide standardized test within six months of the original appropriation. The times and the subsequent politics created a sense of urgency to do something in regards to education.

> MM:…and in the early days, the law was passed, the law was passed that we would have a statewide assessment before it existed.
>
> I: Like 1969
>
> MM: Yeah, and there wasn't one. I mean, you can't just create one in a couple of weeks. They take a long time. And so they contracted with ETS and literally for the first couple of years used items that ETS pulled right out of their drawers at the ETS offices. They created something, called it the Michigan Assessment, reading and math, grades 4 and 7 and we gave this norm referenced test. Didn't do anybody any good. But it satisfied the legislature's demand that there would be a statewide assessment immediately and then about, I don't know the exact year, a couple

> years later, they were able to break free of the ETS stuff. (personal communication on May 3, 2013)

By the time the MEAP was approved as a budgetary appropriation, education had become a national issue and a political problem for states to address. Federal legislation created the infrastructure for states to receive income to meet the rising costs of education. This might explain why the Michigan legislators mandated that the assessment test started immediately. Six months was enough time to get a contracted test but the speediness of instituting the first state-wide assessment made the assessment an easy target for those who wanted to discredit the MEAP's soundness as a measure of student achievement.

The MEAP created data that the state had never possessed. The MDE had promised not to release data. The MDE would use the information internally and would provide individual school districts with their results. It was likely that legislators valued the assessment for the purpose of accountability so much—partly because of the times and partly due to pressure to have increased efficiency with school funding—that they were less concerned about the ramifications of districts having their data in the public eye.

Unfortunately for the MDE, Public Act 38 of 1970 clearly spelled out the public reporting of the results. Phil Kearney acknowledged that it was not wise for the MDE to make the initial promise. In his 1971 paper with Bob Huyser, Kearney presented correspondence from legislators. The very existence of the MEAP results motivated legislators to desire having a copy of the data. Submitting reports was a common task for the MDE, but never before had others outside the establishment cared about MDE activity than when the MEAP results debuted. This speedy sequence of events was the reality that professional educators in Michigan struggled to

understand, especially when the MEAP results became publicly assessable information. The very ranking that Phil Kearney and colleagues used to determine which school districts would receive additional state funding was published by one of the leading newspapers without forewarning to school districts. The school districts were outraged, yet law-makers were satisfied to get a copy of the results. The legislators, in conversation with Michigan's Attorney General, successfully argued that public funding of the MEAP made the scores public information (Ed Roeber, personal communication on April 12, 2013). The MEAP results becoming publicly accessible information without forewarning to the schools was a public relations pitfall that would haunt the MDE for years to come.

Implications of the MEAP for Schools

Even though the opposition to the MEAP was strong, the program and its assessment were not going away because of legislative action, in addition to support from Governor Milliken. The urgency of increasing educational accountability through the MEAP was bolstered through ESEA and the funding it provided to strengthen state departments. Once information on what students were learning became publicly assessable, parents wanted to know how their children were doing.

Stu Rankin served as the Assistant Superintendent for Research, Planning and Evaluation in the Detroit Public Schools (DPS), from the end of the 1960's until approximately 1980. Rankin offered his reflections of the initial reporting of the MEAP results. He recalled how the scores were presented in the paper and making a trip to the MDE to argue for republishing the results:

I: ...Now, 1969 is a big year for a lot of different reasons but the MEAP came out in '69-'70. Do you remember anything about that happening?

SR2: Yeah, when they came out with the MEAP, the first thing they were doing was they were rank ordering the school districts by… they would put a school district like Detroit in the first percentile. It looks like they were the worst, in other words, because they were the very bottom. They were making the reports not on scores, not on how well different people did but on what is your percentile ranking and what order you come in. Well, it exaggerates the devil out of the comparison …They'd give this percentile ranking by what order you were in and I thought that was idiotic and so I immediately talked to the superintendent and got off a strong recommendation and actually went in there and talked to them about this and how this is, this doesn't tell you the information that you need to know. And not only that, it exaggerates the devil out of it. They changed it…(personal communication on June 13, 2013)

Rankin was quick to look out for his school district. Throughout my interviews with him, there was a consistent emphasis on providing publicity for what students were learning and on his interest in finding ways to support the work teachers were doing. Rankin was not opposed to assessment, but wanted to make sure assessment was more than insurance for the business

community on the readiness of their potential employees. He was in favor of education so that learners could think about a variety of issues and receive preparation that would allow them to be good citizens. To Rankin, the MEAP was and has been "…a pretty good program. The problem, it has a lot of problems, all kinds of testing does…" (personal communication on May 3, 2013). Like others have mentioned in this study, testing in education was not novel in the 1960's for Michigan.

> SR1:…there were, there have been tests for a long time, from various places that could be compared and, but it was probably not until beginning of the '70s when our state did the MEAP. We'd been doing, I mean tests have been used for quite a long time but basically, before that, they were, they were ones, whatever, whatever the school district wanted, they got them from ETS or from the one out in California, which is the one I liked… I mean, the districts themselves were the drivers of finding out how well people did…(personal communication on May 3, 2013)

Rankin went on to cite the NAEP as one of the assessments that met his approval. Some of the same people who worked with the NAEP—like Frank Womer and Ed Roeber—helped to develop the MEAP. It is important to keep in mind that the state-assessment community at this time was facing its own learning curve. Interestingly, Rankin held the NAEP in high regard, although it, too, faced challenges when it started in the early 1960's (Vinovskis, 1998). Both tests were striving to measure similar things, although operating at different levels within the

American educational system. The NAEP did have a broader focus in terms of the range of subjects it measured, whereas the MEAP initially focused only on reading and math. The objections that arise today, about what gets tested becoming what is taught in schools (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006), was an observation Rankin also made about the negative impacts testing can have on instruction. Nevertheless, the MEAP stimulated district-level and district-wide discussions about the nature of the program at large, and specifically the assessment. Districts historically had sole control over assessment, and the MEAP represented a departure from what had become normalized.

Ed Roeber shared how Superintendent Porter truly believed in the power that accountability and assessment could wield to improve the education of all students.

> ER1: …I think that was John's dream, that assessment could be something that we could identify what every kid should know and be able to do , determine if they know it or do it, can do those things and then we can address, help schools address that. And so…he would be most upset if the data went back to a school and they didn't do anything with it. (personal communication on April 12, 2013)

It was John Porter's dream that educators used this information to change their way of doing school to ensure students' success. By 1977, when Ed Roeber became supervisor of the assessment program, the MEAP was becoming a tool to help teachers understand the impact of their instruction. Discussions ensued around curriculum sequence, alignment, and professional

development. These types of topics would not have garnered attention prior to the MEAP. Each school district could have easily dismissed the state's interest by asserting it had its own assessment program.

Ed Roeber also was aware of the long-standing history of the testing that had been happening in schools in Michigan. Before the MEAP program and assessment test, "good schools" administered achievement tests. Not all districts used exams like the Iowa basic skills test, but they assessed students as they saw fit, using a variety of testing instruments selected by individual school districts. However, most school districts did very little or nothing with the test data, no matter what kind of assessment was utilized. Rarely were any reports created to give to the school board to demonstrate what students were learning, yet on occasion some information would reach parents. The idea was that test data was only for the "professional educator": teachers, principals, and superintendents. Any questions about student achievement from external sources were met with a statement about what tests were given to which grades. The variation among testing instruments across districts could not lend a comprehensive picture of student learning at the state level. As a result, there was no way to answer the most basic questions about education as a whole in the state of Michigan. There was more information on the inputs of schooling (dollars spent or teacher qualifications) than outputs, like student achievement. This led to decisions by the MSBE to seek funding to create an outcome measure for all school districts: one test, administered by the state, collected by the state, and analyzed by the MDE.

> ER1: We had plenty of testing going on. But each district would select its own norm referenced test, administer it to students

> whenever it felt like it. They would get their own normative data. They might release some of that publicly and maybe parents would get the scores but by and large, it was their own data and more often than not, it was just collected and filed away….that really didn't help the state though because the state didn't collect that data and even if it did, it was five or six different tests, given at different times to different grade levels. Some cases, different subject areas…. if you wanted to look at a state system of education, you know, answer a basic question like how many kids are progressing academically? At an appropriate pace? The state couldn't answer the question…The idea that there oughta be a standard. And so the state superintendent, John Porter, naively, I think, agreed to the creation of some kind of measure. It was not gonna be popular with local districts. (personal communication on April 12, 2013)

In looking at the story of the MEAP, it is a case of radical empiricism in a slightly different way than Martin, Overholt, and Urban (1974) presented it. What made the MEAP radical at its conception and through its delivery was that the MEAP ripped up the roots of local control concerning achievement data. The tests were designed to focus on the empirical—what could be measured—at a time when researchers were coming to grips with the challenges of measuring the complicated process of learning.

> PK3: In one sense, you know, accountability is…like a school district internally saying, well, how are we doing and are we getting what it is that we intend to get with the resources that we have. And it stays pretty much into that school district or school…And other organizations, whether it's parent groups or whether it's citizens, whether it's the business community, they're interested in getting information that's going to tell them how the schools are doing and by and large, this equates with: tell me about the academic achievement of the kids in our schools, whether or not they're achieving what they oughta be achieving. If they're not, why not? (personal communication on March 11, 2014)

Those advocating for the MEAP, like Kearney, were hoping to provide information to counter the negative effects of unequally distributed resources for schooling. As Dan Schultz reflected, he pointed out that the MEAP is still having an impact. Ed Roeber and Kearney agreed. Over the past four decades, the MEAP became more than an artifact of policy. It also became a policy lever. The MEAP was not designed to drive education decision-making beyond the data it produced for its original purposes, but the data it produced changed the educational conversations that occurred in Michigan.

Although Rankin expressed how the initial MEAP data was not useful to some at the district level, the fact that districts were talking about the usefulness of achievement data derived from the same instrument is a possibility that did not exist before the MEAP. The measure was

far from perfect, which is why Rankin was one of the people who did not shy away from articulating how the MEAP needed to change.

> SR2:…This was…the state of Michigan doing the MEAP, you know. I was just telling them that we needed a far better scoring system and not only that, after we did that, we were still working with, you know, just general measures on the test, you know and they were kind of, everything's lumped together. And we also made, I also made a strong recommendation, along with a number of other people, by the way, I wasn't the only [one], that we oughta have criterion referenced tests instead of norm referenced tests because then we get some results that we know kids are doing okay in math and not so good in reading. (personal communication on June 13, 2013)

Johnson-Lewis's role with DPS during the 1970's was connected to ESEA. She was charged to work with schools to provide in-service around the MEAP. Johnson-Lewis would later help to monitor test performance by investigating schools with high incidences of test erasures or sudden score increases.

> SJL: Ed Roeber, I met because of MEAP, cuz I would go, since I was in charge… Well, when I first started in research, I was in the assessment unit and we were responsible, that's when Detroit had

> money so we had five units. One group that did only inservice, another group did test administration, another one program evaluation, another Title I and, you know, that kinda stuff. So I was doing inservice. And so that meant I had to understand the workings of MEAP and so I would go to the meetings and that's how I met Ed. And we just hit it off. You know, most districts, they didn't like folks because they were from the state and you weren't supposed to like anyone from the state. Well, I just wanted someone who treated us fair and someone who I could talk to and communicate with. And Ed was that person. (personal communication on August 12, 2013)

Johnson-Lewis loved her service to DPS. She shared that her "passion is what is the research? Understanding enough about it to try to share it and develop programs and that type of stuff" (personal communication on August 12, 2013). Her work in the schools gave her the opportunity to advocate for the very professional development opportunities that the MEAP made possible in helping schools learn how to make positive changes in student achievement.

Johnson-Lewis graduated from high school in 1965 and had experienced Detroit schools as being all Black. This corresponds to an observation Rankin shared from his time as a principal. He saw the school he served shift from being 85% white to 85% Black in less than five years. The Detroit Federation of Teachers had their first strike in 1967 and continued to inform the public of the working conditions they were facing—especially changes in district revenue—as a result of the changing demographics of the city. Leading up to 1967, Black

Detroiters experienced years of racial profiling, assaults, and harassment from police. Add to this climate unfair housing practices, destruction of Black property and businesses to make room for interstates, unequal pay in the auto industry compared to salaries of whites, and overcrowding of housing were some of the factors that contributed to the Detroit Riots of 1967 that lasted four days (The 12th Street Riot, 2014).

This context is important because Detroit was becoming a place where any hint of unfair practices in any aspect of life could arouse protesters from the city. Persons in positions of authority, particularly those in public institutions, feared accusations of racism or discrimination. The truth of the accusations was less consequential than the ramifications that could arise from the allegation. With this in mind, the start of the MEAP with the DPS more than a week before other districts underwent the test administration is one reason why the SES questions from the test created controversy strong enough to question the continuation of the MEAP at large. Phil Kearney shared how the early administration of the MEAP in Detroit ignited the first of many contestations against the assessment that were so strong that it almost sank the MEAP as a program. It is possible that because of the racial tensions in Detroit still at play after the 1967 riots/civil unrest, that some in the city were sensitive to any intervention from the state. The MDE to some might have represented the establishment or authoritative power that was not to be trusted. If so, then it is possible that the questions about SES status and attitudes towards schools were seen as unimportant to the study of education.

Johnson-Lewis worked with Rankin and eventually was in "charge of the research and evaluation office during the '70s" (Ed Roeber, personal communication on April 12, 2013). Because of the racial climate in the city of Detroit, Johnson-Lewis understood why some teachers and principals did not like the idea of people from the MDE trying to tell them what to

do. Some had the impression that white men from the state were coming to Detroit to find problems and take away resources. Johnson-Lewis did not share these sentiments:

> SJL: Ed's heart has always been how can I make the best state assessment program possible. And how can I not infringe on other folks' rights. You know, and so I didn't look at him as oh, here's this white guy coming from the state telling me what to do. (personal communication on August 12, 2013)

The MEAP was having an impact by giving leaders across districts a common point of discussion around student performance. Individuals and groups were able to disagree with the way testing was being done and what the scores looked like, which is a form of use that many in this study have noted was absent in the way districts operated prior to the MEAP. Fortunately, districts were able to get more applicable information from the MEAP when it became a criterion-referenced test. This allowed schools to begin the process of communicating what students were learning in a more direct way.

Implications of the MEAP for Teachers

For Michigan—as has been consistent in national educational reform like NCLB—the first versions of the MEAP were concentrated on math and reading. McConnell remembered the start of the MEAP, but was extremely transparent about the little impact it had on his world, the world of social studies. McConnell's input suggested that he did not have much interaction with colleagues teaching other subjects. He told of a departmentally organized school separated into

subject areas. What math teachers and English/reading teachers were facing did not affect him or his fellow social studies teachers. McConnell did remember the first time he was made aware of the MEAP. It was at one of the many meetings that Ed Roeber, Phil Kearney, and Dan Schultz described in their conversations about accountability hearings across the state.

> JM:…I really wasn't terribly concerned about the assessment issues. I enjoyed teaching history and learning, learning history and so I really focused on my content and wasn't too concerned about what the state of Michigan might be doing. My first real memory of awareness, if you will, of state testing, in particular in social studies, came in the early 1970s at a state social studies conference and I would assume that it was Ed Roeber and either Bob Trezise or Gene Kane who were making a presentation to a very large room of very angry people.
>
> I: Why were they angry?
>
> JM: Because they did not want to be tested and the state was beginning at that time to talk about expanding the MEAP program beyond the initial language arts and math into other areas. And people felt that this would, this would be a way to measure their teaching and they were very concerned about the objectives that had been drafted and how could they be tested effectively and I just remember, it was a very, must've been 80 to 100 people in the room, and of course, after 35, 40 years, I probably don't remember

very well, but I do always recall the fact that the initial implementation was all of these people attacking the Department of Ed. (personal communication on June 11, 2013)

While social studies teachers at McConnell's school had not been concerned about the MEAP, teachers assembled for this conference were. The potential of including social studies in the MEAP raised a host of questions that were shared by educators regardless of their subject matter expertise. Again, teachers wanted to know about the objectives that were guiding the assessment, if they were sufficiently vetted, and they responded in a way that confirmed the notion that teachers did not take kindly to the state's rising involvement in local school affairs.

In addition to the controversy from the SES questions, the first MEAP also contained another set of questions that rallied professional educators in protest: content questions. Grace believed that these types of questions were "really pushing the envelope." She said it was likely a bright idea by someone in the MDE that did not turn out well once it hit the schools. The MEAP represented such a departure from what teachers were accustomed to that some questioned their desire to continue as educators.

I: .. So what were some of the conversations you were having, being that you started out, you know, as a new teacher with this test [the MEAP]?

CE1: Well, I think, I took, you know, I took it seriously and I didn't, I wasn't old enough to really fight against it because I was new so it was, you know, when you walk it, but the older teachers,

> the more experienced teachers, they really, they did not like it. And actually, I think that some people actually retired rather than have to deal with it. That's how serious
>
> I: so after giving the first one, they retired?
>
> CE1: Yeah. There were people who, in those early '70s, you know, just didn't… I mean they didn't wanta deal with their name on a test and their kids and all that. They did not wanta be accountable. (personal communication on April 4, 2013)

The involvement of the state in the testing practices of schools was so threatening for some teachers that they would rather quit their job. Again, this speaks to just how strong the "egg-crate model" of education (Lortie, 1975) had become, that teachers in Michigan schools did not want anyone to be able to make judgments about what was happening in their classrooms. Rather than let others outside their classrooms look at student achievement reports as a indicator of their teaching, many teachers decided it was safer to exit the profession. This was especially true with the publishing of the MEAP results in newspapers. In the desire to hold schools more accountable for a variety of reasons, Grace's commentary is an invitation to consider why there was such disgust for accountability. What is it that schools were fighting if one of the chief goals for teachers in schools is to help students learn?

In retrospect, Grace saw that the MEAP was an accountability tool that "pointed out which schools" and what schools were doing in regards to student achievement. There were examples of students achieving in economically challenged areas because of their good teachers. Grace said this was particularly true in the subject of mathematics. MEAP results could also

show schools at which grade levels student achievement dipped or soared. Grace once worked in a very large district at the time, and when the MEAP results were published, it was clear which schools were not doing well. As the MEAP data grew in its specificity, Grace saw how school leadership was able to see patterns from students' scores. Then, as well as today, Grace has continued to believe that education should not lose sight of the impact that a good education can have on children regardless of their background.

While the rhetoric of the MDE and MSBE about the MEAP was against the use of the assessment to evaluate teachers, teachers unions saw the onset of the MEAP as a threat to their professional autonomy and job security. Tom Wilbur was one of the people who helped to draft the proposal papers that led to the creation of the MEAP at large. With the release of the MEAP results, persons in the MDE would go around the state to field questions and address concerns in accountability hearings. Ed Roeber mentioned that Wilbur was in front of a group in Oakland County who voiced their concerns about the abuse of the MEAP in evaluating teachers. In a moment of likely impatience and frustration, Wilbur said the purpose of the MEAP was to identify in order to eliminate bad teachers. His hurried reaction went on to become choice ammunition for union groups throughout the 1970's and into the 1980's. Soon after this incident, Wilbur quit his job and vanished from the public eye for over ten years. From this example arises a sense of just how tense interactions were between districts and those associated with the MDE.

I: Why did the, why were the teachers so opposed to the MEAP when it first came out?

ER2: Well, I think that it was a political thing, that, you know…

> They [teachers] were asked to give something they didn't believe in that was taking time. They were concerned that it [the MEAP] would have a negative impact on them and their careers. How ironic, given today. They were 40+ years ahead of their time. But I think there was concern about potential misuse. That [the MEAP would] be used to hurt teachers and their careers. It would cause negative evaluations and so I mean, one of the things that was happening—I didn't explain this—is in the first four years, testing was in January and the results came back in May: teacher evaluation time. (personal communication April 13, 2013)

From this conversation with Roeber, attention turned to another example of how the MEAP was an affront to the realities teachers were facing: the timing of the test itself. The MEAP results for the first few years were made available to districts within the same time frame that administrators were evaluating teachers. The conditions were right for teachers to be concerned about the use of the data in making determinations about their continued livelihood. Whether or not this coincidence could have been avoided, the union response is understandable. The resistance of educators against the test is telling. If schools had been testing all this time, then why did schools not have their own examples to prove their use of student data to improve instruction? The interviews suggest one answer is that schools were practiced at not using the data, and doing so was uncharted territory. Roeber remembered moments when he realized what teachers did not understand about tests and the various ways achievement data could be presented or interpreted:

ER2: numerous times I'd say to a group of teachers, if I were to give a reading test, one of you would be at the 99th percentile and one of you would be at the 1st percentile. What? We can all read. I said, I know you can all read but I said, I can make it so by how much time I give you, by the complexity of the text that I give you, by the nature of the questions that I ask. I can make sure that somebody scores at the very top and somebody at the very bottom. Does that mean that none of you, that those of you below average can't read? No. It just means that you can't read as fast or as deeply…as somebody else…therefore, testing really oughta be about whether we're reaching kids and helping them or not. And there is this mindset still very prevalent in our, in some portions of our society that we have a limited number of goodies to give our children and it's a zero sum game. So if I give your kids something, my kids get less. If my kids win, your kids lose. And we can't have, you know, if we try and create a situation where your kids and my kids both win, then we're just pretending and we're giving people things that they don't deserve. And that is still a mindset that's out there. (personal communication April 13, 2013)

Reactions against the MEAP revealed a need for assessment literacy among teachers (Stiggins and DuFour, 2009). Although schools had been administering tests in Michigan since the early 1900's (Stu Rankin, personal communication on June 13, 2013), neither schools nor teachers seemed to have had experience using the data in a systematic way. The members of the educational community who had historically argued that lay people would not be able to understand student achievement data had a limited understanding of how to use that very data.

In studying the history of the MEAP, McConnell gave his view on what students gain from exploring the past. In addition to "a sense of chronology," the past helps us gain "an understanding of how things work." Overall, that is what this research has been about—gaining a better understanding. Towards the end of the conversation, McConnell expressed his intrigue for this research's topic. He said he was "very interested in seeing what you learn about the relationship between state politics and accountability and K-12 classrooms." His insight provided another piece to understanding the reaction, both immediate and delayed, to the existence of the MEAP. McConnell noted how different the world today is from that of the 1950's and 1960's, yet when it comes to the emotions surrounding standardized testing, this research has shown that some things have not changed.

The release of the MEAP data provided the MDE and MSBE with new roles for overseeing education across the state. Achievement data as an accountability tool fostered necessary conversations about what the data meant. So much energy was going towards dismissing the tests or calling for the dismantling of the MEAP, but no one then—like now—was going to ask for less accountability for schools. The MEAP was not about identifying winners or losers but identifying the instructional needs for students. The program at large would evolve, especially under Roeber's leadership, to focus on helping schools use the MEAP data. Roeber

helped write a treatise in the late 1970's for the MSBE to see that the MEAP was not used to evaluate any teacher or administrator. Roeber knew then that using the scores in such a way would result in educators who taught to the test, and that teachers would not have an incentive to focus on improving their practice. Because Roeber did not see the MEAP as a tool for teacher accountability in the punitive sense, he stayed focused on assessment as activism: a chance to look out what students were learning in order to help them receive a quality education.

Implications of the MEAP for Students

Marge Mastie was the first to mention how teachers could use the MEAP to have discussions about the data directly with students and parents. This was significant because it demonstrated how the MEAP not only changed the realm of possible discussions around data, but also gave an avenue for the districts to have deeper communication with those outside of school (parents) about their learners (students). In order for the Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD) to see changes, more had to be done to assist teaching and learning beyond a mere looking over of the MEAP scores. Below are two excerpts from adjacent portions of the conversation with Mastie that speak to the new conversations that were fostered because of the revamped MEAP in the early to mid-1970's.

> MM:…Assessment in those days was still pretty teacher friendly and you know, there were state assessments and part of my job was helping districts create a balanced assessment program. We didn't use the terms formative and summative yet. We didn't use the terms interim and, you know, all these things but we would talk

about what kind of information is needed about kids [and] when and so you'd have some state assessments but in those days, it was just grade 4 and 7 and it was just reading and math. So that is certainly inadequate information. You need some information, so we'd talk about when are critical points when you make decisions about kids? Can they or can't they read enough to move on? You know, what's going on in kids' lives? Where are they ready for something else? And so then we'd build an assessment program with the right kinds of assessments at the right time. And it was really very fun and productive.

MM: I was there [at WISD] as kind of a guide to hold their hand and say, okay, here's what we can do and can't do with that information and, you know, here's how we have to do it and explain it to parents and kids. But it was, it really changed my job a lot. In the beginning, MEAP was basically user friendly…(personal communication on May 3, 2013)

Because of Mastie's background in assessment, she was able to work with WISD to focus on using achievement data to inform instruction. Her ways of incorporating MEAP information with her knowledge of evaluation is reminiscent of what Rankin discussed. Mastie used the modern phrase "balanced assessment" to describe her work over forty years ago. The idea was that the MEAP data was only one source of data that was going to make a difference. Again, the

concept was akin to the idea of having an evaluation approach that included multiple sources and kinds of data. There were other factors impacting student learning that Mastie helped teachers in the district ascertain by building a context-specific assessment program.

Chapter Summary

The MEAP created controversy, but it also led to changes. The MEAP was adapted to be one of the country's first criterion-referenced standardized assessments being administered to all schools within a state. The MEAP would go on to provide curriculum directors and parents with information on achievement data that proved more useful to their concerns. The MEAP became an accountability tool in ways that helped parents, teachers, principals, and superintendents see which students were succeeding and which ones were not.

Chapter 9

Discussion of Findings

The case of the MEAP, as investigated in this study, is a fraction of a fraction of the decades-long history of the MEAP. Nevertheless, the research questions that appear below provided a sufficient guide to meet the goal of better understanding the story of the MEAP:

1. What insights about accountability, as a means of educational reform, can be gained from the establishment of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) as a policy artifact in 1969?
2. How do educators (k-12, higher education, state department of education) describe and understand the rise of accountability in Michigan surrounding the MEAP, from 1965-1975?
3. What impact did the MEAP have as a policy lever on the educational landscape of Michigan?
    a. What examples exist, if any, of borrowing strength theory in the history of the MEAP?

Investigating the story of the MEAP has brought the educational policy, political science, and the history of accountability literatures into conversation with each other. Looking at the MEAP provides a unique, yet tentative, answer for two interconnected and enduring questions about educational accountability: why did accountability become the chosen route for the pursuit of educational reform, and why were tests an attractive option to inform accountability efforts? Scholarship on accountability in education has raised these questions, which have been

addressed in this study on the MEAP. This chapter presents an interweaving of the scholarship presented in the literature review with additional studies that help us better understand why the history of the creation and implementation of the MEAP is an illustrative case. In the first section of this chapter is a detailed answer to the first question concerning the insights about accountability that have been gained from the MEAP through a discussion of what made accountability and assessment bedfellows in the pursuit of educational reform nationally and in Michigan. Within this discussion, question 3a is also addressed. The second section specifically addresses the second research questions on how this research gained an understanding of the rise of accountability, as embodied by the MEAP, from the perspective of the study participants according to the three major themes that emerged from this study: (1) Assessment as activism and assessment for equity, (2) Resistance to the MEAP, and (3) Implications of the MEAP. Here, too, the impact of the MEAP is presented as gained from the voices of the participants who are career educators who have been actively involved in education since the late 1960's/early 1970's. Next is a presentation of the story of the MEAP situated within the larger context of ESEA. This provides an overview of the findings using Hillson's (2007) adaptation of the Johari Window (Luft, 1963) as an analytic tool to explain how the MEAP is an example of borrowing strength (Manna, 2006). Finally, the study's limitations, future directions, and conclusions are articulated.

Insights about Accountability as Educational Reform

The understandably prevalent focus of scholarship on the impact of NCLB has dampened the attention given to the rationale for accountability as a choice for educational reform prior to 1983's *Nation at Risk*. Although NCLB in 2001 is acknowledged as a reauthorization of the

ESEA of 1965 (Hess & Petrilli, 2007; McGuinn, 2006; Standerfer, 2006), accountability is typically positioned as the result of the response to *Nation at* Risk and the standards reform movement of the late 1980s (Rhodes, 2012). Both McLaughlin's (1974) and Kantor's (1991) telling of the history and progress of Title I detailed the compromises necessary to enact ESEA, along with the reporting requirements established through the legislation. Sherman Dorn (2007) has been one of the few scholars to mention specifically accountability via testing as connected to ESEA; however, the examples he gave from Florida occurred in 1971, which was after the linking of assessment and accountability in Michigan in 1969. Accountability as a construct has become so popular in the literature because of NCLB that few scholars have attended to the historical attractiveness of the term itself.

Research that has been reacting to and reacting against NCLB has done so with few state-specific examples of accountability policies prior to the 1980's. McDermott (2007) used historical methods and documentation to argue for state accountability policies as naming and blaming schools. It is one of a few studies that explicitly focused on accountability at the state level, but in looking at four states the study is limited in the amount of that detail that can be shared. Even so, the earliest example in McDermott's study comes from New Jersey in 1979, where language was used in legislation to hold schools accountable by the administration of minimum competency tests. The study encourages the consideration of the impacts when there is incongruence between policy aspirations and actuality. McDermott (2007) argued that the accountability policies through NCLB are an example of the victimization of schools and teachers, positioned as the source of the very problems they are mandated to fix (p. 86). Interestingly, the MEAP could serve as a case where schools play the victim as a means of resisting the linkage of assessment and accountability. Whereas McDermott discussed the idea

that accountability was designed to single out under-performing students and to make judgments about the schools they attended, she stated that this practice is unaccompanied by a promise to provide assistance for students or schools to improve. In the case of the MEAP, the intent was to use assessments as a means to identify which schools demonstrated need because of lower student achievement scores. As a result, studies have taken a piecemeal stance towards accountability without giving a more synergistic view.

The history of the MEAP supports the claim that the "public accounting of the results of schooling was the heart of the accountability movement" (Spring, 2002, p. 207). This statement begins the process of understanding why accountability became an attractive option. New insights emerge from attending to the history of accountability outside of the typically studied 1980's time frame. Spring is referring to the book by Leon Lessinger (1970), *Every Kid a Winner*. Interviewees like Grace, Roeber, Schultz, Mastie, and Urban noted how accountability was a part of the conversations about government and public services throughout the 1960's. Journal article searches revealed more research during the 1960's and 1970's about accountability than is discussed in the most current literature. Such a truncated view of accountability's history affects the richness of the larger accountability story that the case of the MEAP provides. The MEAP was a result of state-initiated accountability policy acted upon as early as 1968 in Superintendent Polley's (1969) testimony before the US Congress about ESEA. This connects the case of the MEAP with ESEA and suggests that prior to 1968, Michigan was viewing accountability as a way to reform education. Instead of the often general statements made in accountability literature, the story of the MEAP provides specific evidence about assessment programs existing in the 1970's.

The desire for accountability as public accounting for schooling is a reincarnation of the efficiency argument. The demand within education to prove itself in terms of a return on investment had surfaced before the 1950's under the label of efficiency. Addonizio and Kearney (2012) referenced how industrial management in factories became the pursuit of scientific management in education (p. 48) that bred an efficiency movement as explained by Callahan (1964), that the authors argue is at the heart of trying to provide a high quality education in the most economically efficient way. Giordano (2007) wrote a very extensive history on the use of testing in the United States—complete with examples of testing items and the corresponding technology to determine testing results—that highlights the role of psychologists as scientists who created an industry of testing and the widespread fascination of the public with the "objectivity" science could provide in helping to sort people based upon their differing abilities.

Ideas about intelligence fed a view of education that resembled the procedures factories had developed to organize large groups of people or to determine how to divide tasks on the assembly line (i.e., Ford in the automobile industry). Profits in industry were maximized and waste dramatically reduced, thanks to "Taylorism" (Giordano, 2007, p. 99). These advancements in science and engineering were depicted as instructive cases of value in helping schools become more efficient places. The public's confidence in the power of testing grew after World War I, through the use of intelligence testing to separate the officers from those in the lower ranks. The messiness of decision-making, in this context, was eliminated through efficiency which made a substantial difference in military operations and outcomes. The business community relentlessly and successfully lobbied for the adoption of these successful practices in the context of education.

Accountability as an efficiency argument made testing a natural accompaniment. Reese (2013) makes very clear that the penchant for judging schools has been a practice since "festivals of learning" tried to showcase school successes to parents/tax-payers to stimulate continued financial support for schools as far back as the 1830s (p. 8). In addition, determining how well schools were doing through such festivals came with the potential for biases that could sway towards the extreme in either direction. Over time, it became popular belief that the objectivity of standardized testing could eliminate such bias. This is not to say there were never objections made from any facet of the educational community, but both Giordano (2007) and Reese (2013) help us understand the systematic lobby of the business and behavioral psychology communities that testing was the most efficient and objective avenue to help schools improve. As a result, testing became such a common practice within schools that the idea of the MEAP initially might have been seen as just another test by some that happened to be administered by the state. The MEAP, however, went on to symbolize the increased presence of the state in decisions that affected local control. If testing in the United States and the controversies surrounding them are a forgotten history, then the MEAP provides a comparatively recent example of what controversies assessment can stir when it becomes paired with the pursuit for increased accountability in education.

Accountability became an attractive option for reform during the 1970's because of the characterization of education as a business in need of greater efficacy, and the adoption of a business model towards educational operations (Kirst, 2000; Stetcher & Hanser, 1992). The costs associated with education were increasing at a time when resources were fewer than the number of groups vying for funding at every level of government.

> "[After World War II] demand for all kinds of domestic public service resulted in intense competition for fiscal support among governmental agencies and interest groups. Caught in the crossfire, legislators were no longer willing to accept the justifications educators continued to offer for their increasingly open-ended cost estimates of their needs. Legislators began to ask for more meaningful evaluations of the results of formal schooling…" (Kirst & Mosher, 1969, pp. 627-628)

Because testing was such a common practice in schools, it is not surprising that assessment became an avenue for determining how well schools were performing. Increased public funding warranted a "public accounting," especially with the passage of ESEA. Why would the federal government not want to track how the $1.3 billion dollar appropriation was spent? While Stu Rankin shared his beliefs that evaluation and assessment were not interchangeable terms, both terms convey the desire to be able to make a judgment about school performance. Future research could investigate this distinction, because it could very well be that the history of testing becomes a wider history of accountability.

The history of testing and the pursuit of efficiency are often repeated topics in the literature as they relate to what accountability has become after NCLB, but this study on the MEAP incorporates theories from the political science literature concerning problem-definition and agenda setting. Outside of this literature, problems concerning education are bemoaned more than they are analyzed. This tendency creates a large volume of literature that raises opposition to policy without recognizing that the policy was designed to address a specific problem or set of

problems. In other words, studies on the history of accountability or studies about the issues of implementation become limited in their ability to explain why accountability became attractive in the first place. Literature on accountability acknowledges the ascendency of standardized testing, but it seldom critiques its existence beyond the exploration of alternative ways of measuring student performance or commentary on what policy makers are not considering. The political science literature concerns itself with understanding the how and why behind policy creation, adoption, and implementation.

As mentioned in this study's review of the literature, not all issues become politically defined problems that merit governmental involvement. Figure 2 is the author's rendition of what political science theory on agenda-setting offers to an understanding of what policy discussions become policy decisions, using the research by Kingdon (2003) and agenda-setting focused studies by other scholars (Dery, 2000; Manna, 2006; Riker, 1986; Schattschneider, 1975; Scheingate, 2003). Like any theory, Kingdon's view towards the policy-making process has limitations. However, his theory provides the necessary structure to describe what occurred in the case of the MEAP. The context for the assessment program was highly bureaucratic, which helps it to pair well with Kingdon's rational, linear model.

Using Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the story of the MEAP. The rising costs of education within Michigan was defined as a problem that local districts—especially Detroit and the larger cities—saw as necessitating increased state intervention. Thus, education was defined as a political problem that became part of the policy/political agenda (PA). Individuals like Superintendent Polley and Phil Kearney were policy initiators, entrepreneurs, and implementers considering their positions within the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). They helped articulate the policy ideas of what Guldbrandsson and Fossum (2009) refer

to as a hearing. Policy entrepreneurs, they argue, have the "claim to a hearing: the actor has an ability to speak for others, hold a decision-making position or possesses expertise" (p. 438). Polley, Kearney, and other authors of position papers presented their case to the Michigan State Board of Education (MSBE). The MSBE provided the hearing. Polley, Kearney and others through MDE used their hearing before the MSBE as an entry-way into the policy stream since the MSBE was a policy recommending body. The policies presented to and approved by the MDE to the MSBE then went on to the Office of the Governor for approval. Here, the problem moved from the policy/political agenda to the government agenda (GA). In the case of the MEAP, the recommendations for the program moved from the Office of the Governor to the Michigan legislature. The MEAP was a coincident suggestion from the MDE as Governor Milliken's Commission on Educational Reform was entertaining the notion of an assessment program. Although Polley and Kearney were concerned their proposals would be co-opted by the Governor, the MEAP was to be under the charge of the MDE. The MDE had successfully pitched their idea for the assessment program to the MSBE, Governor Milliken, and went on to await the funding of the MEAP by the legislature as a line-item addition to the MDE's annual budget request.

The movement of the MEAP from the government agenda to the legislature put the MEAP into the politics stream. Once again, Polley had a hearing; this time it was before the Michigan Congress. The MEAP was in the hands of the politicians. The approval of the budget made the MEAP a political reality that successfully made it onto the decision agenda (DA). The appropriation the MEAP received made it a policy artifact. This label is intentional because the MEAP was initially funded as an exploratory endeavor and a needs assessment to fulfill ESEA reporting requirements. The MEAP was not purely a result of legislators coming up with a

policy solution that resulted in the traditional policy instrument as an intervention. Instead, the problem definition, policy suggestion, and political maneuvering that gave rise to the MEAP originated outside of the traditional legislative space. While Polley, Kearney and others within MDE might have wanted to see it become a permanent program, its funding made the continuation of the MEAP vulnerable to the political process. It is quite possible that had the national discussion of accountability not been so pervasive, and had Michigan not been such a prominent player in Washington's deliberations about ESEA, the MEAP could have been a once-and-done budgetary appropriation. It can be argued that accountability became a powerful idea within education (Majone, 1988), to the extent that the Michigan legislature codified the program through Public Act 38 of 1970m within months of the first test administration of the MEAP.

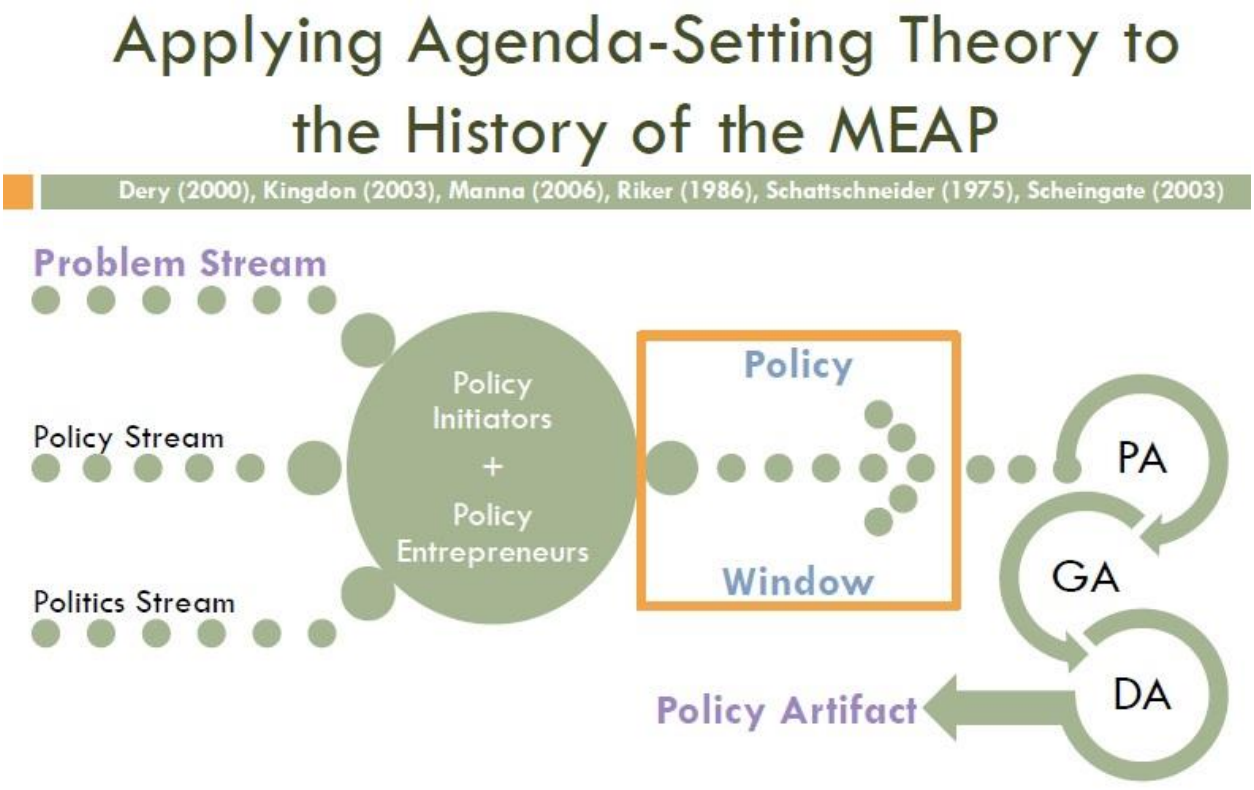

Figure 2. Applying Agenda-Setting Theory to the History of the MEAP.

In approving the MEAP's transition from an item on the policy/political agenda to the decision agenda (Riker, 1986; Schattschneider, 1975), Michigan was attempting to address the Congressional intent behind ESEA. The economic conditions in the state warranted evidence and a more efficient way for determining how state funding was going to compliment ESEA monies to meet the needs of diverse learners as well as the struggling coffers of local districts. Returning to Figure 2, ESEA opened the policy window for the MEAP.

Because of the national conversation regarding accountability beyond and within the context of education, the MEAP is also an example of borrowing strength on several levels (Manna, 2006). First, the MEAP was envisioned to help provide missing information on education in Michigan, much like the original intent of the NAEP was to serve as a "census" of education in the United States. Two of the study participants, Roeber and Mastie, worked on the NAEP when it was headquartered in Ann Arbor, and for a short time after it moved to Denver. Both of them relayed how their experiences with NAEP shaped their involvement with the MEAP—Roeber as the eventual supervisor over the MEAP, and Mastie as a consultant helping school districts learn from MEAP results. Second, in serving as a Title I and Title III needs assessment, the rationale for the MEAP was justifying its merit in terms of the ESEA as national policy. The strength of the argument for the MEAP was connected to and ultimately funded by ESEA. Third, the rationale for the MEAP borrowed from the Johnson administration's concerns about the negative impact of poverty on students' access to quality education and education that was equitably funded. Fourth, the funding of the MEAP was also made possible by the under-recognized contributions of ESEA's Title V that was specifically designed to increase the capacity of state departments of education like the MDE.

When today's era of accountability becomes type-casted as the result of the 1980's push for standards, rich cases like the MEAP get lost. The attention is disproportionately placed on the evils of testing as if adding to the volume of scholarship opposing policies like NCLB is going to convince policy-makers that standardized assessments should not be used to increase accountability within education. The goal for some educational researchers may not be this simplistic, but research that fails to address the history of accountability, educational policy, and political science theory in concert is less likely to impact the very spaces being critiqued. In order to impact the creation of policy, attention must be given to the history behind the policy and to understanding the policy-making process itself, in order to influence what problems get defined, how these definitions materialize, what policies are crafted to provide solutions, and what political skill will be necessary to transform an educational problem into a viable policy outcome to influence action at the school level.

Understandings of the Rise of Accountability and the Impact of the MEAP

The pages in this section provide a consolidated overview of the major findings from the qualitative interviews. References from research in the literature review as well as more current research on accountability are interspersed throughout the presentation of the study's three major themes. Each of these themes is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Assessment as Activism and Assessment for Equity

The MEAP is a case of the belief that assessment data can change the status quo. Ed Roeber, Grace, Sharon Johnson Lewis, and Phil Kearney expressed how they chose their career paths because they believed in the power of education to make a positive difference in students'

lives. Ed Roeber explicitly stated that his disgust for norm-referenced tests that helped to perpetuate ideas of innate intelligence and contributed to some educators' deficit orientations towards students. For Roeber, assessment was an opportunity for activism, and his sense of activism motivated Roeber to take the time necessary to counter arguments raised in objection to the MEAP as an accountability tool. It had become routine practice for districts to test students, but these results were typically not shared because it was for professional educators to review. A deficit orientation existed towards parents and other laypersons in the public, too. Professional educators consistently articulated that anyone who was not a trained educator would not be able to understand or would misrepresent the data, should they have had access to it. However, such a practice was a status quo that the MEAP confronted head-on, well before the MEAP scores were publicly released. The fact that the MDE was going to have all districts take the same test, within the same period of time, and for two grade levels was a strategic move to be able to gain valuable information for the sake of educational reform.

Phil Kearney was specifically interested in the funding disparities between wealthy districts and their less-resourced counterparts. Like Ralph Tyler, who helped in the establishment of the NAEP, Ed Roeber and Phil Kearney believed that assessment data could yield valuable information to inform decision-making at the state and local level. The MDE's intention for the MEAP was closely aligned with the Congressional intent behind ESEA. In an attempt to strengthen the quality of education that students from disadvantaged backgrounds received, ESEA was designed to provide more equitable funding by targeting specific populations. What the MEAP and the ESEA were trying to accomplish was a deviation from the normalized practice of funding educational programs for the general school population. ESEA

required state agencies like the MDE to conduct a needs assessment to help determine which schools contained the most students from economically challenged areas.

The MEAP and the ESEA were challenging schools and the American people to face the harsh reality of poverty and to empower schools to address this social ill. With ESEA came the idea that students could overcome poverty through schools that provided specialized instruction to meet the needs of students from impoverished backgrounds. The MEAP through state and ESEA dollars would target specific student populations. This time, however, the federal government was identifying a different population of students than NDEA had done in 1957. The idea of using tests to select which students were potentially gifted in math or science fit in with the way society had accepted the use of tests—to sort people in a deterministic fashion. Consequently, in the story of the MEAP, providing funds to students who did poorly on tests was construed as rewarding failure. The goal for the MEAP was to identify which students met ESEA criteria—not to simply label them as economically disadvantaged as a form of victim blaming (McDermott, 2007)—but to ensure that the students received the additional educational supports they needed. Such a means for providing services did not fit with the tradition of testing as had been commonly practiced in schools. This is an instance long before NCLB of policy trying to address the achievement of a previously ignored student subgroup.

> The improvement of school performance for children from poor families simply had not been on local school system' agendas; in fact, it was barely on anyone's agenda…There were not even publicly available data to judge which schools were weak, for there was no national data on student performance. (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009, p. 6)

The MEAP, again like the NAEP, was an opportunity to gain assessment data from schools in a manner that had been previously undone. The very questions aimed to determine students' SES background became the biggest source of contention. Although some of the arguments against the inclusion of these SES items on the MEAP had to do with the invasion of privacy, this research suggests that it was the state asking such questions and seeing the results before local schools that was the underlying issue. The MEAP was an example of activism through the use of assessment that also became a tool to make education more equitable in Michigan.

Resistance to the MEAP

In linking assessment and accountability, the MEAP was a direct challenge to the tradition of local control. The collection of data by the MDE for the purpose of gaining information from the schools was mildly tolerable, but making that information available to the public was vehemently protested. Schools would be held publicly accountable in an unprecedented way. As Cohen and Moffitt (2009) noted, public data is seen as a violation of local control. As previously stated, assessments were not new to local districts (Addonizio & Kearney, 2012; Giordano, 2007; Reese, 2013). The MEAP was designed to be a departure from the habit of filing data away to intentionally use the data instead. Schools, however, were more concerned about the potential misuse of the data. When the MEAP results were publicly released without forewarning and listed in leading newspapers, the MDE was at the center of a public relations disaster. The MDE had naively promised districts that the results would not become public when it was originally funded. It did not take the opportunity to inform districts of the reporting clauses in Public Act 38 of 1970. When schools received their data after the first

administration of the MEAP, legislators reminded the MDE of the law. The MDE held off as long as it could before it had to comply. The release of the scores became fodder for different comparisons about schools among districts. In effect, the fears held by professional educators concerning student achievement data in the hands of laypersons soon manifested.

While districts protested the MEAP because of the SES questions and concerns about the validity of the testing instrument, and the lack of clarity surrounding the entire assessment program, the MEAP did not go away. This is an instance when Manna's (2006) borrowing strength policy has a limitation in terms of the MDE's license. License involves the soundness of the justifications used to argue for government action. While the MEAP had legislative license, the resistance to the MEAP suggests that license must be a mutually agreed upon justification in order for policy entrepreneurship to be successful. Local control and questions districts raised about the reliability of the MEAP were challenges to the MDE's jurisdiction when it came to collecting data on student achievement. In spite of the controversy, however, the MEAP has persisted and evolved over the course of three decades.

Implications of the MEAP

The story of the MEAP is an example of a policy artifact becoming a policy lever. Researchers like Hand (2011) presented the idea of a policy lever as a political hope more than an actuality in terms of implementation, but the MEAP did change the conversations that were possible concerning education. This research suggests that the MEAP is a policy artifact rather than a traditional policy instrument. The MEAP started as an appropriation, but the powerful idea of holding schools accountable made the MEAP law before the onset of the most intense of school and union opposition to the assessment program. The existence of the MEAP impacted

every aspect of the educational landscape in Michigan. Legislators wanted data to assist funding decisions. Schools eventually wanted more useful information to guide curricular decisions. Teachers and parents wanted individual score reports for students. The data created through the MEAP providing talking points across educational contexts in ways that had never previously existed. This is what makes the MEAP a policy lever: a policy decision that intends to change individual or group behavior (Hand, 2011, p. 1). The MEAP was an accountability tool used to spurn educational reform because it was designed to change funding inequities and compare access to quality education for students across Michigan.

Using the Analytic Tool to Understand the Story of the MEAP

Using the analytic tool of Hillson's (2007) adaptation of the Johari Window (Luft, 1963) provides a visual to help communicate the way the MEAP borrowed strength from the ESEA. Following each figure is a textual explanation.

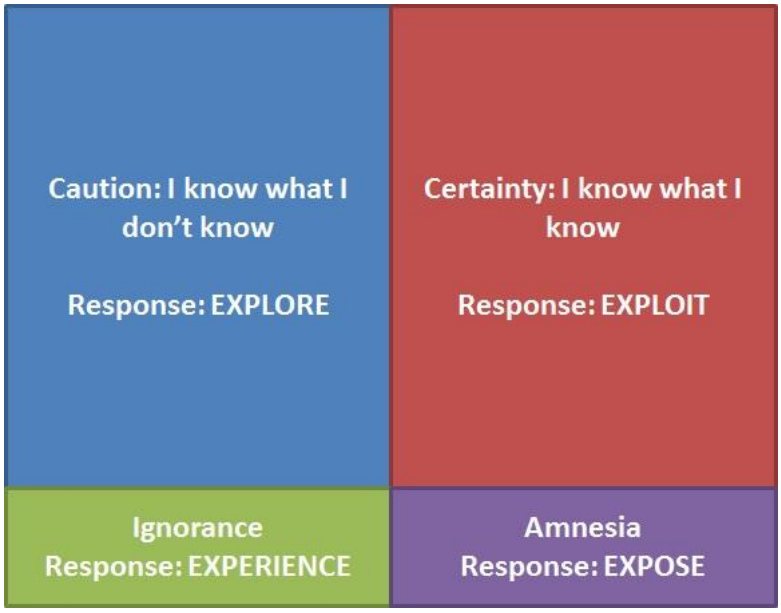

Figure 3. Using Hillson (2007) to represent federal perspective on accountability

The story of the MEAP is interconnected with the history of ESEA. At the federal level, the legislative intent of ESEA resulted from a level of **certainty** about the need for special services that would allow educators to tailor instruction to address diverse students, especially those living in socioeconomically depressed environments that was rooted in the extensive research that informed ESEA legislation. State departments of education in the 1960's were often organizational fledglings in the face of local control as a dominant force in the education of the nation's children. Looking at the original intent of ESEA and how holding schools accountable for Title I money arose, ESEA was thrusting schools (and states) into the unknown. Both levels of government proceeded with **caution** as they explored the new realities resulting from ESEA as policy. Never before had states been given such a sizeable amount of funding, and been required to report back to the Office of Health, Education, and Welfare. It is likely many schools were **ignorant** and insufficiently prepared to address, let alone ameliorate, their instructional shortcomings to meet the learning needs of diverse students. As a whole, the educational community steered away from self-disclosure. There were no open admissions of educators that they did not know what they had learned from their years of testing students. This was an examples of **amnesia**. Instead, the educational community took a defensive posture against calls for accountability, external evaluation, and assessment. Public disgust and political mistrust arose at a time when educators could have been at the helm of deciding how student learning would be measured. From the federal perspective, ESEA was a chance to **exploit** what research had revealed about the educational impacts of poverty, and the policy was an invitation to innovation that would **explore** new practices to meet the needs of diverse learners. The federal model, then, has larger proportions in the certainty and caution categories of the Hillson (2007) adaptation of the Johari Window model.

The MEAP is an example of how the MDE borrowed strength from the federal policy. Like the federal level, the MEAP in the context of Michigan was an opportunity to gain information. The MDE knew what it did not know, and it wanted to use the MEAP as a means of gaining comparably-administered tests to get data on education within the state. However, the implementation of the MEAP impacted and changed the nature of the conversations about education within the state. The next representation focuses on the story of the MEAP using some of the language from the major findings of this study.

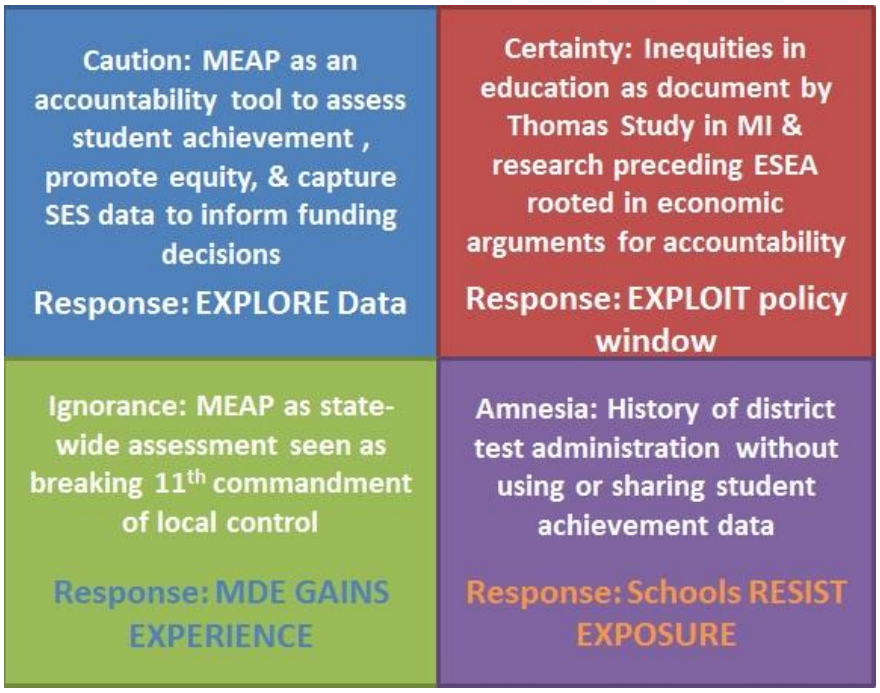

Figure 4. Using Hillson (2007) to represent major findings from study of the MEAP

The ESEA created the license and capacity (Manna, 2006) for Michigan to propose a state assessment (Polley, 1969) considering the state had conducted its own study of the financing of education through the Thomas study (Crowson, 1975; Kearney, 1970). These contextual pieces of information helped to open a policy window for the legislative action that

funding the initial administration of the MEAP. Policy initiators and entrepreneurs like Polley and Kearney were able to **exploit the policy window** because of the license and capacity provided through ESEA in addition to the prevalence of accountability being discussed across the nation (Briner, 1969; Cunningham, 1969; Lessinger, 1970; Lessinger & Tyler, 1971; Levin, 1974). The goal of the MEAP was to **explore the data** that it would produce. For the first time, the MDE would have data on student achievement that used the same instrument and was administered during a specific span of time.

For individuals like Roeber and Kearney, assessment was a type of activism because the MEAP was designed to change the economic disparities between affluent and resource-challenged school districts. The MEAP was an accountability tool for increasing equity. Both the original intent of the ESEA and the MEAP revolved around economic arguments for accountability that would inform stakeholders across contexts data to inform decisions about the quality of education in Michigan and which schools had the most financial needs to provide a better quality education to its students. While members within the MDE knew the state administering the test would create some debate, few anticipated the pervasiveness and tenacity of the resistance to the long-standing tradition of student achievement being an issue of local control.

If local control were the 11th commandment, the MEAP was breaking the moral code set for education in Michigan and the country at large. In administering the MEAP and bracing itself against the attacks from the professional educator community, the **MDE gains experience** the hard way. Kearney admitted the naivety with which the proposals were articulated and the way the MEAP was implemented. Artifacts like the MDE response to the objections raised by the Oakland Public Schools are a great example of how the MDE's initial ignorance provided the

chance to gain experience. Finally, the existence of the MEAP as a program for accountability as a means of educational reform and the existence of the assessment itself were grounds for schools to resist its existence. The MEAP was breaking the 11th commandment of local control and members from the school community foreshadowed the long-term effects of educators not being in control of student achievement data. **Schools resist exposure** is the last window pane in the model because the MEAP created the conditions for the public to question the expertise of professional educators. As previously described throughout this study, schools in Michigan (as well as the nation) had a history of giving tests. However, the era of accountability shifted the focus from giving tests to using assessments to ascertain what students were learning as way to evaluate the quality of education students were receiving.

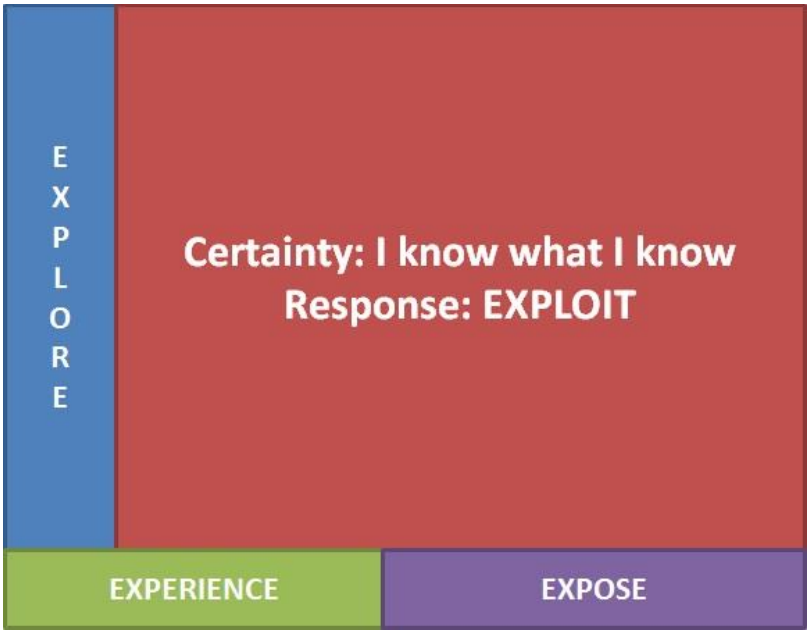

Figure 5. Using Hillson (2007) to represent school perspective on MEAP as an accountability tool.

Schools saw the MEAP as an affront to local control. Schools did not **expose** themselves regarding their long history with testing students without using that achievement data to inform or improve instruction. Most schools were not open to gaining the **experience** necessary to reduce their misconceptions or ignorance about assessment. Schools and unions took a reactionary response, possibly to avoid facing what they did not know about their own students. In opposing the MEAP, schools were also not open to **explore** the aspects of teaching and learning that would need to be adjusted in order to meet the needs of specific portions of the student population. Instead, schools chose to **exploit** the MEAP as an opportunity to stand on what they were "certain" of: that data on student achievement was a matter of local control. The sudden implementation of the MEAP and its administration before goals or objectives had been determined made the MEAP an easy target for criticism.

Limitations

One of the goals of this study was to present the voices of individuals typically not included in the political science literature. While this research was able to provide a detailed account of the events surrounding the creation and implementation of the MEAP, there are perspectives that remain unrepresented. First, individuals who could address the teacher union perspective were not included, along with reading or math teachers who administered the MEAP during the time period of interest. Second, time constraints precluded the inclusion of more information in terms of archival materials or an in-depth analysis of historical texts that were mentioned as a part of this study (i.e. *Every Kid a Winner* by Leon Lessinger). Finally are the limitations inherent to research that focuses on past events. Because the topic of interest concerns a time period in the past, a limitation inherent to case study as the chosen methodology

is the inability to conduct direct observations of the case in action. Historical research also constrains who participates in the study and can impact the availability of resources to help gain multiple vantage points for the story the research aims to (re)construct.

In spite of these limitations, this research benefitted from snowball sampling to identify study participants. The individuals who were interviewed were readily accessible, and so were the major stores of archival documents. There is more documentation in academic journals and popular newspapers from those who opposed or criticized the MEAP, compared to the coverage of the rationale behind the MEAP from the perspective of those within the MDE. In reviewing the literature about accountability along with documents about the MEAP, this study has been able to highlight lessons the field can learn from the MEAP from sources that are less prevalent in the literature reviewed for this study. The choices made in this study allowed for a focused investigation that provides several avenues for continued study.

Future Directions for Research

Ellison (2012) proposed this question: Can standardized assessments provide rich, useful data on student achievement? Several study participants made comments to suggest that the MEAP after 1975 can provide such an example of schools receiving useful data. The MEAP program has evolved since its beginnings to adapt to the needs of schools. Beyond the controversy and the concessions made by the MDE over the years, investigating the history of the MEAP has more to offer when it comes to the interconnection of educational policy, political science, and the history of accountability literature. Future research could strive to identify individuals who were math teachers, reading teachers, union members, and union leaders for oral history interviews to enrich the quality of information beyond the nine standard qualitative

interviews used in this study. Additional time in the archives could provide a better sense of the accountability conversation in Michigan media outlets and could provide a chance to review more of the original reports produced by the MDE on the MEAP. Moreover, continued research could strengthen the case for more discussion of the impact of Title V as building the capacity of the nation's state departments of education in the educational policy literature. Also, more attention can be given to the social forces at play during the time period, especial in terms of the impact race had in judgments of student ability. Looking into the roles of prominent Black leaders like Coleman Young (Senator from Detroit), Ron Edmonds (one of the founders of the effective schools movement), and the impact race might have had on the challenges Superintendent John Porter faced as a Black man in charge of education in Michigan. Finally, there are two substantial opportunities to add more robustness to this research. First, is the potential for conducting book analyses of the books on accountability mentioned in this study that were published between 1965-1975, along with additional books that may exist. Second, an analysis could be conducted on discussions within select journals for vintage articles on accountability. *Phi Delta Kappa* and *Theory into Practice* emerged as candidates because they were consistent sources for gaining a better understanding of accountability in its historical context.

Conclusions

During one of the interviews with Ed Roeber, he mentioned a memorable cartoon by Bud Blake (n.d.) that appears on the next page.

Figure 6. Stripe is taught how to whistle from *Tiger* comic strip by Bud Blake.

The story of the MEAP is one of the many attempts to demonstrate student learning. The MEAP as a tool for accountability was designed to gain information on what students know, in order to guide policy to address the needs of students. What could have been a singular needs assessment, the MEAP became a staple in Michigan's educational policy and leveraged change across the educational landscape within the state. Michigan during this time period was considered to be one of the leaders on the national scene. Superintendent Polley recruited talent from across the country to build the capacity of the MDE and to strengthen the department in order to pursue the goal of designing a state assessment program. The MEAP is an example of an innovation that arose out of the ESEA. Its very existence is a case of the state-level government borrowing strength from federal legislation. As a result, the MEAP is also a case for the modern accountability movement arising from ESEA. The intent of the MEAP to guide state funding decisions made it an instrument for equity, and interviews revealed the idea that assessment could be seen as a form of activism. Although the MEAP faced great opposition and some forecasted its possible demise (Murphy & Cohen, 1974), the MEAP has endured for over forty years. The MEAP is an example of accountability for educational reform that precedes the traditional historical milestone of 1983's *Nation at Risk,* and it provides a unique example of

how the defining of educational problems is important to understanding the policy-making process when assessments were linked with increasing educational accountability.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Title of Project: Economics, Equity & Breaking "the 11th Commandment": A Case Study of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program as a Historical Example of Accountability for Educational Reform

Dear Potential Study Participant,

My name is Valencia Moses, and I am a Doctoral student in the Department of Teacher Education studying Curriculum, Teaching and Educational Policy at Michigan State University. For my research study, I am tracing the emergence of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, or MEAP.

The purpose of this study is to describe the political origins of accountability and how accountability became the means for educational reform to increase economic efficiency in educational spending in Michigan prior to the rise of the national accountability movement of the 1980's. For this reason, I am asking permission to audiotape and transcribe the audio from the interview conversation I hope to have with you. When the transcription record of the interview is complete, you will be given a copy to read to ensure it is an accurate representation of what was said during the interview.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. It is likely that you will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of how the goals for education in a state are articulated and implemented. Your participation in the study should take at least one hour for an interview, however, follow-up interviews may be requested over the period of three months. While I consider you to be a public figure in the educational scene, you can request to be identified by a pseudonym as a part of your participation in this study. If you prefer not to be identified, your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowed by law.

This is a request, and participation in the study is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions and may withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty. All audio recordings, as well as any identifying information, will be stored in a locked file cabinet for 3 years after the end of the study, accessible only to the principle investigator, Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews, myself and the MSU IRB. The results of the study may be presented and published in papers, scholarly journals, and/or presentations that would be of interest to educational researchers, historians, and/or teacher educators. Any identifying information such as your name, position, office, or institutional affiliation will only be shared if you grant permission. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the principle researcher Professor Dorinda Carter Andrews, (Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane Room 358, East Lansing, MI 48824, 517-432-2070). If you have any questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the MSU's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Sincerely,

Valencia Moses, Doctoral Student in Teacher Education at Michigan State University
Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane Room 301E, East Lansing, MI 48824, m o s e s v v @msu.edu

Participant Consent Form

Economics, Equity & Breaking "the 11th Commandment"

Dear Potential Study Participant,

Please check one and sign below. Please return this portion of the consent form to me and keep the first page for your records.

Sincerely,

Valencia Moses

_____ I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I acknowledge that choosing this option means that any identifying information such as my name, position, office, and or institutional affiliation is subject to disclosure with my knowledge after having viewed the transcribed records of my interview with the researcher. I can request at any time that I am identified in the study by a pseudonym and will request this change in writing.

_____ I request to be identified by a pseudonym as a part of my participation in this study. I understand that I have the option of disclosing my identity at any time during this research and will request this change in writing in the event I choose this option.

_____ I CONSENT to being audio-taped as part of my participation in this study.

_____ I DO NOT consent to being audio-taped as part of my participation in this study.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Participant's Printed Name

This consent form was approved by a Michigan State University Institutional Review Board. Approved 04/29/14 through 11/11/14.
This version supersedes all previous versions. IRB# 12-1304.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

These are examples of the type of questions that will be adapted in the interview to fit the position of the person being interviewed.

1. What is your current position/role?
2. What position did you hold in education in the 1960's and 1970's?
3. What issues were important to you as an educator during this time? The educational community?
4. What talk, if any, do you remember about accountability during this time?
5. What does it mean to you to hold schools accountable? Who should be accountable for schooling?
6. Could you describe what you know about MEAP?
    a. Who's idea was it?
    b. Would you describe it as an attempt at increasing accountability?
    c. What conversations, if any, did you have about it?
    d. What impact do you think it had/has had on education in Michigan

7. Why do you think the MEAP happened?
8. What issues or problems did the MEAP intend to address?
9. In what ways did the MEAP solve these problems?
10. In what ways did the MEAP create new issues in education?
11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: the MEAP was about politics and was fueled by economic more than educational concerns. Why or why not?
12. Thinking back on your experience, if you had had the ear of a politician, policy maker or a particular interest group, what would you have wanted them to know about education, then and now?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Table 3. Interview Schedule

Name	Date of Interview	Perspective on Accountability
Grace*	April 4, 2013	Classroom Teacher
Wayne Urban	April 28, 2013	Book co-author
Marge Mastie	May 3, 2013	School district
James McConnell	June 11, 2013	Classroom Teacher
Sharon Johnson Lewis	August 12, 2013	School district

Name	Date of Initial Interview	Follow-Up Interview Date(s)
Ed Roeber	April 12, 2013	April 13, 2013; February 28, 2014; email correspondence on March 20, 2014
Dan Schultz	April 16, 2013	June 12, 2013; March 19, 2014
Stu Rankin	May 3, 2013	June 13, 2013
Phil Kearney	May 9, 2013	March 4, 2014; phone interview on March 11, 2014; email correspondence on March 17 and March 26

*Study participant identified by researcher-assigned pseudonym

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