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Stefani L. Thachik
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A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POLICY
CONTEXT, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF P-20 EDUCATIONAL REFORM
MOVEMENTS IN TEXAS AND TENNESSEE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my grandparents -
my biggest supporters who were immensely proud of every
educational milestone from cradle to career.

Acknowledgement

This project would not have been possible without the interviewees who were willing to share both their time and their experience. Your honesty and interest in the project provided motivation and inspiration throughout the research process. Through this dissertation, I hope I have given countenance to each of your voices, as I sought to learn about P-20 from you.

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Abstract

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POLICY CONTEXT, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF P-20 EDUCATIONAL REFORM MOVEMENTS IN TEXAS AND TENNESSEE

By Stefani L. Thachik, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2016

Chair: Katherine Cumings Mansfield, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership

More people are striving for increased levels of educational attainment as a result of a global shift towards a more knowledge based economy. Schools and communities have adjusted to this societal change by seeking alignment along the educational pipeline from preschool (P) to graduate school (20), otherwise known as P-20 reform. This reform often develops with the collaboration and guidance of specific P-20 leadership councils that exist at both the local and state levels. The main purpose of this qualitative study was to go beyond the mere descriptions of P-20 councils to examine the policy pathways chosen by P-20 councils, specifically the relationship between policy context, design, and implementation of P-20 reform.

Texas and Tennessee were selected as case sites for a cross comparison policy analysis that utilized interviews and document analysis to examine leadership and contextual influences to the reform, with a focus on state and local P-20 councils. An interpretive theoretical framework helped garner the meaning-making of policy leaders throughout the movement's existence, while Kingdon's multiple streams model helped organize the episodic nature of

policy. Findings showed varied approaches within and between states leading to mixed levels of sustained P-20 councils and leadership. Finally, best practices for P-20 councils are shared as the problems P-20 seeks to address continue to persist and the P-20 movement adapts to a changing local and national context focused on college and career readiness.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In his 2009 State of the Union address, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, stressed that every citizen commit to at least one year of postsecondary work and promised the support of the government to help individuals complete college (Carrell & Sacerdote, 2013; Obama, 2009). This proclamation, along with the support of the United States Department of Education, made college-going and college-completion a national priority. Out of the 28 democratic countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States (U.S.) once had the highest percentage of the population holding a bachelor's degree. However, in 2013, the U.S. ranked 19th in bachelor's degrees with a completion rate of 39% (Bettinger & Baker, 2013; College Board, 2008; Weston, 2014). This decline in rankings, along with the growth of jobs requiring college-educated workers, has become a major cause of concern. For example, there is expected to be a workforce shortage of three million by 2018 (Knaggs, Sondergold, & Schardt, 2015; The White House, 2014). As a result, government leaders at all levels have placed education policies high on their political agendas and campaign platforms, noting apparent ties between level of education and economic growth (Engberg & Wolniak, 2013; Mansfield, Welton, & Grogan, 2014; Mokher, 2010). President Obama stresses this connection in his ideas on 'reform for the future,' stating: "The strength of the American economy is inextricably linked to the strength of America's education system" (The White House, 2015). This push for increasing education in an effort to be more competitive is also being seen in policies at state and local levels (Phelps, Durham, & Wills,

2011). As a result of the push for a more educated workforce, attending college is no longer seen as an option accessible only to the elite, as today “it is a prerequisite for the growing jobs of the new economy” (The White House, 2014). But concerns remain as the baby boomer generation approaches retirement and the nation remains in a national recession (Mokher, 2008).

At the start of their high school career, almost all students –regardless of race or socioeconomic status– say they plan to attend college (Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2013). Barriers that often stand between a student’s intent to attend and actual enrollment in college are numerous and include: a lack of resources (including financial ability and obligations), participation in a less rigorous high school curriculum, relatively low educational aspirations of both the student and parents, social isolation, and lack of informational knowledge about the high school to college process (Knaggs et al., 2015). These barriers disproportionately affect students from specific racial/ethnic groups, often corresponding with lower socioeconomic status. Holland (2010) found that students received varying messages about attending college depending on their race, socioeconomic status and generational status. Thus, it is no surprise that overall college enrollment and completion rates of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans lag behind those of Whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders (Moran, Cooper, Lopez, & Goza, 2009; Pitre & Pitre, 2009).

Increased education attainment is associated with increased benefits to the individual and society (Phelps et al., 2011). Yet, disparities in higher education access, performance, and persistence remain based on race and socioeconomic status (Education Trust, 1999; Hoffman, Vargas, Venezia, & Miller, 2007; Phelps et al., 2011; Schultz, Hernandez, Woodcock, Estrada, Chance, Aguilar, & Serpe, 2011; Welton & La Londe, 2013). While overall enrollment in college has increased over the years, gaps in college enrollment and persistence still remain

among students with relatively low socioeconomic status and historically marginalized groups (Casselmann, 2014; Perna et al., 2008). Using U.S. census data studying the population of adults in 2014 between the ages of 25 to 29, 41% of Whites had attained at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 22% of Blacks and 15% of Hispanics (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). The only group with a higher degree attainment was Asians/Pacific Islanders at 61% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). According to The National Center for Education Statistics:

Over the period from 1990 to 2014, the gap between Whites and Blacks in the rate of attaining a bachelor's or higher degree widened from 13 to 18 percentage points and the gap between Whites and Hispanics in attaining this education level widened from 18 to 26 percentage points. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, p. 3)

It is predicted that these disparities will continue to grow as the United States experiences demographic shifts. For example, by 2011, 50.4% of children under the age of one have been identified as *minorities* (College Board, 2008; Cooper, Chavira, & Mena, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The premise of "college for all" (Hoffman et al., 2007, p. 18) is a political and economic strategy in which people perceive a college degree as one of the strongest indicators for success in life. Most believe that education provides a pathway for citizens to reach the *American Dream*, especially during times of economic recession (Hoffman et al., 2007). A better education is tied to a better economy overall, and, on average, a higher salary for the individual (Louie, 2007; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). For example, in the 2010 census, the mean earnings of a person with a Master's degree was \$73,738, compared to the mean earnings of \$56,665 with a bachelor's degree, \$39,771 with an associate's degree, and \$30,627 with only a

high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). With the shift towards technology in the economy, holding an advanced degree is even more beneficial because, according to Carnevale (2007), "...as early as 2012 there will be a surplus of more than three million workers with high school or less and a shortage of about seven million workers with at least some college" (p. 16). For example, Indiana has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of manufacturing jobs available in the state. In order to address this issue, state leaders have updated Indiana's education curriculum, now known as Core40, to a college preparatory curriculum in order to become more rigorous to meet the skills and knowledge needed in the changing workforce (Hoffman et al., 2007).

In order to increase the number of graduates, many problems need to be addressed along the educational pipeline before students even step foot on a college campus. The number of students persisting until graduation from college is lower than the number of students enrolling and the college completion rate is not increasing as rapidly as the college enrollment rate (Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2013). Contributing to this problem is the misalignment between educational institutions, especially K-12 and postsecondary education. This misalignment occurs in curriculum, accountability measures, data sharing, standards, and expectations (Mokher, 2008). In order to address these transition issues, a majority of states are employing P-20 reform, which is a set of initiatives, sometimes referred to as a "policy umbrella," aimed at promoting collaboration between educational institutions from preschool to graduate school in order to ensure a seamless system (Durand, 2011; Lawson, 2010). Unlike in previous years, a college education, rather than a high school diploma, is now seen as necessary in today's economy (Van de Water & Krueger, 2002). Better integrated systems will help lead to an increased number of graduates across all races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses, as

achievement gaps between students appear at the start of schooling and are likely to widen as students continue through the system if they are not addressed early (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008; Lee, 2012). In fact, Chamberlin and Plucker (2008) argue the most successful interventions promoting college access begin around the seventh grade.

Many of the ideas around P-20 reform, and even the term ‘all one system’ that is often used to define the P-20 movement, were initiated with a 1985 report entitled “All One System: Demographics of Education, Kindergarten through Graduate School,” followed by a report 14 years later titled, “All One System: A Second Look. Perspectives in Public Policy: Connecting Higher Education and the Public Schools” (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2000; Durand, 2011; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2014). While the idea behind the policy was not new, P-20 became a formalized policy with the creation of the first council (then termed P-16) in 1995 by Georgia (Kettlewell, Kaste, & Jones, 2000). The movement has since expanded to 46 of the 50 states in the U.S., although the nature of the movement varies between states (Lawson, 2010; Rippner, 2014). However, it is important to note that Rippner (2014) most recently reported a decrease in the number and a restructuring of many state P-20 councils. While there has not been a full evaluation of the movement, P-20 has demonstrated success in some states (Rochford, 2007). Change in the educational system through P-20 collaborative reform can have a far-reaching impact on the country’s economy, as a more educated workforce is tied to a more competitive economy— especially during the current global recession. As the movement continues to spread, more evidence is needed to evaluate the reform movement and its most effective and efficient practices.

Purpose of Study

Prior research is limited to descriptions of P-20 councils' formation and characteristics (Perna & Armijo, 2014). In response, the purpose of this study was to go beyond these descriptions of P-20 councils to examine the relationship between policy context, design, and implementation of P-20 educational reform to identify best practices in P-20 governance and collaboration. Additionally, this study begins to address larger systemic issues of equity by showing how P-20 councils can potentially provide consistent or additional support across communities that may lack much-needed support.

Research Questions

The current study examines relationships between policy context, design, and implementation of P-20 educational reform at state and local levels using two case examples, Texas and Tennessee. Specifically, this project examined the leadership and contextual influences of state and local P-20 councils, as well as variation in approaches to the reform even within a single state (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008). The current study groups together both local and regional P-20 councils, hereafter referred to as *local councils*.

The study was guided by an overarching meta-research question and additional sub-questions:

- 1) What is the relationship among policy context, design, and implementation in P-20 educational reform and how do these factors interact to produce particular results?
 - a) What are the histories of, and the contextual complexities that led to, the development of P-20 councils in Texas and Tennessee?
 - b) What is the nature of policy design and implementation in both states?
 - c) What is the nature of goal attainment in each state?

- d) How does the design and implementation of P-20 reform interact with context to produce particular results?
- e) How does context, design, and implementation influence sustainability of P-20 reforms?
- f) What are the implications of these relationships for future policy, practice, and research?

Overview of Research Design

This study employed case study methodology (Merriam, 2009) and interpretive policy analysis (Yanow, 2000) to understand and contrast the context, design, and implementation of P-20 educational reform plans. The comparative case study approach takes into consideration that policies are dynamic and go through policy phases that include both incremental change and long-term stability (Howlett & Cashore, 2014; Young & Lewis, 2015).

An interpretive approach was used to learn the meaning-making of leaders guiding the P-20 movement for their community or state. Initially, I conducted a document analysis of publically available documents, which included government documents, website materials, and newspaper articles, to explore policy artifacts related to the P-20 movement in order to help understand the policy context and design within each state and region. Based on this initial exploration, I conducted qualitative interviews with representatives of P-20 councils from Texas and Tennessee at the state and local levels. These interviews helped corroborate themes emerging from the document analysis, as well as explored the success or failure to implement P-20 policies. Comparison of interviews across local boundaries and state lines provided insights to factors influencing the sustainability of P-20 reforms.

Overview of Study Context

This study is conducted at the state and local levels to coincide with the governance structure of education in the United States (Ormsmith, 2013). States may address larger national problems, such as college and career readiness, with varying solutions influenced by the state's history, population, and governance structure (Rochford, 2007). The cases studied were purposefully selected. First, based on an extensive literature review of P-20 initiatives across the United States, Texas emerged as a leader in the movement (Thachik & Mansfield, 2014). After selecting Texas, the next case site was chosen based on similarity in P-20 structure with state and local councils. From the narrowed list Tennessee was selected for maximum variation as the state P-20 council is one of only three across the United States to have administrative authority, rather than advisory authority, in their recommendations. Councils with administrative authority have the ability to make decisions, while councils that are advisory provide recommendations for which other agencies can decide to take action (Education Commission of the States, 2015). One final criterion in selecting these two cases was the ability to gain access to leaders of councils to serve as participants. Two cases were chosen in order to allow for more depth in discussion and in order to limit the variance that would come from more sites (Van de Heijden, 2014).

Texas. Texas is recognized as one of the first leaders in the movement and many of its initiatives (Achieve, 2009; Domina, 2007; Thachik & Mansfield, 2014). For example, Texas was among the first states to adopt a longitudinal data system and establish accountability standards (Burley, 2007). More recently, Bricker (2008) recognized one of Texas' local P-16 councils, the Greater Houston P16+ Council, as an exemplar for the nation. Texas is not only an early adopter of many reforms, but has an impressive history of sustaining reforms over a

significant amount of time, which proved beneficial for the current study's focus on policy implementation and sustainability of P-20 reform (Achieve, 2009).

Texas' history and demographics make it a unique case site, as Texas is one of the largest states in the United States with a population of 26,956,958 (U.S. Census, 2015). The Texas land encompasses both large rural areas, as well as housing six of the one hundred largest metros in America (Perna & Finney, 2014). Texas is rapidly becoming a majority-minority state and has recognized the importance in closing the opportunity gaps existing between minority and majority students to ensure the economic future of the state (Harris & Tienda, 2010; Oliva, 2004; The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2014). According to the Texas Education Agency, in 2014-2015 the department served 5,232,065 students with the demographic breakdown of 29.0% Caucasian, 12.6% African American, and the majority (52.0%) identifying as Hispanic/Latino (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Additionally, I have previous experience networking with Texas P-20 leaders, which helped provide a foundation for the current study and for recruiting further participants (see Mansfield & Thachik, 2016).

Tennessee. Even with a growing literature on the P-20 movement, Tennessee has been infrequently studied, despite their history of local and regional P-20 councils (Moran et al., 2009; Rochford, 2007). Compared to Texas, Tennessee is a much smaller state with a less diverse population. According to the 2010 census, the state population is 6,549,352 (U.S. Census, 2015). Tennessee's Department of Education enrolls 993,841 students in their public schools from PK-12 with the racial demographics: 65.6% Caucasian, 24.1% African American, and 7.8% Hispanic/Latino (TN Department of Education, 2015). Most recently, Tennessee has garnered national attention for their program named Tennessee Promise, which promotes many of the

goals of P-20 reform, including college access and success, by offering two years of free community college along with a mentor to help promote success (Tennessee Promise, 2015).

State and local policy levels. In addition to comparing between states, this study also compared P-20 movements within states. State agencies often help guide and coordinate larger education issues, but local education systems are responsible for developing and implementing strategies to meet goals and priorities set by the state (Bloom, 2010). By allowing local P-20 councils to develop their own policies along or in line with those of the state, the local leaders can develop solutions that fit the need and context of their local population, rather than relying on generic state solutions (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014). While Tennessee and Texas have a mix of local and regional councils, these councils are referred to as *local councils* for the purpose of this study. It is also important to note that not all local councils refer to themselves as councils, as some are ‘alliances,’ ‘workgroups,’ ‘committees,’ ‘non-profits,’ or ‘organizations.’ For the purpose of this study, these similar entities are referred to here after as councils. As Kettlewell, Kaste, and Jones (2000) summarize, “When one considers the numerous examples of educational reform initiatives that have been attempted but produced little results, it is clear that neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies are sufficient. Both are needed” (p. 85). The current study explored the interplay, or vertical interaction, between local and state P-20 movements to see how these relationships have influenced the movement (Young & Lewis, 2015).

Definition of Key Terms

The following are definitions for the more specific terms used throughout this study.

College and career readiness: A more recent focus of policy throughout the last decade in response to the growing rates of students needing remediation to ensure students are prepared upon high school graduation for success in pursuing postsecondary education or a career without

the need for additional coursework. Multiple definitions and measures for college and career readiness exist (Mattern, Burrus, Camara, O'Connor, Hansen, Gambrell, Casillas, Bobek, 2014)

Cradle-to-career: A growing movement to expand the P-20 movement from birth to career; unlike the term P-20, which shows a start and end point, cradle-to-career places more focus outside of the educational system to recognize the importance of early childhood development, adult learners, and the workforce (Wimpelberg, 2009)

Educational pipeline: A metaphor often used to illustrate the goals of the P-20 movement to move students seamlessly from entry to exit without losing students along the pathway to graduation due to 'leaks'

P-20: A formalized systematic reform movement that contains a collection of initiatives aimed at linking all years of schooling from preschool (P) to graduate school and professional programs (20). Also known as K-16, P-16, or P-20W, depending on the various start and end points, this study refers to P-20 in order to be more inclusive of all educational institutions.

P-20 councils: A formal group of leaders and representatives within a community, whether local or state, that convenes to work towards one or more P-20 goals

Partnership/collaboration: Often referring to university and K-12 institutional partnerships; partnership and collaboration can refer to the joined forces of two or more organizations, whether political, educational, economical, or community, to work towards shared goals

Postsecondary education: Any type of education occurring after high school graduation; can include technical, two or four year education, graduate and professional education

Reform: A policy seeking to change or adapt educational processes and policies in order to improve educational performance and fit the changing needs of the larger society

Contributions and Intended Audience

This comparative analysis seeks to inform policy makers and leaders at state and local levels. First, the study's focus on varying contexts at state and local levels helps leaders in generalizing aspects of the movement that fit the need of their locality. Leaders can adapt aspects of the movement shown to be sustainable and successful over time to their communities and schools, while also learning lessons from any failures during the development and implementation of policies. The use of maximum variation within the two selected case examples allows leaders to see the P-20 movement at various stages of development. Since most states are already participating in the P-20 movement in some way, leaders can glean ways to sustain, further grow, or in some cases, even reinstate P-20 policies. As indicated by the final research question, the study concludes with implications for future policy, research, and practice, which helps not only leaders making the policy, but researchers who help inform and evaluate the reform and practitioners responsible for implementing the policy.

The ideals behind the P-20 movement have been traced back to school-university collaborations in the 1800s and appear poised to remain as the movement entitled 'cradle-to-Career' broadens the P-20 spectrum and is gaining momentum across the United States (Núñez & Oliva, 2009; Wimpelberg, 2009). Despite this history and the development more recently of formalized P-20 policies, the ideal of 'all one system' remains "...just that- an ideal" (Takanishi & Kauerz, 2008, p. 486). The current study contributes to understanding best practices and what an ideal system would look like for the movement. The more formalized P-20 reform movement has had a short history resulting in a lack of research findings. One particular problem that persists is that interventions usually only target one aspect of the educational pipeline resulting in a shortage of evaluation covering the P-20 spectrum. The findings that do exist demonstrating P-

20 initiatives as being effective are usually only for very specific programs (Núñez & Oliva, 2009). In a comprehensive review of P-20 partnerships, Clifford & Millar analyzed 36 research articles and concluded these articles lacked rigor and scope (2007). This study contributes to the literature by providing a comparative policy approach to study the movement in two states, Texas and Tennessee.

Overview of Study Conclusions

This exploratory study found similarities and differences throughout the history and development of the P-20 movements within Texas and Tennessee. Despite different demographics and state contexts, both states experienced a problem in producing college and career ready citizens to fulfill the economic needs of the state brought by the new knowledge economy. A political mood that tied higher levels of educational attainment to a better economy sought alignment as a solution paving the way for the development of P-20 councils to lead the charge. At times, the P-20 movement became episodic with councils achieving varying levels of success and sustainability as the councils adapted to the changing local, state, and national context. The policy solution of aligning educational institutions broadened to include more sectors, specifically workforce, as career readiness became an issue alongside college readiness.

Over time, the number of councils that identify as P-20 councils have dwindled, yet some councils have continued to sustain and succeed despite identified barriers. As a result of the disappearance of some councils across states, not all students have equitable access to the additional support and resources that result from P-20 councils. The future of P-20 councils remains uncertain, however, similar initiatives have developed due to the continued focus on the policy issue of college and career readiness. Chapter Four presents the findings with further details followed by a discussion of the conclusions in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

As this introductory chapter explains, this study explored the meaning behind P-20 reform and practices from development to implementation by performing document analysis on policy artifacts and conducting qualitative interviews with policy leaders of the P-20 movement in Texas and Tennessee. In the next chapter, a review of the literature explains the emergence and development of P-20 reform, explains key concepts behind the movement, and describes central goals and governance strategies. Chapter Three explains the methods and strategic protocol used, along with the philosophical foundations undergirding these choices. Chapter Four presents the findings that emerged from the document analysis and interviews through narratives for each case site and concluding with comparison of these policy narratives. The final chapter discusses implications of the research for policy at both the state and local governance levels.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the historical and social forces that have influenced the evolving education reform movement known as P-20, with a focus on leadership of the movement through P-20 councils. The first section of the literature review discusses the expansion of education reform overall, which set the stage for P-20 reform. The second section delves into the history of the disconnect between K-12 and higher education systems, further establishing the context for the creation of the P-20 movement. Thereafter, the focus is on specific details of P-20 development, such as the goals of the movement and the strategies typically used to meet these goals. The chapter concludes with a discussion of P-20 councils, which are governance structures that typically provide the leadership behind P-20 reform and initiatives.

An Era of Educational Reform

The word *reform* has become commonplace in policy discussions of education in the United States, with many people even describing feeling *reform fatigue* (McGrath, Donovan, Schaier-Peleg, & Buskirk, 2005). Reforms seek to change educational processes and policies in order to improve educational performance and fit the needs of the larger society, especially as educational institutions come under increased scrutiny and demand for accountability by the public (Chen, 2009; Futrell, 2010; Wright & Miller, 2007). The need for reform in educational systems is necessary in order to adapt to societal changes that include:

... increasing globalization, and shifting workforce demands; an increasing need to ensure that all members of our society achieve to high levels; rapidly changing and advancing technologies, including an explosion of knowledge; rapidly changing demographics; wide disparities in educational attainment, income, and access; ever-increasing demand for high-skilled employees; limited financial resources; an increasing need for creativity, innovation and interdisciplinary thinking and problem-solving in all fields; a workforce that is likely to change jobs, even careers, many times, whose members will need additional education to do so; an explosion of informal sources of learning such as internet, blogs, television, and other media, that change how individuals learn and relate to the world; all combined with decreasing high graduation rates, increasing dropout rates, and overall national student achievement lagging behind many other nations. (Patterson, 2011, p. 38)

Educational reforms have shifted over the past half-century depending on the nation's educational agenda and definition of the educational problem (Portz, 1996; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994).

Patterson (2011) divides the major reforms in U.S. history into three waves beginning with progressive education, followed by reform focused on equity, and most currently the excellence reform movement. An early example of progressive reform would be the 1950s concern over the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union that led to a push for schools to increase math and science performance, while the 1960s were marked by the battle for civil rights resulting in more reforms in schools aimed at equity (Futrell, 2010). For example, in 1965, President Johnson believed access to college should be expanded and helped to fund federal programs, such as TRIO programs and the Higher Education Act (Fenske, Geranios,

Keller, & Moore, 1997). The movement shifted to focus on excellence when the release of *A Nation at Risk* report during the 1980s created a sense of urgency to restructure the educational system to make the United States more competitive globally due to the claim of a failing education system (Bloom, 2010; Patterson, 2011). The focus on excellence continues today, especially with the continued use of international achievement comparisons through the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) as the United States strives to achieve top ranking (Bloom, 2010).

Most of these early reforms focused on the K-12 level with little involvement from higher education (Timpane & White, 1998). However, during the 1990s, higher education began to see more proposed educational reforms that mimicked the reforms occurring in K-12 institutions, such as score card ranking systems and standardized student assessments (Phelps et al., 2011). This shift to include higher education has come about due to the increased recognition of high levels of remediation in education and the need to improve college and career readiness of students for economic and social equity reasons (Bloom, 2010; Blume & Zumeta, 2013; Callan, 1998; Takanishi & Kauerz, 2008).

Despite the extensive history of educational reforms, few have been sustained long-term, often due to exhausting resources, limited support, and competing demands within education (Patterson, 2011; Wimpelberg, 2009). Another reason is that many individual reforms alone are not enough to fix a complex and diverse schooling system, so while a reform may appear strong in policy form it fails to be implemented or sustained over time. Often these reforms are aimed at only a part of the educational pipeline or are not able to be brought to scale across all regions of the state or country (Business-Higher Education Forum, 2005; McGrath et al., 2005).

One growing reform movement, which began formally in the 1990s, is known as *P-20* and, unlike previous reform movements, P-20 is a series of reforms aimed at changing education into “all one system,” an idea originally proposed by Harold Hodgkinson (1985, p. 1) in a report by the same title (Domina & Ruzek, 2012; Durand, 2011; Lawson, 2010). The reform often conceptualizes the educational system as a *pipeline* or *pathway* symbolizing a smooth transition from grade to grade and school to school for all students from preschool (P) to graduate school (20) (Cooper et al., 2005; Lawson, 2010; Stewart & Johaneck, 1998). By focusing on systematic reform over the more common programmatic reform, P-20 supporters hope to change the culture of the current system from simply giving kids access to school to supporting kids through school (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014). P-20 is not only a vertical movement seeking to align institutions from when a student enters school through graduation, but also a horizontal movement that recognizes the need for cross-sector community coordination and collaboration, otherwise known as *wraparound services* (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Lawson, 2010).

The History of the P-20 Movement

P-20 reform has grown in the past two decades to include participation of 46 of the 50 states, but this growth has often been sporadic (Lawson, 2010; Rochford, 2007). While the concept of *all one system* has existed for decades, the formal movement is still considered to be young and developing (Kirst & Usdan, 2007). Compared to educational systems around the world, education in the United States has typically been separated into three distinct levels: preschool, K-12, and postsecondary institutions (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2000; Krueger, 2006). Despite sharing similar missions to educate students and improve their achievement, the different histories and independent leadership of the three levels of educational institutions has resulted in a disconnected system with a lack of overlap between institutions

(Mokher, 2008). This divide has resulted in preschools, K-12, and postsecondary institutions developing different cultures, financial structures, and political and legal requirements (Hoffman et al., 2007).

Since the passing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, otherwise known as the G.I. Bill in 1944, which emphasized the importance of postsecondary education, college attendance has increased and postsecondary institutions have replaced high schools as the end goal of education (Van de Water & Krueger, 2002). Postsecondary institutions, however, were often separate from K-12 as college was seen as elite and prestigious compared to K-12 institutions (Kirst & Usdan, 2007). Educational institutions were also highly divided by gender, as men dominated the role of the professoriate, while women dominated the K-12 teaching field (Mitchell & Torres, 1998; Timpane & White, 1998). K-12 and higher education were growing in student population, yet had to face dwindling resources that led to fierce competition and mistrust (Lawson, 2015; Mitchell & Torres, 1998). The separation of the three levels has been further reinforced by different state structures, such as distinct governing bodies that created policies focusing on their own area of the educational pipeline and different data systems that fail to communicate across the divide (Lawson, 2015; McGrath et al., 2005; Venezia & Kirst, 2005; Walsh, 2009).

The disconnect that has existed between educational institutions is no longer effective as the amount of time students spend in the educational system has expanded resulting in the massification of college as aspirations to attend college, along with student enrollment, have increased (Hess, 2008; Venezia & Kirst, 2005). While more students may have access to college, the disconnect between K-12 and higher education institutions can still be seen in the increased number of students needing developmental courses upon entering college. The

increased need for remedial education has become a top policy problem that is also costly to both sides and signals the need for early identification of struggling students (Bloom, 2010; Kurlaender & Larsen, 2013; Walsh, 2009). Since colleges were once reserved only for the elite, lingering class differences remain in enrollment and persistence (Domina & Ruzek, 2012; Mokher, 2008). P-20 supporters seek to overcome the disconnect by engaging in the idea of shared responsibility, recognizing that both systems share similar problems and work with the same population, albeit at different developmental stages (McLendon, Heller, & Young, 2005; Timpane & White, 1998).

Georgia was the first state to create a P-20 council under Governor Zell Miller in 1995 (Kettlewell et al., 2000; Perna, 2014). The goal of this council was to improve academic achievement of students across the board (Kettlewell et al., 2000). Leaders at the state level recognized the need for local councils to help carry out the state's goals and two years later provided seed money for the creation of 15 local councils across the state (Kettlewell et al., 2000; Venezia, Callan, Kirst & Usdan, 2006). Georgia has remained a leader in the movement, with successful projects such as the creation of the HOPE scholarship for academic achievement and the statewide accountability platform known as College and Career Ready Performance Index (Georgia Department of Education, 2015; Venezia et al., 2006). In their case study of Georgia, Venezia, Callan, Kirst, & Usdan (2006) attribute Georgia's sustained success to the continued support of leadership, resources, and political priority to the issue, along with the movement becoming institutionalized.

Georgia was quickly followed by Texas and Oregon (Durand, 2011; Rochford, 2007). Within 11 years, 46 states had some form of P-20 council, collaboration, and/or P-20 agenda (Lawson, 2010; Núñez & Oliva, 2009). Most commonly, the formal movements were

established by executive order or statute and often using what Van de Water & Krueger (2002) and others (Education Commission of the States, 2015) term as an incremental approach to the movement. Despite continued growth in the movement, this growth has been episodic and at times met with criticism from select groups (Rochford, 2007). These criticisms include lack of focus on specific problems (The Council of State Governments, 2008), lack of research on movement (Clifford & Millar, 2007; McGrath et al., 2005; Rochford, 2007; Van de Water & Krueger, 2002), concern over connecting “already dysfunctional structures” (Rippner, 2014, p. 2), and concern over accountability measures that often include student testing and tracking (Venezia et al., 2006).

P-20 Governance and Leadership

The creation of P-20 leadership councils, at both the state and local levels, is one of the most common strategies, and is often the starting point, of the movement and its initiatives (Blume & Zumeta, 2013). As seen in the history of the movement, political leaders can play an important role in the creation and formation of P-20 councils and initiatives due to their leadership influence and networking abilities as many formal councils are started through executive order or legislative mandates (Mokher, 2010). In the case of the P-20 movement, political leaders, specifically governors, have a vested interest in the success of the entire educational pipeline due to their authority over each entity (Callan, 1998). P-20 councils often serve as an advisory body and serve the role of creating policy and coordinating efforts to collaborate and align education across institutions. As mentioned earlier, in 1995, the then Georgia governor created the first P-20 state council, which still meets today, although under a different name. Now more than 40 state councils have been established across the United States

(Education Commission of the States, 2014; Rochford, 2007), although a recent study by Rippner (2014) found the number of active councils declining.

P-20 councils differ across the states depending on how the council was initially started (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008). Some key differences include how often the council meets, the mission of the council, and budget of the council. While the number of members and who serves on the council also vary, “Five main constituencies typically make up these partnerships and coalitions: (1) K-12 leaders, (2) higher education leaders, (3) early childhood education leaders, (3) private sector leaders, and (5) local governmental leaders” (Lawson, 2010, p. 53).

Nationally, there is an average of 22 members on each state’s council (Education Commission of the States, 2014). Typically, P-20 councils serve as advisory bodies providing recommendations to leaders on how to coordinate P-20 initiatives, such as addressing the disconnect between institutions (Walsh, 2009). Specific P-20 policy areas often focused on by these groups include: “alignment,” “preparation,” “access and affordability,” “facilitation of success,” “data systems and research,” and “educational funding” (TG, 2010, p. 6).

Goals of P-20 Leadership Councils

P-20 reform efforts recognize education does not occur in a silo and to solve current issues requires collaboration across the three historically distinct educational institutions (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The most commonly cited goals of P-20 reform and P-20 leadership councils are to foster community and political collaboration; to improve transition and communication among grades and institutions; and to improve student achievement and educational attainment.

Foster community and political collaboration. The P-20 movement is recognized as both an educational and economic policy (Lawson, 2010). This connection between education and the economy has led to the government becoming more involved in education (Lawson,

2010). Since jobs create demand for more education, goals of the P-20 movement include increasing human capital by increasing graduation rates, aligning curriculum with a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects, and increasing the number of STEM teachers (Engberg & Wolniak, 2013; Lawson, 2010).

In addition to increased engagement of the government, there is also increased recognition that education is not just influenced by the time a student spends inside a classroom, but also by other agencies that include health, child welfare, etc. (Lawson, 2015). As the president of Xavier University, Michael Graham, points out to Edmondson & Zimpher (2014), “Too often, we have tasked our schools to solve alone problems they are incapable of solving, problems whose origins in poverty and social change schools simply cannot solve alone” (p. 20). Unlike previous generations of partnerships existing mostly between K-12 and universities, partnerships from the 1990s to present have been aimed at providing wrap-around services that incorporate businesses and community members with shared goals (Haycock, 1998; Oliva, 2004; Rochford, 2007).

Improve communication and transition. The use of the term, *pipeline* symbolizes the goal of improved communication and transition, both horizontally and vertically, among grades and institutions (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008). Key transition times specifically focused on are often the vital times when students are seen as becoming lost in the educational system, whether in terms of falling behind in development or actually dropping out from school. These key transitions include kindergarten where students need to be learning literacy and number skills, middle school where the focus is on social and emotional learning, and high school where students need to be able to develop content mastery so that no academic remediation is needed when the student enters college (Lawson, 2010). The goal is not only to ensure students move

on to the next grade, but that students also enter that grade prepared to learn at that level. For example, at key points in development, students should be checked to make sure they are reading on grade level or taking the appropriate math courses in order to target remediation needs early (Krueger & Rainwater, 2003).

One of the most studied transition periods is the period from high school to college as numerous studies have found communication problems between high schools and colleges. For example, students and parents often receive vague or conflicting messages about coursework needed to succeed, as college curriculums often do not match up with high school curriculums on a smooth continuum. During senior year, many students might take lighter schedules due to completion of basic high school requirements, when in reality students should begin to take pre-requisites needed for their college program. This incorrect message is often reinforced by colleges as senior year grades are often not looked at in admission requirements (Venezia et al., 2003). As a result of this miscommunication, many students want to go to college, but are not adequately prepared or are unable to complete their college education due to costly remediation issues (Venezia et al., 2003; Walsh, 2009).

Part of the communication problem is that not all students have equitable access to information or social capital to help navigate the transition to college. For example, research shows that some students (racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, and lower SES) are often disadvantaged when it comes to access to information about postsecondary institutions; thus leading to underrepresentation in higher education arenas (Farmer-Hinton & McCullough, 2008; Holland, 2010; Ormsmith & Mansfield, 2014; Palmer, 2000). “Underrepresented students are especially likely to be hampered by insufficient access to college preparatory courses, student placement into remedial-level coursework in college, and a lack of early and high-quality college

counseling” (Venezia et al., 2003, p. 8). Schools have become more segregated with students of color disproportionality attending schools that are often less-resourced and made up of more students living in poverty (Jean-Marie & Mansfield, 2013). Because students of color often attend schools lacking in organizational capacity, they receive less equitable and effective counseling (Farmer-Hinton & McCullough, 2008; Ormsmith & Mansfield, 2014). Another source of information (or misinformation) may come from employees who are often focused only on their segment of the educational pipeline for which they work; students often get information (or misinformation) from recent college graduates or teachers rather than from the institutions themselves (Bloom, 2010; Venezia et al., 2003). In response, the P-20 movement seeks to increase access to college, especially in certain demographic groups (Núñez & Oliva, 2009).

Increase student achievement. Similar to the most recent waves of educational reform, P-20 also strives to improve student achievement by minimizing the achievement gap and increasing educational attainment (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008; Pitre, 2011). The achievement gap is a difference in academic test scores between student identity groups due to a variety of factors, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; Mansfield & Newcomb, 2015). The achievement gap is also referred to as an opportunity gap, as often minority students may be tracked away from gifted or honors programs due to a variety of factors, such as cultural bias and cultural misunderstanding (Contreras, 2011; Goldberger, 2007; Mansfield, 2015; Mansfield, Welton, & Grogan, 2014). McGrath and fellow researchers (2005) found the achievement gap started even before students enter school with African American students beginning school one year behind white students due to a variety of external factors such as economic and racial isolation (Mansfield, 2011). These racial and income

disparities continue to add up and are difficult to overcome, resulting in African American students graduating from high school a reported four years behind their counterparts (McGrath et al., 2005).

Previous research has shown partnerships across educational systems to result in a reduction in the achievement gap, especially when these interventions occur as early as the preschool level before the gap widens (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008). “In theory, if a P-16 system is working, young students will be more prepared at early levels of education, thus reducing achievement gaps in school readiness between groups of students” (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008, p.16). Some states are already reporting gains in student achievement attributed to their P-20 initiatives. For example, Georgia reported a rise in SAT scores, while Louisiana reported a drop in the number of students needing remediation in college (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008). Decreasing the number of students needing remediation in college has additional benefits as the need for remediation influences the self-efficacy of students, which may lead individuals to consider dropping out before college graduation (Venezia et al., 2003). Reducing the need for remediation can also reduce a student’s time spent in college, which can help with reducing the financial strain. Another focus of P-20 movements is enhancing the education and professional development of teachers, as improving content knowledge of teachers can help improve student achievement scores (Kettlewell et al., 2000; Zhang, McInerney, & Frechtling, 2010). Some examples of P-20 reforms aimed at educators include the formation of professional learning communities, the creation of national teacher certification standards, and the formation of a teacher residency model (Futrell, 2010). Despite narrowing the focus of the movement to these three central goals, the movement still encompasses a broad system and multiple initiatives making P-20 goals difficult to assess.

Common P-20 Initiatives

Since P-20 is considered an umbrella policy, the movement consists of multiple reform initiatives (Durand, 2011), which are often developed and/or implemented by P-20 councils. While there are many common practices, it is important to note that the collection of initiatives varies across the United States depending on states' educational policies and goals, as well as where the state falls in developing their P-20 reform (Durand, 2011). Some of the more common initiatives, such as creating longitudinal data systems, P-20 partnerships, and aligning curriculum are discussed below.

Creating longitudinal data systems. The most common strategy utilized, according to Blume & Zumeta's study (2013) of state college readiness policies, was the collection of P-20 data, as K-12 and higher education often use different data systems and fail to communicate across boundaries (Blume & Zumeta, 2013). A longitudinal data system is seen as important, because data can help pinpoint problem areas across the educational pipeline, which can help guide policy and resources to more effectively address the problem, as well as continue to track progress of the issue over time (Achieve, 2009). The use of data may also help identify students in need of remediation early before it becomes cumulative and students fall further behind. Some barriers to this strategy include the time it takes to get a system started, getting the data to the right people, how to share data, as well as shifting data use to focus on continuous improvement over simply compliance (Data Quality Campaign, 2012; Muldoon, 2010). The importance of creating a longitudinal data system was stressed most recently in the federal Race to the Top grant program (Muldoon, 2010).

Partnerships and intervention programs. Another common strategy is P-20 partnerships. Sometimes called intervention programs, many thousands of these partnerships

exist across the United States and have evolved over time to include partners outside of the educational system (Haycock, 1998). These programs are often geared towards disadvantaged students and provide support and resources outside of the classroom to introduce students to college (Contreras, 2011). One example of this type of partnership is the Educational Partnership Center (EPC) created by the University of California system to help increase the achievement and college-going rate of low-income and Latino communities. The EPC has several established P-20 programs grounded in theory that have proven effectiveness. One program includes parent academies to help teach families about postsecondary options by promoting college awareness and resources. In debriefing testimonies, a majority (96%) of participants found these visits to be helpful. Another program offered by the EPC is a summer research program for high school students on the college campus to help motivate students in math and science. In a post program survey, students were found to have significantly higher self-efficacy compared to the pre-program survey at the start of camp. These two examples of initiatives through the EPC are making an impact on the identities of students in the local community (Moran et al., 2009).

A common barrier to these types of programs includes scarce or unreliable funding, as well as the challenge of scaling up the interventions as they typically only serve a small number of students (Haycock, 1998; Tafel & Eberhart, 1999). Contreras (2011) looked at 40 of these intervention programs and found many were short-term for students, such as a single program over a summer in middle school, and thus, were not able to achieve the greatest impact. While the example presented here of the Educational Partnership Center shows demonstrated success, one problem with assessing partnerships is they are usually effective only for very specific programs (Núñez & Oliva, 2009; For more examples see Aleman, Perez-Torres, & Oliva, 2013;

Fann, Oliva & Nora, 2004; Jarsky, & McDonough, 2009; Jarsky, McDonough, & Núñez, 2009; Officer, Grim, & Medina, 2013). In a comprehensive review of K-20 partnerships, Clifford & Millar analyzed 36 research articles concluding that the studies reflected in these articles lacked rigor and scope (2007).

Curriculum alignment. Other initiatives focus on aligning the curriculum to make expectations of readiness clear and expanding curriculum offerings through programs such as dual enrollment in order to increase rigor. An example of curriculum alignment would be the P-20 Academic and Career Pathways created by leaders in Aurora, Colorado to integrate curriculum from pre-school to higher education. Students select one of four pathways: Arts and Communication, Health Sciences, Business and STEM. Each pathway consists of a specialized curriculum that allows students to set career goals early and learn a specialized set of skills. Centering the curriculum around anticipated career fields for the future helps to make the students more competitive in the global economy and setting early career goals make students more likely to graduate. (Aurora Public Schools, 2014).

Impact of P-20 Leadership Councils

While many articles and reports exist *summarizing* the formation of P-20 councils, few rigorous studies exist that focus on the P-20 councils that create the infrastructure for the movement to succeed (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; Mokher, 2008). The current study goes beyond summarizing P-20 councils by interviewing council representatives in order to gain a leadership perspective of the meaning-making behind P-20 policies at different system levels. In 2008, Mokher conducted a quantitative study to explore factors that contributed to the creation of state P-20 councils. Out of all the factors explored, only the presence of a so-called “education governor” and increased state population were linked to states more likely to have a P-20 council

(Mokher, 2008). Three recent studies have gone beyond description to explore the effectiveness of these councils (Perna & Armijo, 2014; Rippner, 2014; Rippner, 2015). Perna and Armijo (2014) conducted and analyzed case studies of P-20 councils in ten states finding the councils were unable to make sustained change due to many being only advisory in nature. Councils demonstrated the most influence on shaping the educational agenda and expanding discourse to recognize the need for collaboration across the span of education (Perna & Armijo, 2014).

Rippner (2014) produced a similar study in order to explore the reduction in the number of active P-20 councils. By exploring the influence of three state P-20 councils on collaboration, Rippner found a variation in collaboration among states. Most often the collaboration resulted in the development of relationships, but not measurable outcomes (Rippner, 2014). All three state councils studied in Georgia, Illinois, and Minnesota struggled with maintaining their council, as they faced barriers that included lack of space, lack of dedicated staff, and leadership turnover at the state level (Rippner, 2014). Rippner (2015) produced a follow up study to explore the barriers for P-20 council using organizational theory, which focuses on six potential barriers: mission barriers, political barriers, legal barriers, constituent barriers, bureaucratic barriers and resource barriers. The researcher used the same three state case sites from the 2014 study and discovered a combination of the barriers to collaboration within each case site. The barriers varied due to the different state governance structures. The current study adds further information on the persistence of P-20 councils by studying two additional state councils, Texas and Tennessee, as well as the interplay between state and local councils.

Similar to the lack of assessment of interventions, there is also a lack of evaluation of the leadership of local and state P-20 councils. The goals set by P-20 councils are often not specific and measurable; according to Dounay (2008) only 16 states in 2008 have set numeric goals for

their councils resulting in no way to measure progress. The majority of studies on P-20 councils focus on characteristics of the council over implementation and achievements of the council (Perna & Armijo, 2014; Rippner, 2014). Another problem in assessing P-20 councils is the diversity in approaches, such as different makeup of council, agenda setting, state contexts, and governance (Dounay, 2008). This includes diversity within and between states, as often local P-20 initiatives are employed to address issues that may be regionalized or constructed more practically through local partnerships. Even at the state level within P-20 leadership councils, differences could include how often the council meets, the mission and authority of the council, and the funding of the council (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008).

The current study provides an updated look at the current state of P-20 councils today, as the movement has been episodic, but has recently experienced a resurgence due to the emphasis on college and career readiness at the national level (Patterson, 2011; Rippner, 2014). While P-20 councils were developed under ‘excellence’ reform as discussed earlier, the new focus on ‘career readiness’ has shifted the reform to include a focus on ‘relevance’ that provides a purpose to education. Schools are being reformed as the traditional model has become outdated and national high school redesigns are focusing on “rigor, relevance, and relationships- with academic rigor as the primary goal...” (Kazis, 2005, p.9). As Hagen states, “Across the country, state and local leaders are employing meaningful school reform efforts that accelerate the personal competence and academic development of students as a civic and economic duty” (2010, p. 15).

In addition to studying a recognized leader in the movement, the study also explores Tennessee, a state not often included in P-20 studies, yet previously known for its strong local councils. While most previous studies focus on policymakers at the state level, the current study

incorporates the interplay between state and local councils in order to gain a more in-depth look at the implementation of the reform (Werts & Brewer, 2015). States often adopt policy, but local groups have to put the policy into action (Patterson, 2011). This relationship was further stressed in a case profile of Georgia that recognized the importance of local councils as one of the state's lessons learned (Kettlewell et al., 2000).

Conclusion

Increasing numbers of people in the United States are expanding their time in school by seeking a postsecondary education. P-20 reform was developed decades ago as one means to address this growing need for further education. Yet, progress in the movement has varied between and within states as the more formalized movement phases out of its developmental stage. Leaders at the state and local level guide and develop the reform by providing an infrastructure that helps to decide the movement's priorities and strategies. P-20 initiatives in curriculum alignment, as well as credit articulation, dual enrollment, and longitudinal data systems have shown positive success (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008; Durand, 2011). However, typical measurements of success have weaknesses because studies often use severely limited definitions of progress –for example, test scores or graduation rates. Graduation rates are especially unreliable due to inflation of statistics (Losen, Orfield, & Balfanz, 2006). Thus, evaluations should consist of multiple dimensions to gain a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the P-20 movement (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008; Fleury, 2001; Walsh, 2009).

Despite some documented success and majority support, Rippner (2014) recently reported a decline in the number of P-20 councils in the United States. Numerous reports list barriers that may contribute to the failure of these councils, such as lack of resources (Mokher, 2008; Núñez & Oliva, 2009; Van de Water & Krueger, 2002; Venezia et al., 2006).

However, implementing and understanding large scale systematic reform requires time (Perna, 2014). As Hess (2008) points out in their critique of the reform “We cannot do everything...By too often implying that P-16 reform is a painless, technical effort to solder together disparate components of familiar machinery, advocates invite unintended headaches...” (p. 514). Because the movement is heavily based on leadership, understanding how leaders have interpreted and implemented the P-20 movement over time can provide insights into the sustainability of the movement across varying contexts. By studying the relationship among these policy contexts, designs, and implementation efforts of the P-20 movement in Texas and Tennessee, we can learn more about how these three dimensions have interacted to produce particular results, with potential to inform other P-20 councils across the U.S.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This study utilized case study methodology and interpretive policy analyses to explore the interplay of state and local context, development, and implementation of P-20 reform by leadership councils. The study design is informed by interpretivism (Yanow, 2000) and further guided by the theoretical framework of Kingdon's multiple streams model (Kingdon, 1995). The chapter begins with a description of implementation studies, philosophical foundations, and epistemologies employed. This grounding aligns with the research questions and the choice of methods explained in the remainder of the chapter.

Implementation Studies

Howlett and Cashore (2014) identify five stages of the policy making cycle that include: 1) agenda setting, 2) policy formation, 3) decision-making, 4) policy implementation, and 5) policy evaluation. However, researchers often skip the fourth step in their investigations; rather, choosing to conduct policy evaluation. However, I agree with others that studying policy implementation is an essential step of putting policy outcomes into perspective (Howlett & Cashore, 2014; Young & Lewis, 2015). In fact, the use of implementation studies in education coincides with the start of accountability reform in the 1960s and has continued to be useful in illustrating the complexity and motivations of all levels of the government (Diem, 2012; Odden, 1991; Werts & Brewer, 2015). While research, including the P-20 studies highlighted in the literature review, often focused on development, the expansion of analysis into implementation

helps policymakers and researchers to understand the difficulty in transitioning a policy into sustained practice and provides guidance on how to address transition issues.

The current study addresses the three key dimensions listed in Honig’s dimensions of contemporary education policy implementation in practice and research (2006) shown in Figure 1, which include, in no particular order, people, places, and policies. In the current study *the people* includes recognized leaders as well as their perception of how the policy influences their constituencies. *The places* include the context of case sites of Tennessee and Texas, as well as local and state levels. Finally, *the policies* include the P-20 reform plans and initiatives.

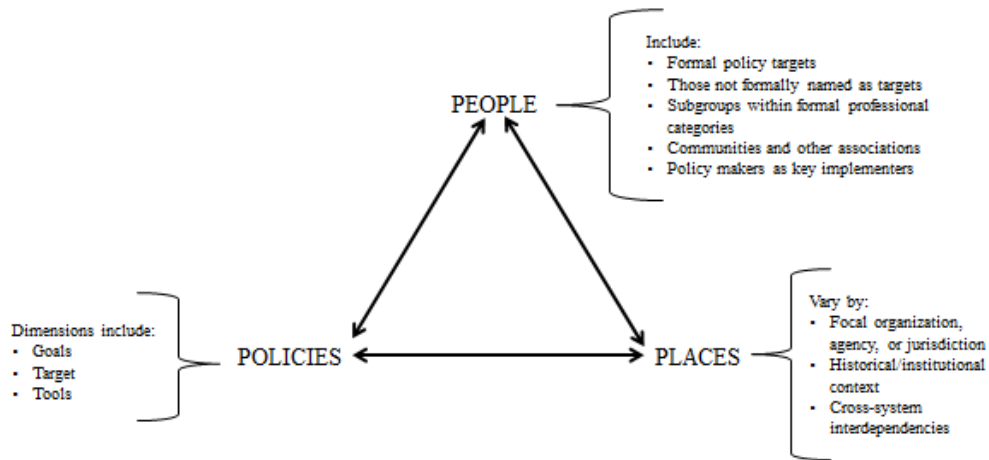


Figure 1. Honig’s dimensions of contemporary education policy implementation.

Note. Adapted from Honig, 2006.

The use of the triangle created out of multidirectional arrows helps to illustrate the intersectionality of the three dimensions of implementation. In the current study, all three dimensions are addressed through the methods employed in order understand the context of P-20 reform. Like Honig, I see “implementation as a highly contingent and situated process” (Honig,

2006, p. 19), which resulted in a narrative outcome of the reform movement, rather than an intangible universal truth.

Philosophical Foundations

Policy is often portrayed as being neutral, but in reality “Policy becomes, instead, a series of conclusions, choices, and rejections of alternatives...” (Rocheffort & Cobb, 1994; Fischer, 2003; Mansfield, et al., 2014). Interpretive policy analysts recognize the making of meaning that goes into policy development and implementation by using a different approach to studying policy, instead of more traditional processes such as a cost-benefit or comparative analysis (Yanow, 2000). This philosophy and the theoretical framework guided the methodology and analysis in order to better understand the interplay between context, development, and implementation in P-20 reform plans. By searching for contrasts between what policies say versus what they actually do, one can seek the “truth of policy (and thereby the state’s) intent” (Yanow, 2000, p. 9). This process includes engaging with the data to tell the stories of the policy stakeholders using a systematic process that, according to Yanow (2000), includes:

- 1) Identify the artifacts (e.g., policies, handbooks, websites, minutes, articles)
- 2) Identify communities of meaning (e.g., interviews with policy leaders at state and local level, business leaders, educational leaders)
- 3) Identify the discourses (e.g., common language employed, metaphors, definitions, rhetoric)
- 4) Identify the points of conflict (e.g., differing values and goals, resource allocation, problem definitions)
- 5) Taking action to present findings to audiences (e.g., learning to speak to different communities involved, sharing recommendations)

Contrary to other methods, there is not a single starting point as:

Instead, a research enters the hermeneutic-interpretive circle-spiral at any starting point, with whatever (prior) knowledge she has at that moment. Rather than a deductive or inductive rationale, interpretive research follows an abductive logic of inquiry: it begins with a puzzle, a surprise or a tension... (Yanow, 2014, p. 143).

Because of this philosophical assumption, the method is an iterative process in which earlier research and data collection informed later collection.

Epistemology

Because the current study is focused on the meaning-making of policy, this study largely relied on the philosophical analysis termed constructivism (Yanow, 2000; Yanow, 2014).

Constructivists see knowledge as constructed by individuals resulting in people forming their own perspectives of a situation that is influenced by their values and beliefs and socially determined values and beliefs (Paul, Graffam, & Fowler, 2005). Every individual constructing their own perspective leads to multiple ways to view an event or issue, as each participant shares their own story. How one frames a situation could impact their understanding and response (Spillane, 2006).

While the dominant epistemology is constructivism, it is important to recognize that not all those involved or affected by the policy are equals in the construction (Yanow, 2014). Policies grant privilege to certain groups (Yanow, 2014). In addition to constructivism, the study was guided by critical theory. Both theories view reality as constructed by those involved (Paul et al., 2005). Critical theorists recognize that this constructed reality is also influenced by different power dynamics. Yanow (2014) argues that while policies may appear neutral due to the language and manner in which they are presented, policies are still subject to the bias of the

dominant group manufacturing the policy and, thus, are an example of power dynamics within society. These two epistemologies guided the methodology and the type of knowledge or data sought; qualitative interviews were analyzed to “understand meaning within a given context, seeking a broad range of inputs and interpretations” (Paul et al., 2005, p. 46).

Public policy, both action and inaction, are the result of “political processes involving social interactions and the use of rationalizations and research” (Birkland, 2005; Mansfield, 2013; St. John, Daun-Barnett, Moronski-Chapman, 2013, p. 36). Using interpretive policy analysis can investigate the social interactions behind policy by showing how the meaning behind a policy evolves from stakeholders’ values and feelings (Yanow, 2000). As the policy making process is often not linear, nor as apolitical and rational as it appears (Mansfield, 2013; Wedel, Shore, Feldman & Lathrop, 2005). Critical policy analysts believe that “Each time we engage, invoke, or use an [policy] artifact; we reinforce, maintain, or change its underlying meaning(s)” (Yanow, 2000, p. 15). At the same time, interpretive policy analysts recognize the meaning behind policy may shift over time, which helps identify shifts in the sustainability of the movement throughout the states (Yanow, 2000). Through studying the relationship between the proposed intention of the policy and actual implementation of the policy, a shared narrative is created utilizing local experts and policy experts (Yanow, 2000).

The narrative of the P-20 movement is organized using Kingdon’s popular multiple streams policy framework, in which three process streams exist: “problem recognition, the formation and refining of policy proposals, and politics” (Kingdon, 1995, p.87; Young, Shepley, & Song, 2010). These streams are analyzed to see where the streams intertwine to open a “policy window” or fail to gain enough momentum requiring discontinuation or further change in addressing the problem of the educational pipeline (Kingdon, 1995). As education continues

to face numerous reform movements, Sharp (1994) points out policy issues have a limited and episodic life requiring flexibility within the reform movement in order for P-20 to stay relevant in educational policy.

Most recently, P-20 policy has returned to the forefront of policy agendas due to interpreted ‘crises’ that include reported poor college and career readiness and a weakened economy (Portz, 1996). As Portz discusses, these crises are socially defined having “different standards of judgment, different explanations of causation, and different solutions can be used” (1996, p. 372; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). Starting at the definition of a problem at state and local levels can help illustrate contrasts between “authored texts” at the state level and implementation at the local level (Yanow, 2000). Because the issues addressed in P-20 reform are both stable and commonly shared among states, a comparative policy analysis that utilizes Kingdon’s multiple streams across two case sites, Texas and Tennessee, is fitting in order to identify trends within the policy reform (Young, Shepley, & Song, 2010). Similar to the issue of reading presented in Young, Shepley, and Song’s study (2010), the issues surrounding P-20 reform are common and stable problems that face all states.

Data Collection

The primary methods of data collection for this study were document analysis and interviews, as these align well with interpretive studies and enable the researcher to discover and understand the discourses and points of conflict amongst policy artifacts and communities of meaning (Yanow, 2000). From these methods, the language used is the data collected and analyzed to answer the main research questions (Yanow, 2014). Based on the philosophical foundations, data collection was a continual process in which document analysis and interviews coincided. The analysis of language pulled from the interview transcriptions and document

analysis helped illustrate the different perceptions of leaders within the movement, as well as the context as the movement progressed. The next section provides an explanation of these methods, beginning with a brief introduction to the pilot study, followed by the two prominent methods used, document analysis and qualitative interviews.

Pilot Study

The pilot phase serving as the foundation for the current study was conducted to explore P-20 initiatives in Texas (Mansfield & Thachik, 2016; Thachik & Mansfield, 2014). In an earlier literature review of the movement across the nation, Texas was chosen due to being a recognized leader in the movement, as well as due to convenience sampling based on personal connections within the state. A total of 21 participants were interviewed over a four month period. Participants were contacted using a P-20 listserv, as well as snowball sampling based on recommendations from participants. The 21 participants included leaders from local or regional P-20 councils or similar organizations and state P-20 councils (Table 1). The objective of the pilot study was to explore P-20 leadership to focus future studies and to pilot test the semi-structured interview protocol. After conducting the initial interviews, the protocol was altered to help clarify questions, as well as to add an additional question regarding how councils address the needs of underrepresented groups. The themes from the pilot study were used to narrow the focus of the literature review in Chapter Two and were further developed into findings to be presented in Chapter Four.

Table 1.

Sample characteristics for pilot study.

Characteristic	Number of Participants
Leadership Level	
State	4
Local	17
Formally Recognized by State	
Yes	9
No	8
Not Applicable	4
Region of State	
East Texas	3
North Texas	5
West Texas	1
South Texas	4
Southeast Texas	1
Central Texas	1
Statewide	6
Gender	
Female	12
Male	9

Document Analysis

Starting with the document analysis provided context for the P-20 movement and how the movement has shifted over time. These documents provided a background for identifying the leaders of the “authored texts” and their intent (Yanow, 2000, p. 9). Policy artifacts examined in the document analysis included legal documents, websites, newspaper articles, evaluation reports, and meeting minutes that translated policy into practice (Wolcott, 1994; Yanow, 2000). The goal of the document analysis was to collect information on the context for the movement.

Rationale and design. The document analyses was systematic and collection began by analyzing the documents from state and local government and news sites within Tennessee and Texas. The search terms “p-20” or “p-16,” along with each of the state names, was placed into Google to help uncover other documents, such as blogs and similar agencies. Databases,

including the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Education Resource Complete (EBSCO), were searched using the same terms. Any recommended documents that emerged from interviews were added to the document analysis. Once the documents were collected, the data was reviewed for inclusion based on relevance to the current study's research questions, proximity of document to case site locations, and authenticity or reliability of document.

These documents helped demonstrate the language and symbols, as well as how these language and symbols have shifted over time to shape the P-20 reform movements in the state. Conducting the document analysis along with the interviews reinforced themes and led to the recruitment of additional participants that fit the study criteria. Data analysis included a constant comparative method, which resulted in tentative categories that lead to theories. These theories came as a result of three developing stages of coding that began with open coding, and then proceeded to determine relationships or axial coding, followed by refinement through selective coding (Merriam, 2009).

Documents. A total of 220 publicly available documents relating to the P-20 movement were collected. Documents ranged from the time period of 2002 to 2016. The document types included websites, blog posts, newspaper articles, meeting agendas and minutes, and reports. For Texas, a total of 115 documents were analyzed, which included 38 at the state level and 77 at the local level. For Tennessee, a total of 105 documents were analyzed, which included 53 at the state level and 52 at the local level. Appendix A provides a brief summary of characteristics of the documents used in this study.

Qualitative Interviews

The interviews provided the perspectives of the experiences and thoughts of leaders within each case site. As Yanow points out, these participants are local experts that can provide their personal “expert understanding of and practical reasoning about local conditions derived from lived experiences” (2000, p. 5).

Rationale and design. Based on experience from the pilot study, semi-structured interviews were conducted one-on-one between the participant and researcher. The semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B) allowed participant flexibility to respond to questions appropriate to their experience. A foundation of similar questions aids in comparing and contrasting experiences, but at the same time allowed both the participant and interviewer to modify the questions as the interview developed. The interview also utilized open-ended questions to prompt conversations. Expanding on the interview protocol from the pilot study helped to ensure the questions were understandable and prompted answers fitting the research questions.

Participants were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling (Henry, 1990; Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Initial participants were contacted based on local and state listservs of P-20 leaders. These leaders included representatives from the community, K-12 and higher education, businesses, government, and non-governmental organizations. At the conclusion of interviews, participants were also asked if they knew of any additional leaders who should be contacted for the study.

Participants were invited to participate in the study through one of three avenues: in-person invitation, e-mail, or telephone (see Appendices C & D). After participants consented to the study, an hour long semi-structured interview was conducted. The interviews were recorded

using an audio recorder to ensure a more accurate transcription of responses (Merriam, 2009). Only one interview was not recorded at the request of the participant, but detailed notes were taken during the interview.

These transcriptions were coded through both systematic and open coding (Young et al., 2010; Yanow, 2014). The use of both of these methods allowed themes to emerge based on literature review findings, while still allowing for new themes to develop (Rippner, 2014). Based on the methodology, there were two stages of analysis, within-case and cross-case (Merriam, 2009). Comparisons are further broken down, according to Charmaz, by comparisons between actors, within transcripts, within key events, within categories, and between categories (2010).

Participants. A total of thirty-four participants contributed to the current study after being recruited via snowball sampling. These participants self-selected to participate after responding to an email or phone request (see Appendices C and D). Of the 34 participants, 11 participants were involved in Tennessee's P-20 movement, while the remaining 23 participants were involved in Texas' P-20 movement. For Texas, the 21 participants from the initial pilot study were included in the current study's findings. Table 2 contains sample characteristics for participants in the study. To ensure confidentiality and protect the identities of the participants, pseudonyms are used to present the findings (see Appendix E for list of pseudonyms). Since regional diversity was an important component of the study, the geographic distribution of the councils which contributed interviews are included in Appendix F and G, however these locations are reported in aggregate form to help protect the confidentiality of participants. Only one star was placed in each region included in the study, however, some geographic regions included multiple interviews.

Table 2.

Sample characteristics for current study.

State	Characteristic	Number of Participants
Texas	Leadership Level	
	State	4
	Local	19
	Formally Recognized by State	
	Yes	11
	No	8
	Not Applicable	4
	Region of State	
	East Texas	4
	North Texas	5
	West Texas	1
	South Texas	5
	Southeast Texas	1
	Central Texas	1
	Statewide	6
	Gender	
	Female	13
Male	10	
Tennessee	Leadership Level	
	State	2
	Local	9
	Formally Recognized by State	
	Yes	7
	No	2
	Not Applicable	2
	Region of State	
	West Tennessee	2
	Middle Tennessee	7
	East Tennessee	2
	Gender	
Female	8	
Male	3	

Steps to Enhance Credibility and Dependability

Maxwell (2006) discusses researcher bias and reactivity as two of the most commonly occurring threats in qualitative research. In order to address these threats and strengthen the current study, multiple techniques were employed to ensure credibility and dependability. To

ensure dependability, often described as consistency of the measure, I conducted an audit of the study to document changes made during the research process and the reasoning behind those changes (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Even though I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B), I engaged in an iterative process that required me to adapt my methods as the process developed due to emerging findings (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The use of a journal helped me track changes to the study protocol.

To address credibility and strengthen my findings, I utilized several techniques from both Maxwell's validity checklist (2006) and Mertens & Wilson's validity/credibility list (2012). First, my study was intensive and long-term, in order to collect "rich" data to provide a fuller picture of the subject studied. Conducting in-depth one-on-one interviews that ranged from half an hour to an hour is an example of this rich data collection. This intensive involvement provided more detailed data that countered bias and provided additional support for conclusions. It also protected me from "premature closure" (Mertens & Wilson, 2012), which would result in incorrect findings due to a lack of data. In conjunction with intense engagement in the current study, I utilized a variety of data sources by interviewing multiple people, as well as also conducting a document analysis to reinforce findings. As another precaution, a random sample of four interview transcriptions were reviewed by two additional people with master's degrees, one in education and one in business, for code checking (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Both of these reviews resulted in an average reliability rating of 80.38%, which is considered high for between-rater reliability. In addition to an audit journal, I kept a reflective journal, as recommended by Merten and Wilson (2012), to track my assumptions throughout the study. Keeping a reflective journal helped me to understand my bias going into the study and findings. The final two recommended techniques of Maxwell (2006) used in the current study included the

use of comparisons both within and between states, as well as searching for discrepant cases. These techniques required thorough examination and support for any conclusions drawn.

Conclusion

The qualitative methods presented in this chapter lead to a better understanding of the context, development, and implementation of P-20 reform in Texas and Tennessee. Utilizing document analysis and interviews captures the spectrum of leadership perspectives surrounding the reform. Exploring the movement with a cross-case comparison between two varying states illustrates the roles context and design play in the development and implementation of the movement across the United States.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The current study explored the policy context, design, and implementation of the P-20 movement and the respective leadership councils in Texas and Tennessee. The findings from the interviews and document analyses were woven together to present the following within-case narratives for the P-20 movement in each state. Data are presented in aggregate form based on themes and ideas that supported the central research question, as well as with direct quotations that provide further illustrations and background of these themes. Thirty-four participants took part in this research study. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms are used for direct quotes. Appendix E includes the pseudonyms and demographic information for the participants; however, geographic locations have been removed to help ensure confidentiality. In addition to interviews, I collected and analyzed over 200 policy artifacts. The collection and coding of the artifacts was conducted separately from the interviews. While in some cases the collection of artifacts and interviewees does overlap, the interviewees' responses and the policy artifacts were not grouped together and, where presented, do not necessarily correspond to the interviewee's councils.

Emerging from the coding is a complex array of people, policies, and places that informed the respective P-20 movements. Due to the evolving nature, the findings are presented in a chronological manner beginning with the history and context of P-20 that helps situate the emergence and development of P-20 within each state. Appendices H and I include a brief timeline of major P-20 events discussed by participants. The findings then lead to a discussion

of the implementation of P-20 and its current status with a focus on goal attainment. Finally, each within-case analysis closes with a reflection on the sustainability of the movement moving forward. The analyses of the within-case narratives served as the foundation for the cross-case analysis by demonstrating the similarities and contrasts as the movement progressed in different regions. It is important to note that while throughout the larger study, I referred to the movement as P-20 to be more inclusive of the broader and growing movement; within each case study the documents and participants utilize their state's terminology of 'P-16.' The difference in terminology, as well as meaning behind the rhetoric, is further discussed in the conclusion.

Case #1: State of Texas

History and Context

Prior to the start of P-20 councils, participants recognized a convergence of issues that required Texas to take action. The following section begins by describing the emerging problem of changing state demographics. Participants saw the face of Texas was changing and perceived this as problematic for the future of Texas, especially for the changing state economy. With the recognition that more education was needed in the new economy, participants considered P-16 alignment as the best policy solution. A political mood focused on education reform and further established by the election of Governor Rick Perry, helped carry the P-16 policy idea forward.

The changing face of Texas. The majority of participants reported the issue of changing demographics in Texas as the main factor in influencing the need for P-20 councils. As a 1997 report by state demographer Steve Murdock pointed out, Texas would soon become a majority minority state. The population was changing in four major ways: 1) younger age; 2) lower socioeconomic status; 3) more racially/ethnically diverse; and 4) changes in family composition. Considering each separately, these demographic groups faced barriers within the current

educational system, which led to lower levels of attainment. Taken together, various combinations of these factors were even stronger indicators of lack of educational attainment. Bruce shared his perspective on the achievement gap: “So when you think about sort of that pipeline, what we have is that our students of color are disproportionately affected. They are not achieving at rates of their white peers.” The state also recognized this as an issue, but mostly in terms of the changing economy requiring higher levels of educational attainment. Those at the intersection of the above demographics were more likely to experience “the problem of poverty,” as described by Keith.

There was also a perceived lack of a postsecondary-going culture in some communities and, as Renee pointed out, “[Education] just can’t stop at the high school graduation” anymore. The industry in Texas was changing to the knowledge-based economy seen around the globe, which resulted in more global competition. Lennie pointed out that minority populations were disproportionately affected: “You know, we’re based in Texas, so we’ve got the data points going the wrong way. The fastest growing segments of our population have the lowest college-going and completion.” Participants described some of the reasons attributing to the different levels of attainment, including the increase in the number of single parent/caregiver homes and the rise of students working while obtaining an education. As Tony shared, “...one of the major influencers was family and the lack of family members who had participated in higher education before.” Tony also spoke about the sheer size of Texas describing how population and immigration patterns look different across the state. Numerous regional differences exist in an expansive state with both urban and rural areas. Another P-16 leader, Antoine, reiterates this point saying, “After all, we’re so large that we’ve got it all so to speak, across the board. Big cities, little cities, no cities, that kind of thing, so obviously we have a really large Spanish

population, so we take that into account too.” This population growth was viewed as a major concern for the Texas school systems as Caterina described the unwieldy number of new kindergarten classes born in the state each day. Bennett pointed out the enormity of the Texas educational system compared to other states, concluding:

...so when you’re dealing with 1200 school districts and almost 75 colleges and community colleges, it’s very difficult to get everyone on the same page and align everybody from pre-kindergarten to college; along with the fact that we make up about 10% of the U.S. student population, so sheer size and geographic issue, just distance, makes it really hard...

Addressing educational disparities through alignment. Participants recalled alignment as one of the only solutions seriously considered to address the problem of a growing population with low levels of educational attainment. Schools no longer looked the same as they did in the past, so a new approach was required. Mike tried to point this out to his fellow council members saying:

... the demographics have changed since they [P-16 council members] went to school. And it’s not that the schools are bad. If they were to go sit in a class it would be almost identical to what they saw (not that that’s a good thing)...but if they looked around the room they would not be in the majority.

Schools had to adjust to a new context as the history of separate K-12 and higher education institutions was no longer working. As Keith points out, “You know it’s a large educational ecosystem; yet, with common thoughts between them are so similar, yet the partnerships between them are scarce.” School districts, specifically the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for K-12 and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (TX-HECB), needed to align and

work together to resolve the problems facing the new Texas population and the new Texas economy. Trent further illustrates this issue:

So I think, when I talk about the state agencies and their work I often think of a little cartoon that demonstrates three guys in a boat and there's a hole in one side of the boat, and one side is feverishly trying to get the water out of the boat, and the other two guys are sitting on the other side of the boat saying, "Glad the hole is not on our side." But it's all sinking. I think many state organizations recognize that they are in the same boat together.

Difficulties are further compounded if alignment is not addressed early on as students continually fall behind or drop out as each stage of education builds on the previous years. Another problem contributing to the separateness of K-12 and higher education structures is de facto school segregation within districts based on race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Two participants described geographic divisions within their city that resulted in two separate school systems for different population groups.

Participants felt a majority of the community saw alignment, under the guidance of P-16 councils, as a commonsense approach that was widely accepted. Few criticisms of alignment were heard and few other alternatives were considered as a solution to Texas' problem. Frances states:

I haven't heard anyone tell me yet, "We can't do this. This is not a logical approach. You're just trying to do something that's going to burn rubber and not move you on the highway." I've never heard anybody tell me it doesn't make sense. Everybody seems to believe strongly that this is a good initiative. It shouldn't be our only initiative, but it's one that really can have meaningful impact.

Alignment as a policy solution could include everyone in the process and “it gives everybody a way to play that is mutually beneficial to them” according to Frances. Alignment changed the status quo of disconnected systems as Renee reported:

...the P-16 council has the ability to pull together different entities such as our higher education institutions, our skills training center, our workforce, our public schools and pull all of those people together to solve the issues in our community. And I think just the fact that there really is no organization that brings together all those entities except the P-16 council. And that’s what makes it a powerful force that can really make things happen.

A political and education-reform minded mood. In the 1990s, Texas was known for leading the nation in several education reforms, including their accountability programs, standards setting, and data systems, as well as a focus on tech prep, which Sheila called the “predecessor of P-16.” The 1990s also marked the conclusion of three very public school finance equity cases that received national attention (for more information see *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*, and subsequent case decisions). While republicans have had steady control over the state throughout this time, change in leadership was occurring around 2001 with the election of a new governor, Rick Perry, in 2001. In addition, a new higher education plan known as *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan* was implemented. Another factor that might have facilitated the changing political mood is the unique reporting structure of education entities: They report to the legislature, not to the governor and their administration. For Antoine, this structure impacted the educational system, since the “Legislature meets once every two years...traditionally things change every time the group meets...”

These three streams of a common and urgent problem emerging, the commonsense solution of alignment, and a political mood open to education reforms contributed to making P-16 and their associated councils a priority for the state. As read in *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan*, “Texas stands at a crossroads” that requires “...bold steps for the future success of its people.” Solutions were needed to address the issue of college and career readiness with a focus on equity and closing the gaps in attainment for the growing majority-minority population.

Policy Design and Implementation

As stated in one council’s bylaws, “An education system should be responsive to the context of its times.” Texas sought to do just that by establishing P-20 councils at the state and local level. To several participants, such as Sophia, creating P-20 councils was ‘a no-brainer.’ This section shares the meaning making around the design and implementation of these councils, the interaction between state and local councils, and what participants felt were key elements in their policy design and implementation. For a further breakdown of the timeline of Texas’ P-16 policy design and implantation, see Appendix H.

Development of Texas’ State P-16 Council. Before Texas P-16 councils were made mandatory by the 78th Legislature in 2003, a voluntary council existed known as the Public Education/Higher Education Coordinating Group. This group was formed in 1998 by the TEA and TX-HECB, but dissolved with the enactment of the 2003 statute creating the mandatory council. Sec. 61.076 of the statute reads:

It is the policy of the State of Texas that the entire system of education supported with public funds be coordinated to provide the citizens with efficient, effective, and high quality educational services and activities. The P-16 council, in conjunction with other agencies as may be appropriate, shall ensure that long-range plans and educational

programs for the state complement the functioning of the entire system of public education, extending from early childhood education through postgraduate study.

The code goes on to provide direction to the establishment of the council by providing guidelines on membership, number of meetings, purpose, and accountability of the council.

Membership on the state council includes the commissioners of TEA and TX-HECB, who alternate as co-chairs of the committee every two years. Additional members include the executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission, executive director of the State Board for Educator Certification, commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, as well as up to six additional representatives appointed at the discretion of the co-chairs.

Two years later, in 2005, the legislature altered membership on the council to include a representative from the health industry. The council was required to meet at least quarterly. State council minutes show these meetings commonly included agency updates, presentations and panels of various P-20 related initiatives, data sharing, and discussions on future issues. At one meeting, a presenter said it was the job of the state council and similar advisory committees to determine what to do with the abundant information and data presented. As such, advisory committees served to accomplish the work of the state council in between regular meetings. The original mandate also required regular reports to the governing bodies. Both the TX-HECB and TEA created departments within their organization to assist the council's work. TX-HECB created P-16 Initiatives which recently underwent a name change in the past year to the Division of College and Career Readiness, while the TEA created the Office of P-16 Coordination in 2004.

Development of Texas' local councils. The creation of the state council paved the way for the development of local councils, as Lucia stated:

...the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board actually initiated the P-16 movement in Texas and I mean, if they hadn't taken that on and said this is important- maybe it's because the Legislature put the responsibility on them to increase the number of kids entering and graduating from college. So, from that perspective, the state has not only been supportive, but the catalyst that made this happen.

In 2006, the 79th Legislature established code 61.0762, which sought to create programs to enhance student success. Regional and local P-16 councils developed, although some had previously existed across the state, under this code in order to “support the participation and success goals in the state’s 2000 higher education plan known as ‘*Closing the Gaps.*’” *Closing the Gaps* included a goal for increasing higher education participation: “By 2015, close the gaps in participation rates across Texas to add 500,000 more students.” As well as a goal for improving student success: “By 2015, increase by 50 percent the number of degrees, certificates, and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs.” These two overarching goals provided direction for the goal-setting of local councils.

The state provided an organizational structure and a list of important components to be considered in developing local councils, which included: identifying a coordinating body and fiscal agent, determining the geographic coverage, setting up a leadership group, creating a strategic plan limited to six or less goals that align with those of the state, defining measures, dedicating money and staff to the council, meeting at least quarterly, and publically reporting about the council’s work. Several documents and participants cited that higher education institutes should serve as the host sites. At a 2011 state meeting it was stated, “There is nothing more fundamental than what is going on at the local level, particularly at community colleges that have to bear the lion’s share of the work in this area.” The community college also had

established districts that could help determine the geographic boundaries for this work. Local councils had the option to apply for recognition by the state. State recognition came with incentives that included support services from the P-16 outreach office at the state level, online posting of council events, statewide professional development activities, and inclusion on an online directory.

Councils had the opportunity to work within state parameters to set up their local council as they saw fit for their region, as Bruce points out:

What you'll find - and I think this would be interesting in your work - as you move to different cities, and you see different cradle-to-career groups, they all kind of have a different approach. They will all be a product of their community, so whatever that means, whether they're in a district that's very large, very small, very unified or otherwise. And you'll find that those qualities have an effect on how they operate, how they organize. Even if the core tenants are the same, you'll find some distinctions in how they do their work.

By 2011, the state helped to establish and recognize 40 local councils. However, not all P-20 councils sought state support, so additional councils existed. As Beverly points out, "Yeah, there are a lot of organizations. They call them collaborations or you know, just a plain old non-profit. We could be a non-profit with direct services, but we don't do direct services." In addition to variation in whether councils received state support- and differing levels of state support- variation among local councils also existed due to their stage of development. Renee shares how her council developed and changed over time:

When we started we did not have a leadership commission. We didn't have a presiding officer and so it's really kind of taken shape since then. We've strengthened our bylaws

and we have strategies and goals we look at each year and try to really look at what we need in this area... I mean, there's still a long way to go. There's still so much that needs to be done as far as let's look at the state and what do we need to do as a result of that? So we're still young and still learning and we're pleased with what we've been able to do to this point.

Interaction between state and local councils. Participants from recognized local councils found strong state support early in the movement, which included the incentives for recognition mentioned earlier. Additional support came from state convened P-16 institutes that allowed councils to share and learn about best practices and new initiatives occurring at the local level. Renee highlighted the benefit of interacting with other councils:

The other thing that made a huge difference is because there was this support we were able to meet as councils at the state level... three times a year. Three times a year we would get together to see what other people were doing and as a new employee back when I started, if it hadn't been for that, I would not have known what to do or how you get people together or what kind of projects are going on. It was because of those meetings we were able to share and ask each other questions - see how other councils were working and truly, that's how I got my start.

The state also provided grants to assist new councils. One local P-20 council even had a contract with the state, outlining the services and deliverables to be provided between the local and state entities. In 2010, the state rewarded new councils between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Other support included the hiring of state college readiness advisors across the state. The state and local councils interacted through the P-16 Regional Council State Network which, according to a document on the P-16 council communication structure, "will be comprised of

representatives from the P-16 Regional Councils in Texas. The main role of the Network is to serve as the voice for P-16 Regional Councils to communicate their issues, updates, and concerns with the state council.” In addition, minutes at both the state and local level show cross-over between the two levels as state representatives provided updates and presentations to local councils and local councils shared best practices to the larger state council. The strong initial support and interaction has since waned, as both Caterina and Oliver were unclear if the state council was even still meeting. Lucia, who initially referred to the state as the catalyst for the movement, noted the inconsistent support saying, “They haven’t backed away from it and said they don’t believe in this anymore. But they haven’t been putting money into it like they used to and nobody else has picked that up. Everyone’s pretty much on their own.”

Key elements for establishing a council. While participants’ councils varied in formation, three themes emerged consistently as key elements during policy design and development. These three characteristics were: honest conversation, human capital, and a framework for action. First, participants emphasized the importance of council members engaging in open and honest conversation regarding the problem, the current data, as well as the purpose of the council. The thought was that these conversations would serve as the foundation for the council by establishing trust and credibility. This was especially important for council members coming from different sectors. While participants thought collaboration was important, at times the participants still reported seeing territoriality at initial meetings in regards to people finger pointing or refusing to share data. This territoriality can pose a huge problem in uncovering the real problems in the community. Some participants reported that, at times, members in their council became defensive about the data and current outcomes. Laurie agreed, making the point that without an open conversation you will not have true collaboration:

... the conversations have always been hard and some of that is around territoriality. Some of that is around privilege- higher education having more of that than K-12. Some of that is around different vocabularies, but the core problem that gets in the way is not those things, but a reluctance to challenge each other and to have truly honest conversations. So people talk about where we come from- one's Venus and one's Mars. We don't talk the same way. And all those things are true, but in the end, the biggest barrier to real collaboration is a refusal to be honest about the problem.

Having an honest conversation is especially important in regards to talking about equity issues, since these academic gaps were the impetus for creating local councils. Participants reported mixed success in addressing race. Sheila stated, "This region is 90% Hispanic, so as such, that's pretty much all that's addressed." Whereas other participants talked about their councils walking around the issue of race, especially in P-20 councils where a majority of the members are White. Mike commented, "I mean, I think everyone knows it's there. People walk around the issue, but everyone knows what you're talking about..." Some strategies to overcome this barrier include utilizing the data to begin the discussion. Laurie suggests:

I mean, in our work, we knew from the get-go that if there were just K-12 and higher education people in the room, we would never get any place because they would not have honest conversations and whatever. So we insisted whatever the feistiest community-based organization that really represented moms and dads in that community had to be at the table.

Participants saw honest communication as a necessary design element to bring about change in collaboration and break down the walls that traditionally have kept sectors separate.

The movement's focus on collaboration led to a second key component within policy design, which is human capital. This human capital requires "not just teachers and school leaders, but also policy makers, diversity of perspectives, and leadership roles." P-20 councils need leaders with power and authority to bring about change, but in some cases this didn't always happen. As Lucia mentioned, when talking about the start of her council, "I didn't see leadership. I saw worker bees, people that already had more to do than they could, taking time out to come and talk to each other." In addition to leadership, and in some cases the emphasis on high-level leadership, several participants reported the critical element of staffing for the council. For a leadership driven movement, staffing of the council could provide on-going support and focus as Caterina shared:

Well, a P-16 council I think needs an on-going staff, an executive director, several other staff, a committed board... I think P-16 council work takes a lot of central facilitation and I say that because the P-16 work is not at the top of the job description of anyone who's active. This is something people do out of commitment and personal value, because they see the organizational value. But there's no pressure on them from a supervisor to get right after that, which means that when a meeting is held of a P-16 council group, somebody needs to send out the reminders. Somebody needs to take the notes. Somebody needs to keep things moving in a way that you sometimes can't expect volunteers to do.

The people who make up the P-20 council set the foundation for the council and influence the progress of the work.

Finally, participants felt a more formal framework outlining a theory of change was needed in order to successfully shift from policy design to policy implementation. Without a

new framework model Mike found the P-20 meetings were “just additional meetings for us.” While TX-HECB did provide a basic framework, Oliver found it to be too simplistic which impeded true change:

They [a local P-16 council] said, “we’re using this coordinating board process,” which by the way, the difference is it sat multisector people at the table, but it didn’t say you needed CEOs. It said you needed data, but it was very unclear about the data sources and that sort of thing. It did not have an operating process when you get your strategizing group together. It assumes people will come together and out of good will try to make some progress around some issues.

Oliver did not find this to be the case, so his council utilized a more developed and stricter collective impact framework. Trent stressed that this framework had to ‘be able to support innovation and support these types of collaborations in ways that haven’t been in place in the past.” A new framework needed to be established in order to bring about the change sought through policy design.

Goal Attainment

Setting goals is an important first step in the policy design so progress can be measured; however, according to the executive summary of the Office of P-16 Coordination, “Measuring the successfulness of such a far-reaching program is not an easy task.” Again, the variation in councils has resulted in different levels of goal attainment. But, as Trent pointed out, efforts and results appear to be moving in the right direction:

I think what is exciting about these pieces of work that are taking shape in the cradle-to-career initiatives are first and foremost a common and clear understanding of what the goals truly are... Some were running towards those goals. Some were walking towards

them. Some were just standing there looking at them, but at least everyone was faced in the right direction. That is huge...

Tori, Lucia, and Sheila also shared the perception that progress is moving in the right direction; albeit, this progress may be slow and minimal.

State goal for ‘Closing the Gaps.’ Most local councils were established to improve student success as related to the state higher education plan of *Closing the Gaps*. While the plan had four overall goals (closing the gaps in participation, success, excellence, and research), P-20 councils focused mostly on the first two goals, closing the gaps in participation and success in higher education. According to the most recent (2015) progress report, the state has met- or almost- met all of the benchmarks and goals, although some of the benchmarks set in the original policy document have been adjusted over time. A more detailed breakdown of the progress towards the specific targets for each goal is provided in Appendix I.

Table 3

Texas state Closing the Gap progress on outcome measures

Goal	Benchmark	Number of Targets	Status (according to 2015 progress report)
Close the gaps in participation	By 2015, close the gaps in participation rates across Texas to add 630,000 more students.	4	Almost Met
Close the gaps in success	By 2015, increase by 50% the number of degrees, certificates and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs	10	Met
Close the gaps in excellence	By 2015, substantially increase the number of nationally recognized programs or services at colleges and universities in Texas.	6	Almost Met
Close the gaps in research	By 2015, increase the level of federal science and engineering research funding for Texas institutions by 50% to \$1.3 billion.	2	Almost Met

Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2000). Closing the gaps: The Texas higher education plan; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *Closing the Gaps* 2015 progress report; The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *Closing the Gaps* goals and targets summary.

For participation, the goal was to increase the number of students in higher education with a revised goal in 2005 of increasing enrollment between 2000-2015 by 500,000 or 5.9%.

The 2015 progress report indicates the goal for total enrollment is within reach at 5.7%.

However, the state also set targets by ethnicity and while participation has increased across all categories, not all goals will be met, such as the target for Hispanic enrollment. The second goal sought not just to increase access to postsecondary options, but to increase the total number of degrees awarded: “By 2015, award 210,000 undergraduate degrees, certificates, and other

identifiable student successes from high-quality programs.” Again, while the state reached this goal in 2011, the state did not meet all of the targets, especially relating to STEM degree completion. While the state is showing progress across participation and success, it has proven difficult, if not impossible, to determine any direct impact P-20 councils have had on these goals and targets. For example, since these goals are statewide targets, other interest groups with similar goals may also influence the results. This is made even more difficult by the fact that some P-16 councils just sought to improve success and change the culture in general without establishing specific numeric measures. In 2012, the Senate Higher Education Committee sought to remedy that problem by recommending that “P-16 councils should shift their goal from general student success to specific outcomes.”

Barriers to goal attainment. Participants struggled in defining success for their local council and the measures they would use to demonstrate their councils had achieved success. These barriers to achieving goal attainment included: 1) the challenges associated with measuring a complex system; 2) adequate time to show results; 3) lack of measurable outcomes; and 4) problem hopping. P-20 councils are striving to measure a large and complex system. As Sue described, “It’s kind of esoteric when you think about it.” As a result, participants reported having to tackle the issue “piece-meal,” “in baby steps,” or by “taking small bites of this elephant.” Participants shared the belief that “A P-16 can’t do it all;” thus, councils are left having to make compromises in what actions and measures they can use. This approach may not always result in positive change, as Bruce views goal attainment as an uphill battle:

No matter how you do this, you’re dealing with a very large, very complex system and a large set of uncoordinated actors in a world of misalignment, so it’s all the makings of a change movement that’s not supposed to work, so from that perspective we’re always

fighting an uphill battle. I think that's the piece in front of us and our challenge is always being able to demonstrate efficacy and outcomes. That's always the bottom line for us is to find those opportunities to say, 'Yes, we are moving the needle and this is how and this is how we can do it again and let's do it.' That's always a challenge we're working against when working with such a slow moving anchor and trying to turn it around.

P-20 councils often start small by focusing on an identified school, region, or population, but this left Trent to question whether this was a success when the movement is aimed at aligning the system for all students: "It can't be 'I have a nice little program that serves 20 kids and they're all successful and they all get into college and everything.' Well that's great for those 20 kids, but I have five million in the state of Texas." The focus on the systems level leaves few metrics for councils to utilize or isolate in order to determine their impact.

A second issue in measuring such a complex system is the issue of time. As Sophia states, "I would say the legislature wants to see immediacy." However, this large scale system change requires time, but as Lucia points out, "slow" is not the American mentality as "we've got to do something and we've got to do it right now." Often, in education, if a reform isn't showing progress effectively and early, it is replaced by a new initiative due to the fear of harming kids. But as Lucia believes, councils haven't been around long enough to really see the change or immediate returns. Rich sums up this issue:

I think one thing to keep in mind about the cradle-to-career movement is that it's really trying to attack systemic change, which quite honestly just takes time. Outside of a few pilot projects that we're doing to help spur that change... mean they'll tell you it took them 5-6 years to see real change across the entire community and I think that real systemic change has been difficult. There's not an easy answer or easy solution that's

available. I can't say that we're seeing, we're [young]; I can't say that we're starting to see these big changes in numbers, especially because the first year and a half is just getting people at the same table.

Councils struggled to show their effectiveness, outside of anecdotal evidence, when they are still in the process of forming and developing as a council. Also, measuring a child as they progress throughout the educational pipeline would require a more longitudinal approach which takes time to show effects.

It can be difficult to show change when the council is still focusing on setting up the collaboration or if their primary goal is to be an informational organization. As Beverly points out, some P-20 councils are set up more as a think-tank than a direct service provider:

They [a P-16 council] were meeting. They had the right players, but they didn't have the framework for implementation. They just had it for ideas and so that was one of the problems with the P-16 movement in Texas is that it was mostly ideas and talking to each other and not many outcomes.

Not all councils were outcome driven, but as Lucia said, "What I can show is a difference in effort." A problem related to lack of outcomes was termed 'problem hopping.' That is, some participants talked about the lack of outcomes resulting from their council switching focus from among different P-20 areas. For example, one participant talked about her council focusing on teacher professional development one year, followed by focusing on college access the following year. This shift in initiatives and goals results in a lack of consistent monitoring and measuring of specified outcomes. Lucia stressed the importance in sticking with an initiative and evaluating as you go, so that programs can be tweaked without simply being deemed as a failure at the end.

Despite these barriers to goal attainment, Texas has a strong data system known as the Texas Pk-16 Public Education Information Resource, which tracks student data across the education spectrum. All stakeholders have access to this public information provided by TEA and TX-HECB. Not to mention that many of the leaders who helped build and work with the strong state data system are still employed today, which helps with consistency in leadership of the data. As Lennie says:

...having strong data systems to, you know, if you don't have a cohesive system from pre-K all the way to college you can't track where they are going. You don't know if you are doing well or not. You don't know if there is change or if change mattered.... So [state] data systems, strong P-16 data systems and proper security in place for confidential and privacy, but having those data systems, even education systems have access to [state] data which is by far an effort.

While data is important to help identify problems and track progress towards goal attainment, Mike cautioned, "Don't just look at data, understand the context of the data." Due to the differences across regions in Texas and the contextual nature of the P-20 movement, it's important to not just take the numbers at face value. In Texas, the P-20 councils are still moving towards goal attainment, or as Bennett says, "We're still trying to fight...that good fight here in Texas."

Interaction of Policy Design and Context

Participants went on to discuss issues that have arisen since the development of the state and local councils, which have interacted and influenced the larger movement. These issues included changes in state policy and the emergence of new programs and policies at the state

level, adapting based on understandings of P-20 movements outside of the state, and the redefining of college and career readiness.

Throughout the establishment and continued existence of Texas' P-20 councils, the state has had steady gubernatorial leadership with Governor Rick Perry at the helm. As Bennett points out:

Governor Perry has been around for a while, so there was clear leadership at the governor's level and that alone allows, you know, some consistency as far as appointed positions and board membership and that even alignment with the party is something the party continued to push for at the state. The political party is his political party and that at least allowed us to maintain some consistency.

Despite consistency at the gubernatorial position and within his political party, the state has still experienced change in legislature membership resulting in different state policies and programs. While the state might have provided consistent support in the beginning, an economic recession turned the policy design of P-20 into what some participants perceived as an unfunded mandate with only a specific amount of grant funding available. Budget cuts as a result of the recession were not just limited to P-20 councils, as Beverly shares, "I mean our state, a couple of years ago, pulled out five billion dollars with the money into the education system and then subsequently two years later they are starting to put the money back in..." Often with budget cuts, schools have to cut what is perceived as extra, which sometimes includes special programs that fit under P-20 initiatives. As a result, these cuts and changes in programmatic offerings can hamper progress. As Frances said, "We are still struggling there," as budgets rebound from earlier cuts.

While state financial support may be inconsistent, P-20 councils have benefited from the emergence of other state level organizations and programs with similar goals. Many of these programs interacted with participants' councils. Participants mentioned specific programs, such as *Complete College America*, *TG Texas*, and *Generation TX*, that have emerged and strengthened their work (see Appendix H for a timeline related to Texas' P-16 movement). *Complete College America* was established in 2009 and Texas became a member of their alliance of states to help improve college attainment rates. *TG Texas* is a non-profit that helps address the issue of access, especially when it comes to affordability of postsecondary options. The third program is *Generation TX*, which was established in 2010 with initial funding provided by TX-HECB to help improve college access by creating a statewide marketing campaign aimed at promoting a college-going culture. Participants saw these three programs as complementing the work of the councils. Laurie specifically mentioned *Complete College America* for likely helping to promote higher education student success, rather than just access, saying, "I'd say probably the *Complete College America*...put more emphasis on completing." Additionally, while participants reported the state P-16 council as less active in the past few years, another statewide public-private partnership known as *Educate Texas* has stepped up, which Oliver describes as "a state collective impact consortium."

These alliances and state entities helped promote the sharing of best practices among P-20 councils across Texas and across the United States. Laurie discussed how the addition of pre-K within the state of Georgia's councils encouraged the addition of pre-K and early childhood education within Texas. In addition, participants mentioned looking at best practices outside of the state. For example, when Oliver was looking for a framework for his council, he learned

about *Strive Together*'s collective impact framework, which altered his council's design and future work.

The design of P-20 councils and initiatives were also mediated by the addition of a career readiness problem and the redefining of college readiness. Initially, the work of local councils surrounded college readiness as related to the state's higher education master plan. However, career readiness was added to their work, especially with the establishment of House Bill 5 in 2005, which emphasized the importance of career readiness. As Bennett shared:

One of the things I've seen change - and this is more recent thing over the last four or five years - is early on everyone was really clear on P-16, which means preschool all the way to the graduation of college. Well, more recently, the college talk has gone away and it's more of a workforce discussion...

Tied into the discussion of career readiness was the redefining of college readiness from a four-year focus to also include two-year degrees and certifications. Lucia found it difficult to explain this change in college readiness, especially to parents, as she described it as a "major, major culture intervention..." Many of the positions in the changing economy, especially in Texas, do not require a bachelor's degree. As Mike stated:

We're not interested in everyone getting a bachelor's degree in biology, I mean who cares? We'd create a problem. We wouldn't have any workers. Everybody would be sitting at a desk somewhere.

This emphasis at the state level on career readiness required P-20 councils to adapt their problem definition, as well as create new interventions for those P-20 councils engaging in direct services. It also required a larger change in the culture of the community around college-going.

P-20 councils will soon have another state policy to adapt to in future years, as *Closing the Gaps* is being revamped by TX-HECB into a plan titled *60x30 The New Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan*. The overarching goal of the new plan, as indicated by the document's name, is to have 60% of Texans hold a postsecondary degree by 2030. The new plan is described as a "living document" that focuses "more heavily on the alignment of higher education and students with the workforce."

Sustainability of the Movement

Sue described sustainability of the P-20 councils as the most difficult aspect of the movement. This struggle with sustainability has led to the disappearance of some councils across the state, especially in poorer or more rural areas. Tori shared the same view saying, "It does seem like a number of entities have kind of come and gone. They come in with great guns and then they kind of peter out, but we have...continued to be sustainable." To follow up on these observations by Sue and Tori, participants were asked to describe what resources contributed to their council's sustainability, or in some cases, what resources they believed would have helped their council be sustainable. Participants suggested: 1) more time for their council to progress; 2) more flexibility on the council; 3) increased funding; 4) a larger vision; and 5) improved communication of the work.

During a state council meeting, a member said, "We should look at our educational strategy in Texas as a generational one and not something we are going to be able to fix in one generation for individuals who are in need of basic skills." This need for time was also a barrier listed with goal attainment, as communities are quick to give up support for initiatives if immediate changes are not seen. Specifically, the lack of time for implementation is seen as a problem in an education system that is marked by constant reform and as some participants felt,

over reform. Sheila related that her colleagues described this level of over reform as “the flavor of the month” and that “this too shall pass.” This need to look at immediate versus long-term change prevents big picture solutions, as councils rush to put what participants perceived as a “Band-Aid solution” to cover larger systemic problems. Irene echoed this problem:

Here’s what happens in education that if you take a look at the history, we get on the bandwagon when something comes along: writing across the curriculum, language in the content areas and that goes wild for about ten years and then something comes along and replaces that and we kind of forget to carry over what’s really good of the movement. So you throw the baby out with the bath water kind of thing and that’s happened in our educational history. You can see it used to change about every twenty years and then it got down to every ten and now it’s about every time you breathe.

Not only is time necessary to build relationships, define problems, figure out solutions, and go about implementing change, but Caterina remarks the councils often lack power to implement their solutions, especially in a timely manner. This results in increased competition for the council, as Caterina points out, “I think the many other groups that are forming that have overlapping purpose suggests that people don’t see the P-16 councils as powerful enough to respond to the many educational needs that exist...” This lack of authority prevents P-20 councils from moving forward and taking action.

A second suggestion to increasing sustainability is that councils needed to be flexible to adapt to the changing context over time. This issue was seen in the earlier section looking at how policy design interacted with context. Oliver also pointed out that sometimes councils have to redefine themselves as, “Our longer term success, meaning our survivability, is dependent on our redefining ourselves right now and creating a business model that can support us.” If P-20

councils do not adapt to new policies, new directions, and new solutions, they run the risk of becoming irrelevant. Several participants mentioned updating their councils' names in order to communicate their new identity and shift in focus to the community in which they serve.

Flexibility is also needed in terms of funding, as participants commented that funding often drives policy. For example, grants often put requirements and a timeline on the use of money.

Lucia described the shift needed:

If we're going to make improvements or progress towards achieving that outcome then we have to do some things that are more systematic and more collaborative with each other and... that's a cultural change. We're going to put more emphasis on that and we can't stop getting grants and doing our work, but somehow we're going to move from these one-off projects to these long-term approaches and we're going to be deliberate.

Similarly, for Keith, his organization found themselves offering direct service activities in order to offset costs and finance their work. He describes it as "...a really tough game to play and it makes it difficult to focus on what you're trying to do." Sheila, who has worked with two P-20 councils, only one of which still exists, found diversifying funding as a key strategy for sustainability. Sheila shared, "...so our P-16 council operation is basically institutionalized, because along the way I... got tired of projects just because it was a grant project. I wanted to be a part of sustained innovation and sustained change."

In general, funding has been an issue for these councils, especially as the state reduced and later pulled their funding for the local councils. For many councils, the state funding was the sole source of money, so this reduced financial support impacted the number and types of activities offered. As Renee noted, "that makes a huge difference." For Sheila, when the state money went away, she let the P-20 council die. Mike estimates about 2/3 of the councils met

similar fates of disappearing when the state pulled the money. Three participants were unsure about the fate of their councils going into the next year due to unstable and/or unavailable funding. As Oliver put it, "...we're cobbling together and kind of going six months to six months." Most participants felt increased and stable funding could provide for much needed staffing of the council. As Lucia noted:

What we're seeing is if that council is going to be successful with the whole program that we've identified, which is identifying outcomes, taking a priority in organizing a network around each of the priorities, and setting the network up, and piloting interventions and studies, and stay with them until they are actually implemented, it's going to take staff.

Many participants mentioned lack of state funding as contributing to a lack of equity, since wealthy school districts and regions are more likely to be able to keep a P-20 council going, whereas poorer areas may struggle due to a lack of resources. Some councils have implemented fees for entities utilizing P-20 councils, but again, this runs the risk of reducing access for school districts that are unable to afford the fees. Suggested strategies included diversifying funding and getting buy-in and commitment from business chambers, private businesses, and other entities. Lastly, participants recognized the need to change the culture of funding and to align funders because, as Rich points out, "...the reality is that dollars speak and people will change behavior when the dollar or the nature of the dollars are shifting." Currently, funders allocate their money to things that directly impact children, but P-20 councils focus more on collaboration and alignment, as Trent stated:

...the aggregating of bringing people together it's just not sexy... there's only so many pictures you can show in your annual report of groups of people around a table hashing out numbers.

Providing money not only helps P-20 councils run and implement their initiatives, but it demonstrates support, value, and commitment from community funders.

Another recommendation was to have a larger vision for P-20 councils. Lennie suggested stretching goals and providing ongoing incentives in order to prevent sectors from remaining in silos. Trent had a similar suggestion saying:

The goals need to be so far out there that we say we cannot reach these goals if we continue work the way we're doing it. The only way we meet these goals is if we fundamentally change what we do and learn from one another.

The perception of some was that these bigger goals would be more likely to motivate and require cross sector planning. Success would not be achieved unless different sectors were forced to collaborate to meet these lofty goals.

The final recommendation to ensure sustainability is a strong communication mechanism. This includes communication within community to improve community perceptions, as well as to unite the community around the council's work. Sue suggests doing this through marketing early wins to increase visibility. Since P-20 councils seek to be inclusive, the public should have an awareness of what is going on inside the council meetings. For P-20 councils in Texas one such communication mechanism is *Generation TX*, which Bennett describes:

We have Generation TX in the state of Texas that allows us to work closely with the local P-16 councils to create a college-going culture all over the state that do a lot of social media work, campaigns, contests, to kind of get that energy here and get the state moving and giving the P-16 councils insight to move at the local level. That's really important for this stuff to work. Communication is key and without that it would be really difficult to be successful.

As Bennett points out, this communication should be a two-way street with the P-20 council informing the community and the community informing the council's work. He also brings up the importance of communication between councils, as many participants reported the benefit of the P-16 institutes in coming together across the state to share best practices. If the goal of P-20 is to scale-up initiatives, this communication will prove beneficial. As Keith sums up, paying attention to sustainability is important to ensure longevity of the leadership councils and institutionalize P-20 as "there's this critical moment for us where the tide has shifted and this becomes more natural. This becomes part of doing business."

Case #2: State of Tennessee

History and Context

The participants recognized a multitude of issues, or what Ashley referred to as a "smudge of chaos," taking place within Tennessee leading up to the development of P-20 reform. While Tennessee experienced economic growth in the early 1990s, the state experienced a recession at the start of the new millennium in which they quickly found themselves falling behind in national rankings. While similar to the national economic discourse at the time, the participants listed three common issues pressuring Tennessee to take action: 1) a shifting state economy relying on human capital; 2) a history of fragmented systems preventing a seamless structure; and 3) a political mood viewing education as a priority. These three issues framed college and career readiness as not simply a problem, but an urgent public issue affecting all citizens.

Shifting state economy relying on growth of human capital. Previously, Tennessee's economy largely focused on financing, labor, and manufacturing, but these industries were beginning to disappear as the economy became more knowledge-based. The 2005-2010 Master

Plan for Higher Education describes the change, "...as markets fragment, technology accelerates, and competition comes from unexpected places, learning, creativity, and adaptation are becoming the principal sources of competitive advantage." Human capital became a prime resource, as Sarah reflected, "We found in our area that we had 1,000 job openings and we didn't have the workforce to fill those." Ashley commented on the consequence of this regional economic change occurring:

This also created a panic around the municipal governments to figure out how to improve the labor market. This labor force, many of which have local high school diplomas, so they [students] had went all the way through the schools and they get there [work] and they are not employable.

It was also recognized at the state level, as Yvonne talked about Governor Bredesen's "...growing acknowledge[ment] there was some work to be done if we were going to have people who had the credentials to deal with the technology industry coming into the state." In some cases, industries relocated to nearby states in order to bring in a highly qualified workforce with more skill training and higher education levels.

The 2005-2010 Master Plan for Higher Education points out: "As Tennessee transitions into an economic era in which its fortunes will be determined more by the human capital potential of our citizens than by the state's physical capital and natural resources." However, a percentage of Tennessee citizens were not positioned towards a knowledge economy, as only 21.5% of people statewide had attained a bachelor's degree. Coupled with the start of the baby boomer force retiring, workforce shortages became a concern. A table titled "Completion: Cracks in the Pipeline," created by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2003), was shared in several state and local presentations stating that for every 100

ninth graders in Tennessee, only 61 will graduate from high school, 38 will enter college, and only 16 have graduated from college within 6 years. While this helps demonstrate the state average, the metrics across regions varied. As shown in a figure from a May 2006 TN-THEC presentation to the state council, “In 75 of Tennessee’s 95 counties, 15% or less of the overall population aged 25 and older hold a college degree; In 41 counties, 10% or less hold a college degree.”

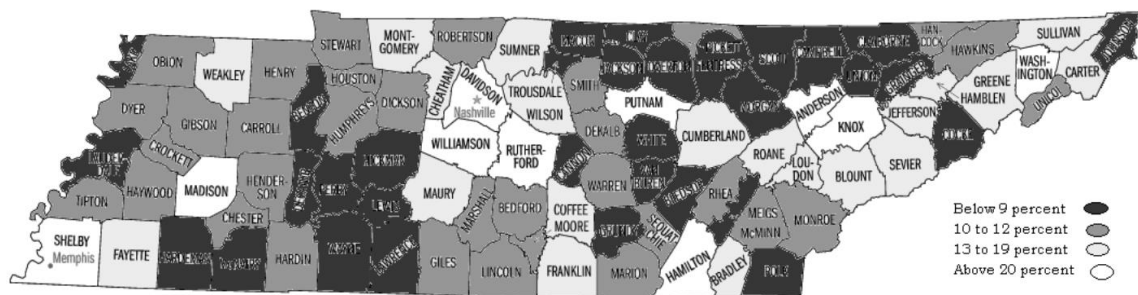


Figure 2. TN-THEC graphic of percentage of citizens with a bachelor’s degree in 2003.

Reprinted from *Tennessee’s P-16 Pipeline for Tomorrow’s Economy*, in May 19, 2006.

As Lisa recalled, “Tennessee’s education system received low ratings in several publications, creating public pressure for change in the system.” Lisa mentioned the more recent grade of “F” for the state of Tennessee’s truth in advertising of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores (2007). Other poor ratings discovered during the document analyses included a grade of “F” for its educational system in Education Week’s Quality Counts (2001) report and a ranking of 45th in the nation for National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education’s Measuring Up (2000) report. The state of Tennessee also received low rankings in economic reports, including a “D” in overall development capacity from the Cooperation for Enterprise Development (2001). Whitney recalled, “...collectively we were not having good outcomes...

Pretty much everywhere you looked in the community we were just not hitting the mark.”

Brooke found these poor metrics made it so “nobody could dispute there was a problem.” Poor metrics for students early on compounded the problem of college and career readiness as students started to drop out or fall behind in the system. Donna remarked:

I think there’s a range of what I would call pipeline issues. Everything from, it’s certainly primarily workforce development and linking you know, the business partners with the education institutions to make sure we’re providing the right education and training for the future workforce. I think that’s really the driving force.

Growing the workforce meant recognition of the changing demographics within the state, in terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In some areas, the demographics were changing more rapidly, as Katherine commented on the large number of immigrants in her region in recent years saying, “I mean we’re just an incredibly ethnically, religiously, linguistically, culturally diverse city...” Supplying the future workforce needed meant recognizing the need to help all students, especially those Eric referred to as “the forgotten half,” who continuously score in the bottom half on school achievement tests. In minutes from a state P-16 meeting, a council member pointed out that “these minority groups are left behind not only in challenged school districts, but across the state.” In Tennessee, the issue became a collective problem for citizens, as it impacted not only an individual’s educational achievement, but the state’s future economy, creating a converging interest for stakeholders in the success of all students.

A history of fragmented systems preventing the creation of a seamless system. With the combined problems of a financial downturn and poor education indicators, Tennessee Higher Education Coordinating Board (TN-THEC) stated, “The time is ripe for eliciting the creative

potential of P-16 education reform.” Tennesseans had the choice of the current status quo of fragmented and misaligned systems or P-20 reform which worked towards alignment.

Participants interviewed felt alignment through the process of collaboration within P-20 councils emerged as a common sense solution leaving few other policy alternatives considered. Ashley viewed the problem as having many layers commenting, “I feel like it’s one of those spiral things, right? There have generally been poor outcomes for decades; we’re talking very systemic issues.” Doing nothing was no longer seen as an option, as participants listed existing barriers to alignment including: organizational silos, an urban and rural divide, and a history of segregation.

Similar to other states, the educational system in Tennessee is comprised of separate entities with the Department of Education managing K-12 institutions and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (TN-THEC) and Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) managing systems of higher education. As a result, when the problem of college and career readiness emerged, people were quick to point fingers outside of their institution. Yvonne pointed out:

If graduation rates are bad in high school it’s the high school’s problem. If kids are not completing college, it’s college’s problem. I tend to frame everything as a P-20 problem. I think it’s a system problem, not an individual sector problem and I think until we have more people that understand and believe that we’re still always going to struggle with who owns the problem...

Yvonne goes on to discuss the mentality of *us vs. them* rather than the preferred, *We have a problem*. “It’s ‘they have a problem.’” This separation did not just exist between education sectors, but also between the education and the workforce sectors. By operating as distinct entities, there was a lack of collaboration and data sharing and in some cases even a culture of distrust, as districts worried sharing data would result in blame.

Participants identified geographic boundaries as another barrier to alignment. Specifically, two participants, who were either elected or appointed to their positions, felt bounded by the need to serve the greatest number of their constituents and to “justify their time,” which prevented collaboration between their districts. In addition, the geography of Tennessee created regional diversity as “Tennessee is primarily a rural state.” Thus, regional diversity can lead to a divide as described by Katherine:

...so there's that kind of tension that's essentially a red/blue tension, especially since at the state level, the way our districts are drawn, the state has a lot of the power. Votes live in rural and suburban areas. So, to a certain extent cities like Memphis and Nashville are disenfranchised at the state level. It's just a tension that I think is not uncommon at this juncture in American politics between cities where people tend to live on top of each other. We tend to be more thoughtful about what we could do collectively and need to do collectively, compared to rural places where the needs of people living on top of each other are not as present.

Moreover, in Tennessee, cities have their own metropolitan government as opposed to the more common city-county government. This city and rural divide has been present in past school mergers mentioned by four participants. For Lisa, the merger happened before the establishment of the P-16 councils. While the merger was perceived to have come at a cost to the county, it led to the creation of one school system rather than two separate- and at times competing- school systems: one for city and one for the county.

The issue of equity interweaves with the above barriers as achievement gaps are prevalent in the education system and issues of wealth and racism arise. Within Tennessee, this has been publicly played out in the past two decades with the state discussions of geographic

boundaries resulting in the state's metropolitan school mergers, including Chattanooga and Hamilton Counties and more recently, Memphis City and Shelby County school merger. Tennessee is considered part of the Old South, a region with a history of segregation and disparity, where systemic problems continue to perpetuate wealth gaps and educational attainment among citizens. As Ashley said:

Let me put it his way, Tennessee - and my region in particular - is deeply rooted in white supremacy. There's no way to say anything different. Anytime anyone comes, they are like, "This is actually a plantation." Now that I've been in this work, I've realized the people in power here would lose a lot if we got to a sustainable cradle-to-career structure that had improved outcomes community wide. They'd lose a lot, pay people more, lose the rationales they have for the way the city is deeply, deeply segregated, and they would have to kind of give up all of their influence over the way resources are used...

In order to create "all one system" from a system that has been historically fragmented requires a change in culture and behavior. Ashley continued to describe this issue by saying:

...getting the [people] to admit they are part of the structure and they have some responsibility for things not changing, right? So instead of saying what you're doing is not working, we come to a place that says "Oh my gosh, what I'm doing hasn't been working" ...I have to confront people who have spent decades of their life (in some instances) to something that's not contributing to outcomes for youth. There are other people in the room who say, "Yes, but what can we actually do about it?" So we've kind of gone through a culture change around finger pointing to make sure it's about ownership at the agency level...

While the struggles for equality aren't unique to Tennessee, they do provide background for the experience of people and the history of current systems that P-20 councils seek to address.

The emergence of education as a political priority. In a TN-THEC document making the case for P-16 in Tennessee, the authors recognize "...transition periods or crises are often the best time to bring education to the forefront of the political agenda." In Tennessee, education became a key focus as indicated by the election of consecutive governors with strong education agendas and the public support of national and state reforms and policies. Republican Governor, Don Sundquist, turned to education as a solution with the majority of his 2001 State of the State speech devoted to education. During the next two election cycles, education remained a focus point despite two different parties holding the office. Governor Bredesen, a democrat, served from 2003 to 2011, followed by republican Governor Bill Haslam from 2011 to present (see Appendix J for a timeline of events related to P-20 in Tennessee). As Jason said, "Through our last gubernatorial change we've had two governors who have been very education reformed. College-access governors who have made that easy." Yvonne recalled the accompanying shift in public mood:

More and more, the state TN-THEC, more and more the legislature, was beginning to push this agenda to graduate more students, to have more citizens with a postsecondary credential, more and more of the politics of completion. The politics of "we need more of our folks who graduate. We need higher graduation rates in our high school. We need more people to go onto some postsecondary institution and get a degree." Higher education started publishing the people from [different areas of the state] who have baccalaureate degrees, so the politics of what was happening statewide and a lot of that

was the Governor’s growing acknowledgement there was some work to be done if we were going to have the people who had the credentials... So that was the messaging that helped the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), and that TBR began using to urge regions and local areas to establish these councils.

While both governors touted a political agenda highly focused on education, each had a slightly different approach to the problem as noted by Eric:

...but a lot of these are quasi-political terms where one governor will use a phrase, or one Secretary of Education will get behind the rhetoric of the movement. Then, as the other party takes over, all of a sudden, that phrase loses some of its sashay in the state or national initiatives. We’ve seen it with *No Child Left Behind* and you just go down the list of buzzwords. And there are plenty of them there. P-16 has some elements of that I think.

Despite different strategies, both governors suggested education as a solution to the problems facing the state, which influenced the political mood by setting education as a priority.

At the national and state level, education reform policies became prevalent topics in the community. Participants referred to working within the guidelines of federal policies like the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), especially in districts with Achievement Schools. Achievement schools are public schools that are in the bottom 5% of schools within the state resulting in partial state takeover in order to try to improve school performance. This connection between P-16 and NCLB is seen in an early description of the movement in which, “The primary focus of the P-16 initiative in Tennessee is centered on providing a seamless transition from one education level to the next, seeking to ensure that ‘no child is left behind.’” At the state level, statewide policies sought to bring innovative opportunities to schools, including the

establishment of a statewide taskforce focused on redesigning high schools in 2007-2008 and the creation of college access programs, such as the Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Achieves, and the Tennessee Diploma project. These college access programs are discussed further in the section on P-16 policy's interaction with context. As Jason points out, "Things that the Tennessee Promise and statewide policy like Promise and Reconnect, those are vitally important things, but really they are policy tools." These education policies were described by Katherine as thoughtful, "as opposed to reactionary." In 2015, the Tennessee Promise even garnered national attention, as President Barack Obama recognized the state's work in his 2015 State of the Union address.

As described by Kingdon's policy streams model, the urgent and shared problem definition of college and career readiness, as well as the solution of aligning systems to ease or remove barriers, and a shift in political mood focusing on education, provided an opportunity for P-16 reform and leadership to develop. As Rich Rhoda said in a document to the state:

I believe that an important foundation for this discussion was the information Board and Commission staff provided on converging initiatives, grant resources, and policy changes that make this the right time to capitalize on collaboration between K-12 and post-secondary education toward student readiness for college.

Policy Design and Implementation

This section discusses the development and implementation of the state and local councils, the interaction (or lack of) the state and local levels of these P-16 groups and concludes with key elements of policy design and implementation. Appendix J includes a timeline of events related to the P-20 policy movement in Tennessee.

Development of Tennessee's state council. The first semblance of a P-20 leadership council started with the establishment of a voluntary public-private partnership with Tennessee Tomorrow focused on the state's education system and economic development. Membership in the partnership included community members from the private, public and academic sector with then Governor Don Sundquist serving as the chairman. While the organizational website listed nineteen P-16 education topics pertinent to Tennessee, these topics are summed up by the partnership's three goals:

1. Improve student learning at all levels and strengthen the connections between PreK-12 and higher education
2. Ensure that all students have access to competent, caring and qualified teachers, and
3. Increase public awareness of the link between an educated citizenry and a healthy economy.

As recognized in the organization's website, Tennessee already had several P-16 reforms underway, but not yet a P-16 leadership council as seen in other states. Documents collected showed activity from the council up until 2004, but it is unclear of the organization's operations since then, as this organization's activity seems to have tapered off with the establishment of a statewide council. None of the participants or documents collected for this project indicated how the group preceded or possibly concluded following the creation of the new state council.

In 2001, TN-THEC established a P-16 statewide council, although membership and priorities appear to overlap with the Tennessee Tomorrow partnership. While both of these state-level groups remained voluntary, the 2001 Tennessee Master Plan for both K-12 and Higher Education stressed the importance of P-16, which has remained a key priority in subsequent iterations of the plan. For example, the 2005-2010 Master Plan for Higher Education

stressed the need for numerous and continuous partnerships that focused on different areas such as access, student preparation, affordability, and educational excellence. In 2005, the state established a corresponding Office of P-16 Initiatives and decided to reconvene the statewide P-16 council under the guidance of TN-THC. The focus given to the council was to increase educational attainment. Specifically, as one state employee stated, “Historically, our work has focused on the traditional aged student.”

The state council included nine members representing the different sectors of education, community, government and business. These members included: the Governor’s Policy Advisor; Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents; President, The University of Tennessee; Commissioner of Education; Executive Director, State Board of Education; President, Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association; Executive Director, Tennessee Business Roundtable; President, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Yvonne pointed out the above membership seemed to reinforce the belief the council operated only at the state-level with state employees. In addition to missing local voices, Yvonne added, “The state council would have benefitted from lawmakers... if there had been some legislative commitment to what the state P-16 council is trying do... I think that was a missing link. They realized later, when they wrote the statewide plan for higher education...” The initial meeting of the reconvened council included a discussion of actions to shape the council’s work. This discussion concluded with the decision to establish three committees around the work of: 1) curriculum alignment with a focus on math; 2) Gear Up grant work; and 3) data and assessment. The state council met once a year at a minimum with the expectation committees and staff would communicate regularly.

Development of Tennessee’s local councils. Around 2002, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), upon seeing the initiative of the state council, sought to create local P-16

councils. They also established a P-16 Collaboration Unit within the TBR, staffed with a coordinator. As Yvonne pointed out, “It’s nice to say, ‘Gee whiz, we’d love to have these councils then sit around and dream about how we might do it.’” Instead, TBR created a model and application process to create a formal designation for local councils. Community colleges were targeted to serve as hosts to the council, since these entities generally serve a specified community and had clear connections to K-12 and higher education. Although, in some cases, existing organizations, such as non-profit or non-governmental organizations, asked to serve as the local council, as did some four-year institutions. As one state employee stated:

TBR began rolling those things out across the state until we had a local or regional P-16 council in every area of the state. So, they were all across the state. It took a couple of years to get it done, but you know, it was really gratifying to see the leadership of our community colleges, universities, and technology centers really step up to it.

At one point, the TBR recognized 32 councils with coverage across the state. However, not all P-16 councils were active, nor were all councils sustained over time. The TBR created an application process and handbook to assist in the development of local councils, which included three stages to work: Phase 1: Accept responsibility to organize and have an informational meeting with core groups; Phase 2: Develop the council’s vision, mission and goals; and Phase 3: Create a template for action to shift from development to implementation. Application elements for recognition by the TBR were centered around four fundamental components: organizational structure, membership, vision/mission, and goals relating to the Tennessee P-16 Council goals.

These broad requirements allowed for flexibility in structuring the local P-16 councils with participants reporting variety among these elements. For example, Stephen’s local council

meets quarterly, while Katherine's council meets monthly. The nature of activity greatly varied depending on the council. Katherine shared her spectrum of experience:

...I was originally invited to participate in several boards and they were all very different stories. One board in one county, there was an invitation to participate. We agreed, clearly our names went on the list and there was never a meeting scheduled... we kind of got the idea they were checking a box, "Yay, we have a P-16 and we have a roster of people who participate. Now go away and leave me alone." But that's my speculation. In the other case, there was an existing organization that coordinated community and school. When the mandate came down to have a P-16, that organization stepped forward to take that role. They were already comprised at the leadership level of the right people and have working groups on a variety of different lifespan issues.

There was variance not only in the amount of activity, but the purpose of the local councils. In Tennessee, participants described three types of councils with some overlap in purpose. These three types included councils established for networking and information sharing, councils that provided direct service and interventions, and, finally, councils that focused on the process serving more as facilitators to provide data. Sarah, who has spoken to other regions who are thinking about starting up local councils, provides the following advice:

We try to give them some strategic plans in starting their local councils. Who should be on their boards and trying to develop a strategic plan that aligns as much as possible with our regional plan, but at the same time we know each district has its own diversities and its own challenges. You know you need to think about those things through your own council and this is how we say the overarching thought is, we want everyone educated whatever it takes, so what are your particular challenges?

Interaction between councils. While the state and local councils co-existed, there was little interaction between the two. This is most likely due to the fact that separate organizations established the state council and the local councils independently. For example, the TN-THEC coordinated the state council, while the TBR coordinated the local councils. This distinction was stated in the minutes of the initial reconvening of the state council: “The council does not provide direction for the TBR network of local P-16 councils, a network established prior to the renewal of the state coordinating P-16 body.” State P-20 meeting minutes rarely mentioned local councils, except for their possibility in building capacity and implementing the state council’s curriculum alignment initiative in math. Yvonne felt the state only wanted to operate at the state level, “...they didn’t really have a vision for local councils or regional councils.” Yvonne continued: “At that point it was more grassroots engagement than it would have been if there had been some of that at the state P-16 level.” This disconnect resulted in confusion for Ashley who stated:

You know, there is a little confusion about P-16, because TN-THEC and the university systems are under them. Well they [the state/TN-THEC] originally had a P-16 that they called a P-16, but it really didn’t relate to what we did under the TBR initiative, so if you looked on the website of those you would find there is a disconnect and I’m not sure what that P-16 is about, because we’ve never been involved with it.

As mentioned earlier, the state P-16 council had a more narrow focus of activities: math curriculum alignment, Gear Up grant work, and data/assessment. The handbook provided to local TBR councils had a broader focus to “strengthen the connection between a Quality Education and a Healthy Economy.” Despite varied missions and initiatives, both local and state councils often included ‘P-16’ in their title. While participants did not interact with the state P-

16 council, many commented they interacted with other state level organizations, such as working in conjunction with the Tennessee college access programs or programs within the Department of Education.

While there was minimal action between the state and local councils, TBR established a P-16 network to connect local councils across the state, as well as the establishment of events to help share best practices. Two participants believed the structure of higher education in Tennessee, which is a university system that includes the TBR and the University of Tennessee System, helped the councils stay connected and informed by providing oversight. In fact, TBR provided a staff member who served as a point person for the P-16 council initiative. This person created an annual report on P-16, which included updates from every local TBR P-16 council. These annual council updates included contact information, council meeting dates, action items addressed by the council, activities and programs, outstanding accomplishments, and future activities that would interest the Tennessee P-16 network. While some councils do still interact, the action appeared minimal, as some participants were unsure of which councils were still active outside of their region.

Key elements for establishing a council. Participants reported key elements needed for the development and implementation of their local council. The three most common responses were leadership, financial resources, and a culture of trust and inclusivity. Because P-16 is a leadership driven movement, it was important to involve top leaders, as Stephen put it, “I guess what I’m trying to say, if it’s not worth the president’s time, it’s not worth my time” This philosophy is again supported by a 2006 Nashville Alignment document on the creation of P-16 councils, which states:

Who sits on the local council is of utmost importance. Membership must include strong and positive advocates from the community to keep the work bold and focused on tackling tough issues. These advocates will respond to the local political landscape, bring together leadership who understand the real issues facing their community and keep the focus on student learning and achievement gaps.

While high levels and the “right” leadership are deemed important, so is creating an inclusive environment with representation that mirrors the community and includes the voices of historically underrepresented groups. Many participants described an adjustment period as councils sought out the right membership structure for their council. As such, P-16 councils have sought to include members from business, higher education, K-12, and local chamber members. In some cases, participants still felt like representation on the leadership team was missing some voices, for example, students, families, government officials, social workers, and teachers. Ashley felt, “I think that ultimately, the people whose work is directly impacted by the conversations that are had, aren’t there [in the organization] to voice their opinion.” There appears to be a need to balance both the inclusion and support of high level leaders, as well as the inclusion and support of those following through on the P-16 council’s work.

In addition, the participants recognized funding and staffing as barrier, as participants reported little to no funding from TN-THEC or TBR. As Sarah stated, “...with us, we do a lot of activities on very little funding.” Sources of funding named included money from grants, foundations, higher education institutions, businesses, and philanthropists. Additional monetary resources could have supported the hiring of a staff, as the local councils and similar P-16 type organizations rely on volunteers. Sarah recognizes the struggle as limiting, saying:

We tend, even though we do have activities, we can only do one or two major activities in a year, so our meetings and all tend to be more informational and I wish we could have more activity, but two people on campus cannot do all of that. We have to have buy-in...from all of the people on the council.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of creating an open and trusting environment, which in some cases required combatting a culture of distrust that existed among certain groups of stakeholders, such as underrepresented populations. P-20 councils now had to come together to solve common issues, when previously these groups competed over resources and values. Brooke reflected:

I think some people in the city have been conditioned not to expect a place at the table, so I feel like there are people who will get in the room and be like “mmhmm, mmhmm” and just think “this too shall pass,” you know what I mean? I feel like people don’t trust any sort of system and don’t expect anything of it, so even if they had been invited, I’m not sure they would come.

Several participants and documents discussed strategies to overcome this problem, such as bringing in an outside facilitator to guide the discussions and/or providing a safe meeting place as Eric suggested:

I think the challenge is we’ve got to have a meeting place that is a place of comfort. People feel like they’re part of the family when they come here...so campus became a mutual ground meeting place that didn’t have any agendas that were threatening folks away.

Establishing this culture early, by setting common goals and having open discussions, often aided to shift the culture, although a few participants still reported creating this environment was a work in progress that takes time.

Goal Attainment

According to “The Case for P-16 Education in Tennessee” released by TN-THEC, “The focus of every education policy at its core should translate into improvements or benefits for the students.” While participants in Tennessee appeared to similarly define the problem as one of college and career readiness, they had varied responses concerning the progress of the movement, both for the state and their particular council. For the overall state council goal of increasing postsecondary attainment, the three primary measures were high school graduation, college enrollment, and college graduation. While high school graduation rates and college-going rates showed improvement over time, according to TN-THEC and TN Department of Education reports (see table 4), it is impossible to attribute the improvements to the state P-16 council due to the possibility that other factors, such as new programs and policies, also influence these statistics. At the local level, in order to be recognized by the TBR, councils had to submit a list of goals, action steps, and outcome measures in their application. In following years, these councils had to submit an overview of their progress for inclusion in TBR’s annual report, which included the council’s accomplishments and strategic plan, if available.

Table 4

Tennessee state P-16 council outcome measures.

Year	High School Graduation Rate	College-Going Rates of High School Graduates	Six-Year Graduation Rate (4-Year Publics)
2005	77.9%	--	57.1%
2006	80.7%	63.5%	57.5%
2007	81.8%	--	58.0%
2008	82.8%	61.6%	58.7%
2009	83.2%	--	56.4%
2010	86.1%	66.4%	--
2011	85.5%	--	--
2012	87.2%	--	--
2013	87.2%	--	--

Obstacles to goal attainment. Participants, representing both TBR-recognized councils and non-TBR-recognized councils, reported several difficulties in measuring and reporting goal attainment. These challenges included difficulty translating council goals into practice, lack of good metrics, daunting or conflicting goals, and inadequate means to report success. Some leaders primarily saw their council as a way to network and share information among leaders across sectors. These participants found that conversations did not always translate into practice, especially for bureaucratic institutions with administrative red tape. For example, Donna's council holds monthly gatherings where events have included panels of local industry experts to help inform educators about career pathways. For Donna:

There is, I would call it translation, so a lot of the purpose is the networking and the connections. You know we meet quarterly and in person, so it's the access points. So, you're standing talking to somebody or somebody is on a panel... and what they're saying is how this industry has shifted and what their needs are in terms of employee skills are shifting. So, they're talking about that and we may consider ideas on how to adapt programs, but sometimes it's a question of how you really make that happen...

moving that into practice, especially in a timely way...higher education... does not turn on a dime... That's always going to be a challenge, but at least gives us a chance to interact and maybe anticipate and recognize things that are changing...

Some participants believed the difficulty shifting from problem definition to goal attainment occurred due to a lack of a P-16 framework to guide the process. For example, four councils reported using a collective impact framework, such as the national Strive Together model (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014). This type of framework provides specific tools and practices for P-16 work. Other councils reported having no framework at all.

A second issue in goal attainment included confusion on how to define or measure some of the goals, as well as variation in how stakeholders defined goals. Several groups wanted to increase awareness, whether it was increasing awareness of the P-16 council or increasing awareness of college opportunities. This made Stephen wonder how they would go about measuring a goal of impact or awareness:

Well, I mean I could define success, but how I would measure it is, you know, is a difficulty. You know, success would be raising the awareness of the connection, fulfilling our mission, raising the awareness of the connection between education and economic workforce development...accomplishing that would be success. How you measure that is... I frankly don't know how I would measure it. Certainly if we saw an increase in enrollment, but that could come from a lot of different places.

Sarah shared a similar concern saying, "...I do see P-16 in that same category as their purpose is really about the networking and the interaction and that is not as systematic or measurable as something that has a pure outcome." Whitney's organization shared a similar concern and suggested the possibility of using metrics, such as number of people on their listserv or number

of social media followers, but then questioned whether this really showed impact. Another goal of P-16 is college and career readiness, but again there was some variation on what college and career readiness means and looks like. In an interview document with David Wright, Associate Executive Director in Policy, Planning, & Research at TN-THEC at the time, the state defined college-ready as a student with a composite score of 19 or above on ACT, meanwhile state council members continued to question *college readiness*, asking their members to reflect on the question of ‘What is college ready’ in between state meetings. One of the state subcommittees followed up with a similar question in a March 2006 meeting using this question as a discussion point, “What should a student know and be able to do at entry in college-level (general education) math courses?” Brooke shared a similar problem as her stakeholders wanted a better community, but were not really clear on what a better community looked like:

It’s not clear to me if a better [community] means importing a lot of middle class white people into the city or if it means building wealth in poor black communities which predominately make up the demographics of the [community] currently. So I think the need was they wanted to reduce poverty. I think they weren’t quite sure, I think they thought education was the ticket to do that...

Leaving the definitions up to interpretation makes it difficult to find good measures and connections to improved outcomes.

A third issue is the tractability of P-16 goals, as the goals of the movement are daunting due to the scale and spectrum of issues they address. As Katherine pointed out:

...the nice thing is, it can be engagement that is simply for this project. So, “I’ve come to the table for this project we’re working on” as opposed to “I’ve come to the table in

perpetuity until every kid in town is fiscally responsible.” You know, every kid in town, forever and ever. As soon as we check off that box, we should be good to go.

Stephen shared a similar problem, stating that while career exploration activities for secondary students is thought to be helpful, he could not connect improved career readiness four years down the road from a one-day event for middle school students that has only been in existence for one year. The issue of monitoring long-term outcomes also makes it difficult to report success as Whitney shares:

That’s kind of a tough question and what we talk about a lot is those long-term outcomes, but when you’re looking at a community wide effort of health, wellness, and education, we would never say when infant mortality rates drop- we could never claim those as one of our successes. We would say that’s something we contributed to and we’re excited to see the indicator move, so we would say that’s our focus. We can’t claim that as our outcome, ever.

A few more established councils have tried to address the issue of longer-term outcomes, like high school graduation and career readiness, by tracking smaller indicators along the way, as Ashley shared her council’s strategy:

The idea of mission to outcomes is where leaders could say, “This is our mission. These are our outcomes, and here are the indicators we are tracking, and this is how it’s translating to kids, and this is how they’re going to move to the next level” ...so, people who do reading work can have a conversation with people who do college access work about the indicators and how they’re tracking and how they support each other.

Even when initiatives or indicators may show progress, it is difficult to show improvement for every child as Katherine points out, “They are never done in part because there’s always

something else. They struggle with scalability, not every solution can be morphed into something that will make change for 86,000 kids in our school district.” Successes are often influenced by context and one-size-fits-all solutions do not work for everyone.

Some participants questioned whether their goals of both efficiency and equity were conflicting, as balancing these dual motives behind movement was tricky. While some P-16 councils place more emphasis on either efficiency or equity, others tried to balance both goals. The 2005-2010 Masterplan for Higher Education recognizes this difficulty stating, “A difficult task for educational planners is to reconcile the seemingly conflicting missions of increasing access and maintaining affordability while simultaneously facilitating student success and maximizing institutional quality.” Brooke recognized this difficult struggle as her council took a systems-approach to the movement:

I have to put it on the table: I’m a real skeptic of this work, actually. And the reason is because I think: one, you have to look at where it started from, what these people look like and their experience. I feel like, and I’ll answer your question directly, but it comes from, it started from a place of efficiency. Efficiency, very business-oriented effectiveness and then this equity lens is starting to creep up and was not really at the forefront of people’s lives and the planning.

These two motives have different effects on achieving goal attainment of P-20 councils. While the efficiency goal is more widely accepted in the current political environment, the goal for equity and changing systems that have been established for centuries is less than customary.

Researchers Dupuis and Knoepfel point out:

Policies that are designed in line with these patterns will fit existing political culture and are thus, according to the phenomenon of path dependency, likely to generate increasing

returns. Consequently, it is likely that the implementation of such policies will produce less conflictuality (Schneider, 2006; Ingram, et al., 2007). Nevertheless, policy designs that break with traditional patterns of policymaking constitutes a notable change that can only happen under particular conditions. Hence, it is likely that their implementation will encounter more resistance. (p. 7)

Ashley found the same struggle in her work with the council, as she shared her admiration for her colleague's approach:

I think that was part of the genius of [our leader]. His genius was to make – I was frustrated with him early on. I was like, “We have to talk about race and inequality early on.” And I learned from him- and I knew that you couldn't just jump into things- But his genius was, “Let's talk about process, the actions people take and the work people engage in, because no one is going to suspect that we're trying to upend the system by talking about process and it turns out you can get a long ways with people only thinking you're talking about process.” You can go into rooms and get people to think differently just by talking about process and making it technical sounding.

Within her P-20 council, easing into the conversation by first talking about process helped to strike a balance between working towards both efficiency and equity related goals.

Recognizing the small wins. These issues in measuring goal attainment can make recognizing the success of a P-16 council difficult. As Katherine says:

Now the down side of that is you can be doing work on a problem for years and not feel like you've gotten any headway except learning what not to do... these are community-based service providers. They're not researchers. They don't get up in the morning- no offense to the researchers- but they don't get up to learn what was wrong. They get up to

serve. And you can lose energy and enthusiasm if you don't have wins. So, sometimes, the iterative nature of the work can erode participation from key community members. At times it can be difficult to share successes, as it can be difficult to articulate the work and help people understand cradle-to-career efforts and the importance of collaboration, especially to potential funders. As Ashley points out:

I think it's harder to translate those, that kind of collaborative funding into something that you can hang your hats on. .. so, it's less appealing. But I think the more particularly philanthropy focuses on performance management and actual outcomes the more we'll see collaborative funding take place and the more we'll see people focusing on cradle-to-career work.

Katherine found similar problems in reporting success when multiple organizations are involved:

It is hard to say, 'Hey this multi-faceted, multi-year initiative that required the engagement of a million people was successful' and then turn around and give credit to a zillion people, right? It's hard to tell that collective impact story without one organization grabbing the spotlight or the spotlight being so diffused that people don't feel like their participation- and remember the currency of a non-profit is reputation and expertise- so if you aren't able to engage in something that is going to expand or enhance your reputation... it's hard to go back to funders and justify the time your spending when the story that's being told is either this is a city-wide thing that a lot of people participated in or something [one organization facilitated].

Despite this struggle with communicating goal attainment, Katherine went on to stress the importance of celebrating the small wins:

So one of the things we implemented a couple years ago in part was, we'd sit in our meeting and say, "Yeah, this made progress, you know, we still have to do this and that and the other thing." Which was an appropriate thing for us to do as a board to be thinking about next work, but what we weren't doing was saying, "hey, look, we did a good thing." Instead of seeing the trees for the forest, let's take some time to point out some trees, so I think we do a better job internally now of saying this was a win... So that's a bit of a balancing act and the fact that you know, teen pregnancy is not ever going to completely go away and neither is the need to put pre-k resources and early literacy resources in the hands of families and some of these things are just not going to be solved, but we ought to be able to celebrate great leaps forward and it's just a bit of a struggle.

Not measuring or recognizing progress in goal attainment could lead to the perception of P-20 as an ineffective or even a failing movement.

Interaction of Design and Context

As the P-20 movement develops over time it continues to adapt to the changing context. Two participants stressed flexibility as a strength in the policy design, as Whitney concludes, "I think new issues are coming all the time. And I think our structure is flexible enough to bring those in." In addition to adapting to arising new issues, the flexibility also allowed each local council to adjust to their region's diversity. While local P-20 councils were seeking solutions to a shared problem, each local P-20 council could adapt the strategies and interventions based on their population and resources.

Changing levels of support from the state. Even though the state and local councils were created separately with limited interaction, local P-16 councils continued to be mediated by

changing state leadership and education policies. The state P-16 council eventually disappeared for a second time, likely with the change in focus of the 2010 election, which heralded in a new governor. Since the state P-16 council and local councils were separate entities, there appeared to be little change in the behavior of the local councils. However, the state system, TBR, which oversaw the local councils, experienced several changes in key leadership positions and changes in job descriptions reduced TBR's support of the initiative. Katherine reflected, "The P-16 initiative, like I said, I think came from the Board of Regents and I don't have a real sense of what, whether they are still backing it or not." Despite a lack of direct interaction from the state, participants named several state level education policies that have been supportive of the same goals of their councils. In this manner, local councils have been able to co-exist with the state's direction towards education alignment and the push for college access. None of the participants felt that state needs conflicted with the needs of their district or the work of their council. In fact, two participants felt their work within the council helped to inform and guide the state's work on the new programs. The policies and programs included Tennessee Achieves, Tennessee Promise, and most recently, the Drive to 55. The Drive to 55 is what Jason referred to as the state's new context for P-20, which seeks to have 55% of state citizens hold some type of postsecondary credential or degree by 2025. In fact, this initiative even includes a group of private sector and non-profit leaders working together to achieve this mission.

Data are a big part of the P-20 policy design as noted earlier. The use of data helps with problem definition, designing interventions, and showcasing goal attainment. Said more simply, using data is part of the P-20 culture. However, the councils are limited by the type of data collected and available, often dictated by state regulations. For example, only recently have

local districts had access to student completion information for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Two participants mentioned the impact of this data, with Jason stating:

... something we're thinking a lot about is I think the state governments have a lot of data that is given back to school districts, that is given back to students, that could really be impactful in helping guide students' decision making. There's guidance from the US Department on giving FASFA completion data back to students and most states are jumping on that. [Tennessee] is in the process of exploring what that looks like, but that's a really good example. If I could tell an educator who, in their school, has or has not filled out their FASFA (because I have that information at the state level), I equip that educator with the information they need to make a more proactive intervention with a student who may need the help to inform and fill out the information...

Data has interacted with policy design, as councils often rely on metrics already collected by local and state school governing boards in order to try to connect their goals and strategies with metrics that are not only available, but valued by stakeholders.

Mirroring economic fluctuations. Participants found their P-20 councils adjusting to fluctuations in the economy, especially the economic recession in 2008. Most P-20 councils did not receive state funding, but the councils still took a hit from other funding sources. As Eric recalled:

In times where county school budgets or state budgets are seriously challenged, elective things go away and those organizations drop back to their fundamental state. School boards drop back to the fundamentals and things like this [P-20 councils], that may have some elective value added to them, sometimes get pulled aside. We've seen that – ups and downs in terms of the funding and the kinds of things we've been able to do.

Participants adjusted their activities based on the money available. While participants consistently cited money as a resource needed, local P-20 councils were used to minimal and inconsistent funding, as most of the councils were established with limited funds and considered self-funding. In fact, one of the earlier state documents says that councils should focus on improvement initiatives, rather than lack of funding.

Existing within -and attempting to modify- the current culture. Finally, the policy design was mediated by the existing culture, which P-20 councils were designed to change. An important component of the design are the participants, as P-20 councils seek to remove the traditional disconnect across institutions by being inclusive and bringing in cross-sector alignment. Several participants mentioned that as both the local council and the movement continued to develop, the councils grew to be more inclusive and include more stakeholders outside of education. Yvonne mentioned this shift in the council:

Now the key thing we did in the later part of the time... was start meeting with the economic development commission and got their interest in [P-20 councils] because obviously that's what they're about. They're about the economy at the local level, how to develop it, how to grow it, and of course, education...

Several participants mentioned the change in their P-20 council membership as they sought membership diversity and inclusion of more systemic areas outside of the education sector. Two participants talked about the focus of their P-20 council expanding to include education, but Brooke believes the councils have room to grow:

Education cannot tackle these issues along, particularly big systemic issues and so I think the conversation is going to morph to involve workforce development, community

development, economic development, and housing. Those types of things have to become points of intersection, because the complexity in this work is immense.

While the connection to education and outside sectors has gained acceptance, other cultural beliefs continue to obstruct the way P-20 policies have been designed. For most involved with P-20 councils, this is an unpaid, volunteer activity that is often tagged on to their regular employment. As such, P-20 councils require time and effort, but the workload of the members is often unacknowledged. The initial support by TBR helped to convey the importance of the local councils; however, the change in support has caused some areas not to recognize the councils as a priority. Stephen talks about this challenge:

Well, I think sustaining a level of interest is a challenge because again, as we're talking about people in education, people in economic development - like chamber of commerce directors, elected officials, and also people in business and industry - we've all got busy schedules. So, even though we all meet...to be sure that we are doing things where people see a return on their investment, time is always a challenge. We want to be relevant and want to make sure that people see there is some benefit to take some time out of their busy schedules in order to attend a meeting or participate in an activity.

It can be hard to change the culture or way of doing things while still engaging in an incentive structure that does not prioritize collaboration. As Ashley sums up, "Whatever people are doing every day when they get up in the morning now has to be different in two years, fundamentally different, so that it's sustainable or it all just goes away." Because of the variety seen in Tennessee's local P-20 councils, some councils have been able to weather (and in some cases flourish) with the changing times, while other councils have disappeared or exist only in name.

Sustainability of Movement

The sustainability of P-20 councils in Tennessee appears mixed. Coinciding with the election of Governor Bill Haslam, the state P-16 council no longer convenes; although, the Office of P-16 Initiatives still exists. At the local level, several P-20 councils remain active; however, TBR no longer oversees these councils and coverage no longer exists across the entire state. Yvonne sums up the status of P-20 councils saying, “There probably are pockets I would venture.” To help understand why some local P-20 councils still exist while others have disappeared, participants were asked to describe what resources were needed to help the movement succeed and continue. The most common resources listed by participants included: visible state support, stable leadership, financial resources, and good data.

Visible state support. One concern was the lack of visible state support of local councils. For Tennessee, this was specifically seen as an issue, since the state created and housed the state council, while TBR created and housed the local councils. One participant believed personal politics prevented the collaboration among state and local councils. Also, the lack of state support led to confusion of the role and work of local P-20 councils within the larger state council and thwarted opportunities for alignment and implementation. Participants wanted their councils to have a voice at the state level. This could have helped with funding the councils and their activities. Also, having state support would have shown that P-20 councils were a priority, which would help the councils gain credibility, participation and resources. As Yvonne points out:

It could have been part of the Tennessee Complete College Act in 2010 and that would have been a tremendous boost and a mechanism for – I guess – formalizing it through state policy, so that it was a required activity. It was never required. It was always

voluntary and voluntary doesn't last. Not in this business. Without the advocates, the believers, those who are going to wake up every morning worrying about it and ensuring that it continues...

Tennessee's P-20 councils, including the state, were established and continue to be viewed as voluntary.

Stable leadership. Since the P-20 movement is a heavily leader dependent movement, participants stressed the need for stable and consistent leadership to keep the momentum of the councils going. This includes stable leadership at the governor and state agency levels, as well as within local councils. Problems caused by leadership turnover included time needed to build relationships and establish trust among the council members and new leader, as well as productively shift agendas and priorities that come with a new leader. As Eric states:

Yeah, I think changes in leadership is probably the biggest [barrier] and that happens at the school director level. It happens at the curriculum coordinator level. It happens at the governor level and the university dean president, whatever level. So, over time, when one of those key players changes that has been a cheerleader, you will have to rebuild momentum. The new person is going to bring in their own agendas. You hope they are aligned with what has been happening, but – especially in the political arena with state commissioners and gubernatorial changes and things like that – that [is] frequently the last thing they want to do is reinforce what the last set of political folks were doing. So, we've seen that problem and I've worked with enough industry at the national level and with some other educational systems to know that's not unique to Tennessee.

Three participants commented their councils have had stable leadership and felt the consistency benefited their council and its continued work.

Financial resources. The most common and perhaps most essential resource needed to guarantee their council's future was financial resources; especially, since stable and good funding could provide additional capital, such as hiring staff. For the state and local P-20 councils, no or minimal funds were provided for the budget. One of the more common sources of funds were grants, but grants are often limited to only a few years. While one hopes this would buy time for local councils to look for additional support to continue the initiative, one also runs the risk of the activity and work ceasing when the money disappears. The overreliance on grants can prevent councils from planning for the long-term. Despite these concerns with being mostly grant funded, Jason thought one benefit of successful self-sustenance was that it guarantees the program will continue for that time regardless of change in leadership. Another problem with funding occurs if the council depends on a single source of funding as the council runs the risk of the support shifting to another competing demand. As a result, the council could lose all of its funding. Whitney's strategy for combatting this was a 'tripod of funding,' where the majority of support comes from three different entities including the school system, local government, and businesses, "...so that kind of protects the funding so that if the new mayor comes in and decides to pull that funding you're no longer putting our investment at risk and that's actually played out a couple of times." Stable funding allows council leaders to plan for the long-term, which is important for a movement that seeks long-term goals.

Good data. Participants stressed the need for good measurements and data to provide evidence of the council's progress, especially with education's focus on accountability. Councils could use the data to help illustrate why the community and stakeholders should continue to support the work. Yvonne said:

Yeah, I think if they have actually implemented policy or implemented initiatives in which they can show some measurable results. I mean even that small piece, if it actually did something for which it can show evidence (and I'm a very evidence-based person by the way), if it can show evidence that it followed through and had x type of impact that they used that type of evaluation to continue to improve...

Data contributes to the long-term planning and sustainability of the movement as it provides an argument for the continued support of the councils.

Future of the movement. The future of the P-20 movement in Tennessee is unclear as participants reported mixed opinions about the future of their councils. Four participants indicated an optimistic view for P-20 moving forward in Tennessee. Although Eric recognized the movement will change saying, "And they'll [P-20 councils] be called by different names and that's fine. We plan to continue to grow." However, some participants stated they had no idea how their council would fare in the long-term, as they could only focus on a few years at a time due to change in leadership and resources. Four participants were pessimistic about P-20 policies and their leadership councils into the future. One participant believed something drastic needed to change within the next two years or another initiative would replace P-20. Yvonne also did not see much of a future for the movement without change:

I think the messaging needs to change and there needs to be much more sustained statewide leadership for it and write policy that supports it. And I don't know why we don't do that, but I think if you found states where it's codified in state policies or state rule than you're much more likely to have that policy leverage to sustain it... and what I don't see here is absent those things I'm not real positive about the future – the long-term 5-10 year future. So I'm not very optimistic, I'm sorry. It doesn't mean that I don't think

they're absolutely essential. I think that's my frustration having worked with [local P-20 councils] is that I think they're absolutely essential but that doesn't make it happen. It doesn't give it a longevity that I think it needs.

In order to continue to grow and develop, P-20 councils and organizations will need to develop and institutionalize innovative strategies in order to rebound from Tennessee's declining number of councils over the past few years. The councils will need to figure out ways to remain flexible in achieving their goals while adapting to unknowns they may face. One looming policy with unknown consequences likely to affect the local councils, especially those formed under TBR, is Governor Haslam's recent policy proposal to restructure TBR. The proposal would result in TBR's more streamline focus on overseeing community colleges and technical colleges, while universities currently under their governance would be removed and establish independent governing boards.

Cross-Case Comparison

The exploration of the two case studies, Texas and Tennessee, demonstrate how the interaction of people, places, and policies (as shown by Honig, 2006 in figure 1) influenced the policy context, design, and implementation of P-20 within each of these states. This chapter concludes with a comparison between the two case studies in order to explore cross-site themes that influenced the policy pathway as P-20 developed.

Commonalities

Problem definition. Similar to the national landscape, people in Texas and Tennessee were concerned about their state's future economy as more jobs would require higher educational attainment. Both participants and policy documents indicated the perceived urgency of the problem as change was necessary to remain competitive in the now global economy.

Failure to increase the educational attainment of each state's citizens would result in a problem for all people. In both states, participants could not recall other policy solutions considered for the problem.

Documents and interviews point out the assumption that education is closely tied to the economy; thus, policymakers and community members focused on a solution that was within the realm of this thinking. Data for both states illustrated low educational attainment rates with students dropping out at different points along the educational pipeline. The reasons for these leaks varied by state, as well as by locality; however, the proposal of aligning historically distinct institutions was seen as a commonsense solution to help all students who are the policy targets. This solution was able to be supported by the political mood existing in each state, as in times of crisis education is often pushed to the forefront of agenda. Both states had experience with earlier education reforms and had recent gubernatorial elections that centered around education. Using Kingdon's multiple streams framework, the problem stream (low educational attainment leading to a poor economy), the policy stream (aligning P-20 institutions as a commonsense solution), and politics stream (education reform minded public and recent gubernatorial elections) created a policy window that helped propel the P-20 movement beginning with the creation of P-20 councils.

Differences

Different approaches to organizational structures influenced the roles of state and local P-20 councils. While both Tennessee and Texas, at some point, had state and local P-20 councils, policymakers in each state- and within each state- took different approaches to setting up the structures. One main difference is Texas established their state council, and later local councils, through a statute making the state P-20 council mandatory. By establishing the P-20

council through a mandate, the council was seen as a priority by policymakers and had set standards with which to guide their work, including meeting quarterly. In Tennessee, the state council was always voluntary and set to meet at least once annually. The voluntary set-up might have contributed to the disappearance of the state council that had to then be reconvened in 2005. Another difference in setting up the state council was that Texas' mandate included both K-12 (TEA) and postsecondary (TX-HECB) agencies as the hosts. While having two co-chairs and host agencies can be difficult to manage, it conveys the importance of having both entities on board. Whereas in Tennessee, the TN-THEC hosted the state council and TBR hosted the local councils.

Because of this set-up and the brief hiatus of the Tennessee state council, the relationship between the local and state P-20 councils was almost a bottom-up structure or more of a 'grassroots' movement, as one participant described the councils. Whereas in Texas, a later statute helped to create local councils, so it was almost a top down structure, although local control was emphasized within the movement in Texas. For Texas, this top down approach helped to coordinate the movement early on between the state and local councils with clear goals and parameters. The state even provided a communication model to ensure two-way communication between the state and local communications. In Tennessee, local and state P-20 councils were distinct entities. While there may be benefits to this model, the lack of communication between the two serves as a barrier leading to a lack of alignment between state and local levels, confusion among participants over the two separate structures, and difficulty implementing P-20 policies evenly across the state.

Different tools and targets are taken to reach similar goals of college and career readiness. In both states, the problem was mostly defined in terms of college and career

readiness, which resulted in similar metrics, as well as similar barriers to measurement. Despite having the same overall goal, each state employed different tools and targets to reach these goals. Texas was able to provide more state support and resources into local councils, while in Tennessee the state resources provided by TBR were more limited. In Texas, the problem of increasing educational attainment was compounded by the shifting demographics within the state. As a result, the P-20 movement in Texas, especially for local councils, was more focused on equity as *Closing the Gaps* included targets by race/ethnicity. While this was the initial purpose in creating local councils, not all councils addressed the issue of race and socioeconomic status as some participants pointed out, instead focusing on the more general goals of increasing student participation and success.

Summary and Conclusions

Keeping the policy window ajar for P-20 councils and initiatives. In Tennessee and Texas, an urgent problem of college readiness emerged alongside a policy solution of alignment with the guidance of P-20 councils, and a political mood that supported education reform. As a result, a policy window opened in which the creation of P-20 councils was a priority and acted upon by leaders. However, according to Kingdon, these policy windows “stay open for only short periods” (Kingdon, 1995, p. 166). Yet, in both cases presented the movement appears episodic, as seen in the discussion of the sustainability of the councils and in the reauthorization of the state P-16 council in Tennessee. The policy window, as defined by Kingdon, appears to be kept ajar by changing problem definitions within the movement, such as the addition of career readiness, the diversity of initiatives and approaches that can be taken by the council, and the expansion of the movement to include sectors outside of education.

The movement broadens outside of the P-16 education realm. The policy design of P-16, as implied by its name, initially centered on education with a majority of members being education representatives and educational institutions serving as the hosts. Over time the movement has broadened to be more inclusive of other sectors, especially workforce and health. While P-20 councils have become more inclusive of other sectors, many participants reported councils still had work to do in becoming representative of their community. For example, few councils reported having parents or students, who the P-20 councils seek to serve, as council members. Another issue reported by some participants, especially those councils constructed with top leadership and CEO-level leaders, is the lack of diversity, especially racial diversity, within these councils. The lack of racial representation could influence the perspectives and interventions chosen by council leaders.

P-20 councils have adapted to changing contexts within their region and state.

While some P-20 councils within Tennessee and Texas have existed for over a decade, few current councils are identical to their original policy design and composition. Overtime, councils have adapted their councils to changing contexts, including the addition of career readiness to the problem definition, changing demographics, and shifts in leadership and their policy agendas. This flexibility and adaptability allows P-20 councils to continue to build on their work:

What I've seen over time is that there have been a number of different kinds of initiatives with many supporting goals that none of which had been the answer to the problem. I can only point to a few communities across the country where they seem to have gotten all the pieces right. So that's not to say that the value in the process had not been incredibly important because it's been setting the next stage and then the next stage and the next stage.

The importance of finding the right balance to meet specific needs. A reoccurring theme across all the interviews was the importance of balance within the council, which takes time and practice to learn, as local councils develop and adapt to the needs of their area. Participants stressed balance in terms of the size and composition of the council. This included determining the ‘right’ number of representatives from different sectors that varied based on council goals with some preferring to be educator-heavy, while others were workforce-heavy or equal representation among the main sectors. Boundaries that constitute a geographic region were also important, as too small or too large of a region could limit a council’s impact and affected the design of the council. Lastly, there is also concern of balance in regards to the number and type of issues addressed by the council. For some councils, this balance means breaking down the P-20 spectrum into different phases so all stakeholders from P-20 can participate and feel their needs are addressed. Whereas other councils sought to focus on the most prevalent issues due to their limited resources. Achieving balance, which may look different between councils, helps in sustaining the council.

A statewide education structure can ensure P-20 council access to all citizens. The state of Texas and Tennessee both have a coordinated higher education system that helped establish P-20 councils across the state. This helped in defining the jurisdiction for each P-20 council, while allowing for flexibility within local councils so they could adjust for regional diversity. Over time in both states, equal access to P-20 councils and the enhanced leadership and resources that could come from the councils, has become uneven as not every region can support or has chosen to continue to support a local P-20 council. As a result, there is no longer an equitable distribution of P-20 councils and, based on the current study, this seems to be true

for urban/rural districts and wealthy/poor districts. Continued or increased state support of these councils could help ensure all students are represented by a P-20 council.

P-20 councils face an uncertain future as they adapt to changes in the local and state context. Tennessee and Texas have had to adapt their P-20 policy design in order to address changing issues. One example in both states is the shift for P-20 councils to not only address college readiness, but also career readiness. According to Kingdon's multiple streams model, the policy window is only open for a certain amount of time, but in the state narratives, the window seems to continue to be 'ajar' for P-20 councils. This may be due to a political mood that continues to be focused on education and open to reforms, as well as slight shifts in the problem definition and strategies within alignment that help keep P-20 on the agenda.

The P-20 councils have also been both working alongside, as well as competing with, similar emerging initiatives. For Tennessee this includes programs like the touted Tennessee Promise, while Texas has programs like Generation TX. While these programs all share similar goals, they also compete for resources, like money and time. As such, the momentum for P-20 councils has been inconsistent within both states. The state councils in both Tennessee and Texas appear to be inactive, while local councils continue to vary in their progress as they have struggled to meet what one participant described as the 'critical moment' of institutionalizing P-20 councils and their work.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the interviews and documents help to develop refined best practices, as well as lessons learned as the P-20 movement continues to move forward and change to the context of the times. This chapter opens with a discussion of the limitations that help frame the findings. Next, strategies at the state and local level are provided to help guide policymakers and communities regardless of their stage of P-20 policy development. These strategies, as well as the overall study, could be strengthened through future research that continues to evaluate the development of P-20 reform. Finally, the chapter concludes with my final thoughts on P-20 reform and its future.

Limitations

While the methodology was chosen based on the nature of the research questions, several limitations should be taken into consideration when discussing the findings. The current study relies on a qualitative approach to interpreting the data; as such, no direct causation exists in the current study. Due to the lack of previous research on the interaction between state and local councils and the implementation of councils, the current study is more exploratory in nature. Another limitation is the sampling technique, which relied on publically available information on council membership. Participants responded to an email calling for participation, which resulted in a self-selected sample. A majority of participants were from councils that are still active today, which may influence the findings, as there were fewer participants from inactive or now non-existent councils. The interview protocol used tried to address participants' knowledge of

non-active or struggling councils. Finally, while an exhaustive search was conducted for P-20 documents for both states, I recognize the documents available may not encompass the entire timeline of the P-20 movements within states. Some earlier documents were uncovered using the website, Wayback Machine, an internet archive. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the internet was not as widely available and utilized as it is today, resulting in a skewed sampling of more current documents.

Implications for Policy

As noted in the narratives for the two case studies presented, the design and implementation of P-20 councils and reform is very context-specific. As Brooke stated, “It really depends on where your community is, what your starting point is, where the needs are...” The following section includes generalized guidelines that emerged as best practices or lessons learned from study participants that could inform future policy at both the state and local governance levels. Policy stakeholders can consider and adapt these policy implications when structuring, or restructuring, P-20 councils.

State level strategies.

Establish a clear communication channel for local and state P-20 councils to interact.

Tennessee’s state P-20 council did not have a clear and recognized method of communication between the state and local councils. While the state recognized in council minutes that local councils could help with implementation and building capacity for state initiatives, the two levels of governance did not combine resources. Clear and regular communication can help influence policies and knowledge of policies in both directions, as well as allow for sharing of best practices within the state.

Establish a framework that provides a clear theory of action, yet allows for flexible approaches depending on regional diversity. Both Texas and Tennessee established guidelines in creating local councils. While these guidelines helped initiate the local councils, several participants felt the design was too general to have a lasting impact or to attain the lofty goals of the movement. Along with providing general guidelines, states should provide a more detailed framework that helps demonstrate a clear theory of action. This framework would help P-20 councils in shifting from the design and development stage to the implementation stage. One framework mentioned by several participants was the use of a collective impact framework (Kania & Kramer, 2011). A more detailed example of a collective impact framework could be Strive Together's detailed framework based on: 1) Shared community vision; 2) Cross-sector engagement and accountability; 3) Cradle to career vision and scope; and strategic communications (for more information see Strive Together, 2015; Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014).

Incentivize cross-sector collaboration to encourage innovation. While P-20 councils seek to be innovative and collaborative, they continue to work within the boundaries of existing systems with historically distinct structures. States should recognize barriers within the current system that prevent P-20 from being a priority, especially during times of budget cuts, as participants pointed out these councils and their work are usually the first to disappear. To help encourage innovation, the state should remain flexible and incentivize cross-sector projects. One possible solution could be consolidating K-12 and higher education into a single governance structure.

Provide comprehensive and secure data systems that provide accessible and timely data to councils. P-20 councils often struggle to show progress and goal attainment due to the

numerous barriers presented in Chapter Four. Access to accountability and achievement assessments at the state level could help local P-20 councils in identifying the problems in their region and possible interventions. Likewise, being able to track students longitudinally, between grades and between institutions, could help direct the council's work. While many states already collect this information, stakeholders may not know how to access or how to use the data provided. As Ashley suggested, workshops on building data capacity and on data use could help progress the work of P-20 councils.

Ensure equity by ensuring a P-20 council represents all citizens across the state. As shown by participants' reflections across their state, several P-20 councils have disappeared due to lack of funding and support. The disappearance of these councils has not occurred evenly across the state. Many areas, such as rural regions, have inactive or no P-20 councils resulting in a loss of opportunity to students. State guidance and support could help ensure all regions of the state had a P-20 council, as Texas and Tennessee previously utilized community college boundaries to help reach the majority of students. Likewise, the state can hold the councils accountable as seen by the awarding of grants in Texas and the yearly council updates required in Tennessee. States could also provide additional support to areas with students that have the greatest need for the resources provided by P-20 councils. Providing online resources related to the P-20 movement, including professional development for teachers and administrators, could also aide in supporting students in areas not covered by council representation.

Institutionalize P-20 councils to ensure continuation despite change in leadership. While this guideline is easier said than done, states that view P-20 councils as a long-term solution should seek to institutionalize these councils by making them mandatory versus voluntary, which could be done through the authority mechanism, such as statute or executive

order or writing P-20 councils into the state’s educational master plans. Once developed, engaging in long-term planning for the councils could help ensure continued budget and continued support from key stakeholders.

Expand the movement from the outdated term “P-16” to help illustrate and communicate the more inclusive direction of the movement to “Cradle-to-Career.” Several participants indicated their P-16 council had changed names, which they believed helped more accurately depict the nature of their council’s work. Early in the movement the focus was on college readiness, mostly for four year degrees, however, college readiness has emerged as a parallel issue and not all jobs require a four year degree. Likewise, P-16 is a technical term that often required explanation, whereas the term ‘cradle-to-career’ helps paint a clearer description of the movement’s purpose to all citizens. Cradle-to-career is also a more inclusive term as it indicates not only education, but economics, workforce, and early childhood development, whereas P-16 presents a bounded approach beginning with preschool and ending with college graduation.

Local level strategies.

Establish a neutral meeting place that allows for open and honest communication.

Creating a collaborative environment among stakeholders who once competed for resources will take time. One step that can help in bringing people to the table and encourage honest communication is establishing a neutral meeting place. This type of space may help all sectors feel like active participants, rather than passive players who are being told what to do. The second element is to engage participants in open and honest communication about the council and its intended work. This conversation will not happen in one meeting, but over time as trust is built among council members. Some participants reported bringing in outside facilitators to

help encourage discussion, which can be difficult in a system that has historically created winners and losers and passed the blame down the educational pipeline. Without this foundational piece, P-20 councils will struggle to address the underlying problems it seeks to resolve.

Ensure the P-20 council is representative of the community. P-20 councils should seek to be inclusive in order to improve schooling for all students. Schools cannot be expected to fix larger systemic problems that require cross-sector collaboration. By being representative of the community, P-20 councils can ensure all stakeholder concerns are heard. In order to help seek representation, P-20 councils may want to begin with a community scan to learn more about their regions demographics, as well as organizations within the region. Specific populations that participants felt should be added to councils include those of the parents and students for which they serve and those who implement the P-20 initiatives, such as teachers.

Establish multiple funding sources to help sustain movement in case one funding source disappears. Funding was a common barrier among participants. P-20 councils should seek to diversify their funding to help ensure longevity that way if one funding source is pulled the council is able to persist on remaining funds until additional sources can be secured.

Consider professional development workshops for P-20 council members. Different sectors engage in different leadership styles, languages, policies, and data use. Consider holding workshops among the council's own members to help provide a background on issues, especially in the area of understanding and using data provided. These workshops could also help in establishing trust as council members seek to understand different backgrounds and the problems that brought that sector to the table.

Consider ways to institutionalize the P-20 council at the local level. In designing local P-20 councils, consider how the council will adapt to changes in the future. Ways to help encourage consistency are establishing a strategic plan and bylaws. Leadership turnover is a persistent problem at the local level, so if able, P-20 councils may want to consider establishing membership based on key community positions. For example, the president of the community college and superintendent of the local K-12 district serve as rotating co-chairs, or the Director of School Counseling is a consistent member. This structure may help create the expectation of participation and ensure involvement of key stakeholders, even when leaders move to new positions. As mentioned above, policy designers should also consider long-term funding of councils.

Recognize progress for the systemic issues P-20 seeks to address will be slow, but still be sure to measure key indicators and recognize and celebrate small successes. Measurement of P-20 councils and their initiatives is difficult, but necessary to ensure continued support of councils. While large scale measures for the region should be taken into account, councils should track smaller, more direct indicators or program evaluations in order to track progress of the council's work. To help keep council members and supporters motivated, P-20 councils should recognize and celebrate the small successes along the pathway to large-scale change.

Exemplars

While the number of P-20 councils may be dwindling in numbers across Texas and Tennessee from their initial development in the early 2000s, other P-20 councils are continuing to grow and foster success within their communities. During the interviews, participants often named other P-20 councils that helped served as a guide for their own council or that the participants admired for their work in the field. These P-20 councils included not only local

councils within their state, but exemplars across the United States. As an additional resource, some of these councils that emerged during the literature review and the data collection are included in Appendix K. The reasons participants viewed these councils as exemplars varied, whether it was for a specific program, the organization structure, leadership, or resources. This is a non-exhaustive list of councils provided as an additional resource for readers. The list does not necessarily correspond to the councils included in the current study.

Implications for Future Research

The current study provided an overview of the interaction of policy design, context and implementation of P-20 reform through the use of P-20 councils in Tennessee and Texas, which could help inform P-20 stakeholders and policy practices in other regions. While Tennessee and Texas were purposefully chosen for maximum variation, future studies may want to explore the context of P-20 composition in other states.

During the study, P-20 councils were divided into two categories based on governance level at the state or local. However, as participants at the local level described their councils several different types emerged which could warrant further discussion. These differences included types of services offered by the council (direct service or non-direct service), type of organization established (local entity or non-profit), and geographic area (local or regional). Even though ability to structure the council according to varying contexts was seen as an advantage, future research may want to explore the variation within local councils to further decipher best practices.

Originally, I hoped to gain metrics surrounding goal attainment at the local and state levels, but through interviews I learned more about the barriers surrounding goal attainment. P-20 councils could benefit from further exploration of goal attainment using both qualitative and

quantitative measures. Most metrics used by P-20 councils are student outcomes; however, councils could benefit from evaluations of the council itself. One area specifically mentioned in the current study could be measuring public perception of the local community in which P-20 councils serve.

The current study is one of the first to explore the interaction between local and state councils, as well as the sustainability of the councils. Replication of the study could strengthen findings. While the current study sought to address a policy time frame from policy creation to policy implementation, a longitudinal study moving forward would add to the findings by providing a more accurate depiction as the councils continue to adjust and adapt. Regular monitoring of the councils would contribute to the question of sustainability of councils.

Final Conclusions

In order to combat the sense of *reform fatigue* experienced in education, it is important to study not only the policy design, but also the policy context and implementation to determine keys to successful policy implementation and the barriers preventing the sustainability of reform initiatives. Despite a similar problem definition of college and career readiness and political mood focused on education, the policy pathway of the P-20 movement in Texas and Tennessee was largely shaped by leaders (and by change in leaders) who took both a variety of approaches to state and local P-20 councils and a variety of levels of support. Since the development of the councils, the concepts behind P-20 have continued to morph to fit changing contexts. In some cases, P-16 councils have expanded to address larger community and systemic issues, while in other cases new programs and policies have replaced the now non-existent P-16 councils.

Despite P-20 being referred to as a “commonsense solution,” the current study illustrates the difficulty of establishing and maintaining P-20 councils and their initiatives. In order to

combat the long history of silos within education, the workforce, and government, organizations and the incentives within these organizations need to change drastically to not only encourage collaboration, but require collaboration among leaders and their respective entities. While local councils have had success, strong regional and state support is required due to the complex relationship of systems within our more connected global economy and world. P-20 reform requires not only a systems change, but a culture change. This culture change needs to occur on multiple levels from redesigning education away from ‘one size fits all,’ to changing definitions of college to also value two-year degrees and vocational certificates, as well as changing the funding mindset away from prioritizing direct program funding. Knowledge and recognition of the multiple efforts aimed at P-20 reform goals could provide synergy to the movement which still exists today albeit by multiple names.

This chapter provided implications for the policy context, design and implementation in P-20 educational reform and leadership. As Sue sums up P-20 work, “It’s such an important issue that it’s worth doing it better than you’re doing it at the moment.” Local P-20 councils that continue to survive, and in some cases even thrive, have adapted to the changing context of P-20 work. While Rippner (2014) indicated P-20 councils appear to be on the decline across the United States, the goals and initiatives of the movement continue to be a part of local and state discussion indicating the importance of alignment and collaboration, even if it is through approaches other than P-20 leadership councils.

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Appendix A

Summary of study's P-20 documents from Texas and Tennessee.

State	Characteristic	Number of Documents
Texas	Leadership Level	
	State	38
	Local	77
	Type of Document	
	Articles	1
	Meeting Minutes/ Agendas	54
	Policy Documents	12
	Presentations	8
	Reports	16
	Website Documents	20
	Other	4
	Year	
	2001-2005	7
	2006-2010	37
	2011-Present	54
No date found	7	
Tennessee	Leadership Level	
	State	53
	Local	52
	Type of Document	
	Articles	1
	Meeting Minutes/ Agendas	23
	Policy Documents	6
	Presentations	22
	Reports	28
	Website Documents	20
	Other	5
	Year	
	2001-2005	29
	2006-2010	35
	2011-Present	33
No date found	8	

Appendix B

Semi-structured protocol for qualitative interviews.

1. Could you talk about your experience and involvement in the P-20 movement?
2. How would you define 'the problem' in your region/state?
3. What were your early impressions of the P-20 movement, especially for your region/state?
4. How have your perceptions of the P-20 movement changed over time and what led to these changes?
5. What led to the P-20 movement and council in your region/state?
6. Were any alternatives to a P-20 movement/P-20 council considered and what were they?
7. What are some common concerns raised around the P-20 movement in your state/district?
8. How do these concerns differ across stakeholder groups? Ethnic groups?
9. What do you feel are the biggest challenges in the P-20 movement?
10. Can you talk further about the collaboration between P-20 councils, both between local councils and between the local councils and the state council?
11. How have state needs opposed or complemented the needs of your district?
12. What type of resources do you think are needed to help the P-20 movement succeed?
13. Does funding influence P-20 policy, and if so, in what way?
14. How has leadership (and change in leadership) affected the P-20 council and movement?
15. Are there any areas of improvement or issues that you think still need to be addressed in the P-20 movement?

16. How would you envision the future for your P-20 council?
17. What does a successful P-20 council look like and how will you know your council has achieved success?
18. Is there anything else you would like to share that I have not yet addressed or do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C

Recruitment script via email to send to P-20 local and state council representatives.

Address Line: Will individually email participants

Subject Line: Research Participation: P-20 Leadership Study

Message:

Dear [Name],

My name is Stefani Thachik and I am a current doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. I am working on a study to explore local and state implementation of P-16/P-20 initiatives in the United States as part of my dissertation research. As a recognized leader affiliated with the initiatives, I would like to invite you to participate in the current study. I hope that the research will inform other communities and states as the P-20 movement continues to grow.

Would you be willing to participate in an interview- via phone or Skype- related to these issues? If you are willing, I will find a time that works with your busy schedule to conduct the interview. I estimate that the interview will range from 30-60 minutes. I will also send you a copy of the consent form and questions in advance. Participation is voluntary so you can feel free to skip any questions you do not want to answer or you can withdraw from the study at any time.

This study was approved by the VCU IRB on [DATE]. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns (Primary Investigator (PI): Dr. Katherine Mansfield, kcmansfield@vcu.edu; or Co-PI: Stefani Thachik, thachiksl@vcu.edu). If you have any questions about the research process or research participant's rights, you can also contact the VCU IRB Board (erahelp@vcu.edu).

Thank you,
Stefani Thachik

VCU Doctoral Student & Graduate Research Assistant
thachiksl@vcu.edu

Appendix D

Recruitment script via in-person meeting to P-20 local and state council representatives.

IN-PERSON RECRUITMENT SCRIPT:

Hello [*Name to Confirm*]. My name is Stefani Thachik and I am a current doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. I am working on my dissertation with Dr. Katherine Mansfield to explore local and state implementation of P-16/P-20 initiatives in the United States. We are hoping to learn more about the development and progress of these initiatives, especially from a leadership standpoint, as they continue to grow across the United States. Are you interested in hearing more about our study?

- If individual says no, will stop.
- If individual says yes, will continue at that time or schedule a more convenient time to meet.

As a recognized leader affiliated with the initiatives, we would like to invite you to participate in an interview to learn more about P-16 initiatives. The study will be an in-person interview that will range from 30-60 minutes. We would like to record the interview with your permission. Participation is voluntary, so you can feel free to skip any questions you do not want to answer or you can withdraw from the study. Here are some additional details about the study if you want to take a minute to glance over the materials or to look over them on your own time. [*Will hand packet that includes consent form, interview questions, as well as a business card with contact information.*] If you are still interested in participating, would you like to be interviewed now or schedule another time to meet?

- Depending on answer, move to consent form/interview or schedule a follow-up.

Thank you for your time. We hope that the research will inform other communities and states as the P-20 movement continues to grow. If you have any questions about this current study, the research process or research participant's rights, please let me know or you are welcome to follow up with this contact information at a later time [*Give participant list of contacts*]

Appendix E

Participant pseudonym and demographic summaries.

State	Pseudonym	Leadership Level	Gender
Texas	Renee	Local	F
	Beverly	Local	F
	Tori	Local	F
	Mike	Local	M
	Lucia	Local	F
	Sheila	Local	F
	Keith	Local	M
	Laurie	Local	F
	Sue	Local	F
	Jodie	Local	F
	Frances	Local	F
	Trent	Local	M
	Rich	Local	M
	Bruce	Local	M
	Antoine	State	M
	Lennie	Local	M
	Caterina	Local	F
	Bennett	State	M
	Sophia	State	F
	Tony	State	M
	Irene	Local	F
	Sloane	Local	F
	Oliver	Local	M
Tennessee	Katherine	Local	F
	Whitney	Local	F
	Jason	State	M
	Stephen	Local	M
	Yvonne	State	F
	Donna	Local	F
	Sarah	Local	F
	Ashley	Local	F
	Eric	Local	M
	Lisa	Local	F
	Brooke	Local	F

Appendix F

Texas map of general P-20 council locations from interviews.



Appendix G

Tennessee map of general P-20 council locations from interviews.



Appendix H

Timeline of major events in Texas related to P-20 councils.

Year	Key Events
1998	Informal state P-16 collaboration forms named Public Education/Higher Education Coordinating Group
2001	Governor Rick Perry enters office New higher education plan <i>Closing the Gap</i> is enacted
2003	Texas Legislature passes SB 286 establishing a statewide P-16 council
2004	Texas Education Agency establishes Office of P-16 Coordination
2005	Texas Legislature passes House Bill 2808
2006	Texas Legislature passes law to help define college readiness through the creation of discipline specific vertical teams
2007	State P-16 council expands to include three additional members
2010	Generation TX project is established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
2011	Texas Legislature passes HB 2909 which expands state P-16 council membership

Appendix I

Texas state *Closing the Gaps* progress on outcome measures.

Goal	Benchmark	Target	Status (according to 2015 progress report)
Close the gaps in participation	By 2015, close the gaps in participation rates across Texas to add 630,000 more students.	“Increase the overall Texas higher education participation rate from 5.0 percent in 2000 to 5.6 percent by 2010 and to 5.7 percent in 2015.”	Almost Met
		“Increase the higher education participation rate for the African-American population of Texas from 4.6 percent in 2000 to 5.6 percent by 2010, and to 5.7 percent by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase the higher education participation rate for the Hispanic population of Texas from 3.7 percent in 2000 to 4.8 percent by 2010, and to 5.7 percent by 2015.”	Not Met
		“Increase the higher education participation rate for the White population of Texas from 5.1 percent in 2000 to 5.7 percent by 2010, and to 5.7 percent by 2015.”	Almost Met
Close the gaps in success	By 2015, increase by 50% the number of degrees, certificates and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs	“Increase the overall number of students completing bachelor’s degrees, associate’s degrees and certificates to 171,000 by 2010; and to 210,000 by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase the number of students completing bachelor’s degrees to 100,000 by 2010, and to 112,500 by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase the number of students completing associate’s degrees to 43,400 by 2010; and to 55,500 by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase the number of students	Met

		completing doctoral degrees to 3,350 by 2010, and to 3,900 by 2015.”	
		“Increase the number of African-American students completing bachelor’s degrees, associate’s degrees and certificates to 19,800 by 2010; and to 24,3000 by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase the number of Hispanic students completing bachelor’s degrees, associate’s degrees and certificates; to 50,000 by 2010; and to 67,000 by 2015.”	Met
		“Increase by 50 percent the number of students who achieve identifiable successes other than with certificates and degrees by 2015. Exceed the average performance of the 10 most populous states in workforce education provided by community and technical colleges.”	--
		“Increase the number of students completing engineering, computer science, math and physical science bachelor’s and associate’s degrees and certificates from 14,500 to 19,000 in 2005; to 24,000 by 2010; and to 29,000 by 2015.”	Almost Met
		“Increase the number of students completing allied health and nursing bachelor’s and associate’s degrees and certificates to 20,300 by 2010; and to 26,100 by 2015.”	Met
		“Targets for All Teacher Certification Routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of teachers initially certified through all teacher certification routes to 34,600 by 2010; and to 44,700 by 2015. - Increase the number of math and science teachers certified through all teacher certification routes to 6,500 by 2015.” 	Not Met

Close the gaps in excellence	By 2015, substantially increase the number of nationally recognized programs or services at colleges and universities in Texas.	“Increase the number of research institutions ranked in the top 10 among all research institutions from zero to one, and two additional research universities ranked in the top 30 by 2010; increase the number of public research universities ranked in the top 10 among all public research universities from zero to two, and four ranked among the top 30 by 2015.”	Not Met
		“Increase the number of public liberal arts universities ranked in the top 30 among all public liberal arts institutions from zero to two by 2010, and four by 2015.”	Not Met
		“Increase the number of health science centers ranked among the top 10 medical institutions from zero to one by 2010, and two by 2015.”	Not Met
		“Each college and university will have identified by 2002 at least one program to achieve nationally recognized excellence.”	Met
		“Community and technical colleges and universities will have at least one program or service nationally recognized: 25 percent of the institutions by 2005; 75 percent by 2010; and 100 percent by 2015.”	Met
		“Meet all benchmarks of the Priority Plan to Strengthen Education at Texas Southern University and Prairie View A&M University.”	--
Close the gaps in research	By 2015, increase the level of federal science and engineering research funding for Texas institutions by 50% to \$1.3 billion.	“Increase federal science and engineering obligations to Texas universities and health-related institutions from 5.6 percent of the obligations in 2000 (or \$1.1 billion in 1998 constant dollars) to 6.2 percent in 2010, and to 6.5 percent of obligations to higher education by 2015.”	Not Met
		“Increase research expenditures by Texas public universities and health-related institutions from \$1.45	Met

		<p>billion to \$3 billion by 2015 (approximate 5 percent increase per year).”</p>	
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Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2000). Closing the gaps: The Texas higher education plan; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *Closing the Gaps* 2015 progress report; The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *Closing the Gaps* goals and targets summary.

Appendix J

Timeline of major events in Tennessee related to P-20 councils.

Year	Key Events
2001	TN-THEC establishes voluntary state council
2002	TBR begins forming local councils
2003	Governor Phil Bredesen enters office Guidelines for local P-16 councils approved
2005	TN-THEC state council is reconvened State establishes Office of P-16 Initiatives
2006	CollegeforTN.com site is launched to help inform public about college searches
2009	Tennessee Diploma Project implemented
2010	Complete College Tennessee Act passed
2011	Governor Bill Haslam enters office
2013	Drive to 55 initiative launched
2014	Tennessee Promise Program signed into law

Appendix K

Exemplars emerging during study

Name of Council	Location	Website
Alignment USA	Multiple locations	http://www.alignmentusa.org/
All Kids Alliance (Greater Houston P16+ Council)	Houston, Texas	http://www.allkidsalliance.org/default.aspx
Aurora Public Schools: P-20 Education	Aurora, Colorado	http://p20.aurorak12.org/
E ³ Alliance: Education Equals Economics	Austin, Texas	http://e3alliance.org/
Georgia Alliance of Education Agency Heads	Georgia	http://gaeducationalliance.org/index.php
Illinois P-20 Council	Illinois	http://www.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/default.aspx
RGV Lead	Rio Grande Valley, Texas	http://www.techpreprgv.com/
Strive Together	Multiple locations	http://www.strivetogether.org/

Vita

Stefani Leigh Thachik | ThachikSL@vcu.edu

EDUCATION

Doctorate in Education, Educational Leadership (focus on Higher Education) Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia GPA: 4.0/4.0 Seyfarth Family Scholarship Sally A. Schumacher Dissertation Fund Award	<i>May 2016</i> <i>2015-2016</i> <i>2013-2014</i>
Master of Education in Counselor Education, Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina GPA: 4.0/4.0	<i>May 2010</i>
Bachelor of Science in Psychology Minor: Human Resource Development James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia GPA: 3.69/4.00 Study Abroad: Cross Cultural Psychology in Perugia and Florence, Italy	<i>May 2008</i> <i>May 2007</i>

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

Office of the Secretary of Education, Richmond, Virginia

Graduate Assistant

August 2015-May 2016

- Served as liaison for the Standards of Learning (SOL) Innovation Committee, which includes planning meeting logistics and communication
- Coordinated selection process for two statewide policy committees
- Constructed reports on policy initiatives, including SOL reform, assessment, and P-20 councils
- Researched best practices related to student growth measures, formative and summative assessment
- Addressed public constituents' concerns and maintain documents and website for the Committee

Department of Educational Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Graduate Assistant

August 2013-August 2015

- Conducted literature review and policy analysis of P-20 educational pipeline reform policy with a focus on traditionally underserved student populations with Dr. Katherine Mansfield
- Interviewed key stakeholders in state higher education plans to code for themes and learn best practices
- Engaged in community research to explore school resegregation with Dr. Genevieve Siegel-Hawley
- Served the Educational Leadership Department as needed

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Richmond, Virginia

Intern

January 2015-May 2015

- Analyzed data to track trends in mobility/transfer of students from 2 year to 4 year institutions
- Investigated current policies across the United States to learn best practices to guide discussions
- Constructed reports to share with stakeholders to help shape recommendations for future transfer policy

National Scholars Program, Clemson, South Carolina

Assistant Director

August 2010-August 2013

Graduate Assistant

August 2008-May 2010

- Advised 47 high-performing college students in academic, career, and personal goals
- Planned special events, including a 3-day recruitment weekend for more than 100 prospective National Scholars
- Constructed and implemented assessments and annual program report of NSP activities and the program

- Tracked program budget by monitoring expenses and balancing with the monthly bursar report
- Managed logistics for NSP programs, including foreign travel, courses, reunions, and interview weekend
- Co-taught a freshman seminar, which includes managing Blackboard and evaluating course assignments
- Communicated and marketed program to key stakeholders, including administrators, family, and students
- Supervised a five person retreat team with a budget of \$5,000 to enhance team-building
- Supervised graduate assistant and practicum student

Calhoun Honors College, Clemson, South Carolina

Assistant Director

August 2010-August 2013

Graduate Assistant

August 2009-May 2010

- Coordinated monthly programming for over 1,200 students, including an information fair and Networking Night
- Enhanced Honors community through increased faculty and student interaction through innovative programs, including Thoughts Worth Thinking discussion series and Registration Kick-Off events
- Advised Honors student groups, including the Honors Living Learning Community Resident Advisors, Honors Mentor Program, and Honors Events Planning and Programming Committee
- Evaluated student satisfaction and needs with the Honors College through development of Zoomerang surveys
- Conducted annual university assessment of the program using WEAVEonline, a Web-based assessment management system
- Marketed Honors opportunities through a variety of communications including social media and print media
- Participated in an Honors Application Review Committee evaluating over 80 applications annually
- Managed newly created Honors Academic Activities Center, including creating policies

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Graduate Research, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia *August 2013-Present*

A Comparative Case Study of the Relationships between Policy Context, Design, and Implementation of P-20 Educational Reform Movements in Texas and Tennessee

- Design and defend methods of proposed dissertation research on policy implementation of P-20 educational reform with a focus on key people, places, and policies

An Exploratory Study of P-16/P-20 Initiatives in the US

- Utilize critical race theory to explore the 'Closing the Gaps' higher education plan in Texas
- Interview key stakeholders to explore motivations behind P-16 policies

Reform with Reinvestment: Hopes, tensions, and impacts of gentrification in an urban school

- Conduct an exploratory study with colleagues on middle class reinvestment in urban public schools utilizing qualitative methods to find themes

Educate Girls and Change the World: Documentary Film as a Catalyst for Social Praxis

- Study the impacts of workshops in conjunction with documentary, *Girl Rising*

Master's Graduate Research, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina

August 2009-May 2010

Ally Identity Development on a College Campus

- Investigated what it means to be an ally and ally development towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community
- Developed interview protocol and conducted semi-structured interviews of 18 participants
- Coded interviews to determine findings and trace patterns of ally development

Undergraduate Honors Thesis, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

January 2007-May 2008

Are You Ready for the 'Real World': An Evaluation of Two Career Development Courses

- Evaluated the effectiveness of two newly initiated career development courses
- Conducted literature review regarding aspects of career development
- Performed statistical analyses of data to find significance of career interventions

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Thachik, S.L.,** & Mansfield, K.C. (2016 April). *The politics of problem definition, governance structures, and resource allocation: Making sense of P-16 reform in Texas*. Presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Thachik, S.L.,** & Mansfield, K.C. (2015 April). *A CRT analysis of the P-16 movement in Texas: Symbolic policy or substantive reform*. Presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Wan, G., Scott, M.R., **Thachik, S.L.,** Hall, A.F., & Pienkowski, M. (2015 April). *Educate girls and change the world: Documentary film as a catalyst for social praxis*. Presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Siegel-Hawley, G., **Thachik, S.L.,** & Bridges, K. (2015 April). *Reform with reinvestment: Hopes, tensions, and impacts of gentrification in an urban school*. Presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Thachik, S.L.,** & Mansfield, K.C. (2014 November). *A CRT Analysis of the P-16 Movement in Texas: Symbolic Policy or Substantive Reform*. Presentation at the University Council for Educational Administration Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Wan, G., Hall, A., Pienkowski, M., Scott, M., **Thachik, S.** & Walker, G. (2014 March). *Educate girls and change the world: A community movement*. Presentation at the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium Annual Conference, Richmond, VA.
- Thachik, S.L.,** & Mansfield, K.C. (2014 January). *P-20 initiatives: A review of the literature with implications for future research*. Presentation at the VCU School of Education Annual Research Colloquium, Richmond, VA.
- Williams, J.E., & **Thachik, S.L.** (2012 November). *Building a better honors LLC: Clemson University's successful academic and student affairs collaboration*. Presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council Annual Conference, Boston, MA.
- Cuevas, A., Decker, J., Irvin, D., & **Thachik, S.** (2012 November). *Optimizing Lives, Achieving Dreams: Appreciatively Advising Honors Students*. Panel session presented at the National Collegiate Honors Council Annual Conference, Boston, MA.
- Thachik, S.,** Muhlhahn, C., & Bernard, M. (2012 October). *Advising outside the box*. Presentation at the South Carolina College Personnel Association Conference, Charleston, SC.
- Price, S., Hobgood, K. Williams, J., & **Thachik, S.** (2011 October 15-17). *Reimagining a Honors LLC: Clemson University's Model for an Academic and Student Affairs Partnership*. Presentation at the ACUHO-I Living Learning Programs Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Haupt, B., Hazelton, J., & **Thachik, S.** (2010 April). *Ally Identity Development on a College Campus*. Poster Presentation at the Clemson Health, Education and Human Development Research Forum, Clemson, SC.
- Thachik, S.L.,** & Zinn, T.E. (2008 April). *Are you ready for the 'real world': An evaluation of two career development courses*. Poster session presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Salisbury, MD.
- Thachik, S.L.,** Zinn, T.E., Irby, S., Shalon, J.N., & Slater, M. (2008 March). *Are you ready for the 'real world': An evaluation of two career development courses*. Poster session presented at the Eastern Psychological Association Conference, Boston, MA.

Publications

Mansfield, K.C., & **Thachik, S.L.** (2016). A critical policy analysis of Texas' Closing the Gaps. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(3), 1-33.

Scott, M.R., Wan, G., **Thachik, S.L.**, Hall, A., Pienkowski, M. (Submitted for review). Educate girls and change the world: Documentary film as a catalyst for social praxis.

Siegel-Hawley, G., **Thachik, S.L.**, & Bridges, K. (2016). Reform with reinvestment: Values and tensions in gentrifying urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 1-31.

Thachik, S.L. (Submitted for review). Review of the book *How College Works*, by D.F. Chambliss & C.G. Takacs].

Thachik, S.L. (2014). Different approaches to education reform from countries leading in international PISA scores. [Review of the book *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way*, by A. Ripley]. *New Waves- Educational Research and Development* (Refereed Journal), 17.