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**(Re)Framing the Politics of Educational Discourse:
An Investigation of the Title I School Improvement Grant Program of 2009**

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**(Re)Framing the Politics of Educational Discourse:
An Investigation of the Title I School Improvement Grant Program of 2009**

by

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Dedications

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**(Re)Framing the Politics of Educational Discourse:
An Investigation of the Title I School Improvement Grant Program of 2009**

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Supervisor: Michelle D. Young

Of the numerous public policy debates currently taking place throughout the United States, perhaps no issue receives more attention than the persistence of “chronically” low-performing public schools. As of 2009, approximately 5,000 schools—5% of the nation’s total—qualified as chronically low performing (Duncan, 2009d). Certainly, these statistics merit the attention of policy scholars, yet the political contestation of interests attempting to influence how the federal government should address such issues has reached a new fevered crescendo.

Given the increased politicization of the federal government’s role in education and the growing number of interests attempting to influence the debates concerning school reform, education policy scholars have recognized the need to extend the field of policy studies by using analytical frameworks that consider both the discourse and performative dimensions of deliberative policy making. Therefore, this study addresses this particular need by employing a critical interpretive policy analysis that illustrates how both dominant discourses and the deliberative

performances of the federal government shaped the policy vocabularies embedded within the Title I School Improvement Grant program of 2009 as the commonsense solutions for the nation's chronically low-performing schools.

In addition, this study provides a historical analysis, illustrating how the omnipresent threat of an economic crisis has been a primary influence in the politics of federal governance since the global economic collapse of the 1970s. This study demonstrates how over the course of the last four decades the United States has consistently reduced its commitment to the public sector, choosing instead to promote economic policies informed by the ideals of market-based liberalism. Subsequently this study presents the argument that education, specifically the "chronic failure" of public schools, has emerged as a "primary emblematic issue" and now serves as an "effective metaphor for the nation's economic crisis" (Hajer, 1995).

Thus, with such issues presented as a contextual backdrop, this study examines how the Obama/Duncan Administration operationalized dominant discourses and performative practices to establish consensual support for a turnaround reform agenda, effectively defining the policy solutions made available to those who participated in the revision of the Title I SIG program of 2009.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Of the numerous public policy debates currently taking place in the United States, perhaps no issue receives more attention than the overabundance of low-performing public schools. Currently, approximately 5,000 schools—5% of the nation's total—qualify as chronically low performing (Duncan, 2009d). A recent National Center for Education Statistics report (Planty, Kena, & Hannes, 2009) claimed that 4 of the 5 largest districts in the United States had average ninth-grade graduation rates of 55% or below. From the 2004-05 school year to the 2008-09 school year, the number of schools categorized as in need of improvement rose 30% (from 96,990 to 12,597), and the number of those schools needing to be restructured tripled (rising from 1,180 to 5,017; Planty et al., 2009). Certainly, these statistics merit the attention of local, state, and federal policy makers. However, the political contestation over how and if federal policy should address these issues has reached a new fevered crescendo, thus making the debate on how to improve low-performing schools one of the most heated topics in education policy today.

The policy often central to this debate is the most recent iteration of the Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG), originally passed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and most recently reauthorized as Section 1003(g) of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). This section contains what are often referred to as the *turnaround* policies. Upon entering office, President Barack Obama immediately revealed an education policy agenda targeting the surplus of low-performing public schools across America. Obama (2009a), speaking to the Hispanic

Chamber of Commerce, said America’s public education system is “untenable for our economy, it's unsustainable for our democracy, it's unacceptable for our children—and we can't afford to let it continue” (para. 10). President Obama continued, claiming that the United States had allowed “grades to slip, our schools to crumble, and our teacher quality to fall short” (para. 10). Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009), which allocated an additional \$3 billion to Title I SIG.

As one of President Obama’s initial attempts to address the nation’s lowest performing schools, he and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan completely overhauled the Title I SIG. Embedded within the *Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a), President Obama reshaped the SIG program by earmarking a significant amount of Title I monies for competitive allocation. This signaled a significant change in federal education policy, as Title I funds were historically distributed in a categorical fashion based upon formulas calculating the number of economically disadvantaged students served by local education agencies. However, under the new version of SIG, a portion of categorical funds was reserved only for those districts and schools agreeing to implement one of the U.S. Department of Education’s (2010a) four prescribed strategies for school improvement: (a) transformation, (b) turnaround, (c) restart, and (d) school closure. Together, the competitive aspect of Title I SIG funds and the prescriptive nature of the four school

improvement strategies signal a significant expansion of federal involvement in education policy.

For the great majority of U.S. history, the education of elementary and secondary school children was considered to be a state and local function (DeBray, 2006; Manna, 2006; McGuinn, 2006; Vinovskis, 2009; Wong, 2008). Prior to the passage of the ESEA of 1965, the federal government assumed a “permissive role” in the governance of education, one that allowed state and local governments to define the content and scope of education policy (Wong, 2008, p. 20). However, over the course of the last 50 years, federal involvement in education has increased significantly. A primary focus of this shift can be attributed to the federal government’s desire to address the education of disadvantaged children.

The landmark 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (as cited in Jennings, 2000) served as a major catalyst for a national debate regarding the proper role of the federal government in educational reform. This debate, initially focused on the inequitable education being provided to African American children, eventually grew to encompass broader concerns about the educational opportunities being provided to children from economically disadvantaged populations. Although President Kennedy sought to increase the role of federal education in a way that addressed these concerns, the partisan bickering between southern, conservative, and private or parochial interests prevented substantial progress (Jennings, 2000).

The partisan blockages of federal expansion were soon erased by the electoral mandate afforded to President Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1964 election. Johnson,

working with a newly elected Democratic majority in Congress, capitalized on the election by strategically touting the Gardner Commission findings suggesting that education policy and financial aid for low-income schools could be bound with Johnson's broader domestic policy agenda, the "War on Poverty" (Jennings, 2000). President Johnson's passage of the ESEA of 1965 is considered to be a watershed event in the history of federal education involvement. The majority of funding authorized in ESEA was appropriated to the Title I program. ESEA and Title I were unique in that a new precedent was set in the amount of federal funds channeled to states and local school districts. Also unique to Title I were the provisions that monies would be specifically earmarked for districts in order to address the needs of "economically disadvantaged" children. Prior to ESEA, federal funding of education was rather limited and never explicitly redistributive (Gordon, 2007).

Perhaps burdened by its rather expansive goals of creating equitable educational opportunities for all children and eliminating poverty through educational reform, Title I has always been a heavily contested federal policy. Although partisan attacks have questioned the motives behind its categorical spending, Title I continues to be considered the federal government's cornerstone policy in the effort to provide quality educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

Despite the lengthy tenure of federal policies focused on issues of equity and poverty reduction such as Title I, a remarkable transformation has taken place in the federal government's attitude towards educational policy solutions. In response to the economic collapse of the 1970s and the perceived failure of the Keynesian economic

ideals of welfare governance, the federal government has continuously scaled back its commitment to the public sector, embraced a philosophy of market-based liberalism, and reshaped its approach to education based upon the values woven within the discourses of globalization (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010). Although the values of democracy and equity that founded the passage of ESEA and Title I have not been completely vanquished, they have been largely overshadowed by the discourses of efficiency and accountability (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010). Subsequently, over the course of the last two decades, the purposes of education have been reinterpreted through the discourses of global modernization, resulting in a “global convergence in reform strategies” (Ball, 2008, p. 42). Such strategies have been operationalized through policy vocabularies, the “sets of concepts structuring a particular policy, consciously developed by policymakers” (Hajer, 2003, p. 105). Thus, the written inscription of such globalized vocabularies in the field of education has codetermined what consumers (readers of policy documents) have been able to consider as legitimate policy solutions for the problems facing public schools.

The Title I SIG program serves as an excellent example of an educational policy that should be reconsidered amidst this recent shift in values. The arguments fueling the school improvement debate are fluid, complex in nature, and voiced by shifting networks of interests and coalitions seeking to shape educational policy solutions. Certainly the conversations surrounding the Title I SIG program are highly contested. There are certainly those who would consider the Title I SIG program as yet another example of the market-based condemnation of public schools (e.g.,

Ravitch, 2010a). There are also those who celebrate the Title I SIG program as a positive move away from the bungled efforts of an inept educational bureaucracy (e.g., Finn, 2008). Finally, there are the many who reside at some point in the middle of this highly politicized continuum.

Regardless of where one resides in this debate, it is difficult to ignore the ways in which Title I SIG falls in line with the modernized ideals of governance that support reorganizing through the decentralization, devolvement, and diffusion of bureaucratic decision making. Ultimately, as in the case of the Title I SIG debate, the scaling back of central authority facilitates the creation of a more inclusive policy-making environment, which has resulted in an explosion of interest-group activity in the education policy arena (Opfer, Young, & Fusarelli, 2008). Educational policy scholars such as DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) have called attention to the fact that these interests differ from those who traditionally dominated policy discussions at the federal level. The once recognizable ideological boundaries separating educational interests have dissolved over the past 10 years, further complicating the political terrain of education policy.

The debate surrounding Title I SIG policies should not be glossed over as a battle between liberal versus conservative interests, or public versus private interests. Instead, the fluid advocacy coalitions that shaped this policy provide an excellent example of how education policy making has evolved into a highly complex and contested political environment. This acknowledgement alone supports the

importance of researching the ways in which deliberative processes and interest-based advocacy shape federal efforts in educational governance.

Initially, the analysis of deliberative policy making in education focused on the interactions among a core group of definable alliances: interest groups, government agencies, and legislatures (Kaestle & Lodewick, 2007; Opfer et al., 2008). From 1965 to 1994, these alliances were composed of two distinct ideologies: liberal interests seeking to expand federal spending and services and conservative interests attempting to eliminate the federal government's role in education (DeBray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009). Kingdon's (1995) work on multiple streams, Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) work on punctuated equilibrium, and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) investigation of advocacy coalitions have often been used by scholars to explain the important role that these alliances and interests play in the shaping of policy solutions.

However, Maarten Hajer (1995) claimed such frameworks place too heavy of an emphasis on the ability of researchers and political actors to learn from realist descriptions and explanations of interests. Tracing the rise of policy solutions to a concretized understanding of interests fails to appreciate the critical interpretative understanding that both language and context are socially constructed within the moment. Traditional interest analysis frameworks are often criticized for their reliance on rationalist assumptions. Critical scholars have argued that rationalistic frameworks rely upon the observance of natural occurrences (Scheurich, 1994; M. D. Young, 1999), overlook the social construction of political questions in the search for

a scientifically based solution (Fischer, 2003b), and fail to consider the value orientation inherent within research (Hajer, 2003; Marshall, 1997).

In recent years, scholars such as DeBray (2006), McGuinn (2006), and Mintrom (2000) have sought to expand the study of interests in deliberative policy making by calling traditional approaches to task for failing to acknowledge the ideological preferences of interest-based actors, the historical and social contexts within which educational policies are constructed, and the interest-based orientations of advocacy coalitions. Yet, these studies failed to fully acknowledge the learning that takes place within participatory politics, often labeling individual beliefs at the onset, thus dismissing the argumentative view that the beliefs of actors are never fully understood and are constantly being renegotiated by the discourses and contexts that shape deliberative policy making.

Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) *three-dimensional analytical model* provides a unique approach to the analysis of deliberative policy making seeking to address the limitations of traditional policy studies. This particular approach provides interpretive insight into political processes where the division of roles may be unclear. In doing so, Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) framework for analysis focuses upon three dimensions: *discourse*, *dramaturgy (performative)*, and *deliberation*. The discursive dimension of Hajer's policy analysis seeks to understand the structures and patterns of deliberative politics used by the various actors involved. Specifically, Hajer (2003, 2005a, 2006b) attempted to interpret policy processes by highlighting the *discourses*, *story lines*, and *policy vocabularies* that construct policy solutions at any given moment. Discourse

analysis is central to Hajer's framework, as discursive meanings are attributed to the ideas, concepts, and categorizations that ultimately reproduce specific practices and define the range of potential policy solutions (Hajer, 1995, 2003, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b).

The second dimension of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) policy analysis enriches discourse analytic studies by seeking to understand the performative dimension of policy making. This type of analysis focuses on the physical and symbolic practices in which policy discourses are constantly being produced and reproduced. Hajer's (2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b) performative dimension looks specifically at the processes of *scripting*, *staging*, *setting*, and *performance*. By analyzing the politics of performance, Hajer (2005a) demonstrates the persuasive ways deliberative actors are "acted upon" and thus convinced to sponsor some policy solutions over others (p. 49).

The final dimension of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) analytical framework examines the deliberative processes of policy making. By analyzing the democratic dimensions of policy making—*reciprocity*, *inclusiveness*, *openness*, *integrity*, *accountability*, and *dialogue*—Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) analyses provide insights as to how deliberative practices define the set of rules by which policy actors are expected to participate. Ultimately, Hajer's three-dimensional approach to policy analysis seeks to provide insight into the discursive and performative aspects of deliberative policy making. To deliver a more complete understanding of the context in which today's deliberative actors operate, the next section offers a description of

the economic, political, and cultural reconfigurations that have altered the constructs of nation-states during the modern era of globalization.

The Global Reconfiguration of the Nation-State

Ideological understandings of globalization are highly contested (Ball, 2008; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Popkewitz & Rivzi, 2009; Rivzi & Lingard, 2010; Tomlinson, 2001). Even tracing the theoretical roots of globalization can be difficult. Burbules and Torres (2000) suggested the contemporary constructs of globalization can be traced to either the petroleum crisis of the 1970s forcing nation-states to rethink the production and consumption of energy or to advances in communication technologies, shifts in migration patterns, and increases in capital flows that began to connect the global community over a century ago. Popkewitz and Rivzi (2009) defined globalization as a “name given to the phenomena of the present to consider the effects, consequences, and causes of the changes occurring” (p. 10). Although the ideological constructs of globalization are a topic of continuous debate, there seems to be some consensus as to the empirical phenomena of globalization as witnessed through economic, political, and cultural reconfigurations.

Addressing the economic impacts of globalization over the last 30 years, Ball (2008) highlighted five specific trends in the transnational movement toward market deregulation: (a) the reduction of tariff and nontariff barriers, (b) the floating of currencies and deregulation of financial markets, (c) the inclusion of direct investitures from foreign markets, (d) the standardization of business practices, and (e) the deregulation of product markets that contributed to the reduction of national

monopolies. Over the course of three decades, transnational deregulation has interrupted the nation-state's ability to control the social and economic conditions of labor markets. Today, governments must respond to corporate entrepreneurs who outsource labor so that they are able to profit from differences in labor law, political ideals, and economic policies (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010).

Politically speaking, nation-states must react to the global marketplace and shape policy decisions to meet the new rules of transnational economic competition. Nation-states are no longer able to operate from a Westphalian perspective where politics are organized around issues of national sovereignty (Krasner, 2001). Instead, politics in this context are defined by the pressures of a global financial competition encouraging the development of public policies that will ensure economic growth in the transnational marketplace. This redefinition of national politics contributes to the withdrawal of the nation-state from its role as a welfare provider and its replacement with neoliberal models of governance that place the welfare of citizens in the care of the competitive market.

Culturally, the global explosion of communication technologies contributes to the homogenization of cultural identities. Now able to reduce the communicative constraints of distance and time, cultures are now being unified in ways that were previously impossible. Conversely, amid the global joining of identities is a local fracturing of communities brought about by the discourses of "liberal pluralism" that accentuate the divides of difference (Burbules & Torres, 2000, p. 21). The joining of transnational cultures and the fragmentation of local communities create a unique

challenge for the authority of nation-states, as policies must reflect the homogenized needs of the global market while also attempting to satisfy the needs of a pluralistic citizenry.

Although the economic, political, and cultural transformations described above appear to suggest a weakened and less authoritative nation-state, Weiss (1997) claimed this is a “myth” (p. 26). Instead, Weiss envisioned an increase in the authoritative power of nation-states as they are forced to strengthen the range of alliances both within state and beyond. Certainly globalization is frequently used as a theoretical scapegoat, blamed for any policy that is not embraced by the general public; however, the empirical consequences of globalization and the corresponding shifts in governance reconfigure the discourses of economics, politics, and culture. It is within these reconfigurations that the goals and practices of public education are being reconstituted. Subsequently, to better understand the public policies within this context of globalization, the next section provides a brief historical description of the discourses often relied upon to frame today’s policy issues and solutions.

Discourses of Globalization

Blackmore (2007) suggested the varied discourses of globalization have served as a guide for the bulk of policy choices made during the last decade. Addressing this dominance, Blackmore stated, “Globalization has provided for the justification for the restructuring of the workplace, and of educational work more specifically, in most Western liberal capitalist states in the past decade” (p. 21). Certainly, some consider the policy solutions emanating from globalized ideology as

pragmatic and necessary responses to an increasingly interconnected global society. However, despite how appropriate any set of policy solutions may appear, scholars must acknowledge their theoretical foundations. Ball (2007) categorized the ideological masks of globalization in a chronological fashion, beginning with the neoliberal rationalities that came to being in the 1980s, followed by the “Third Way” rationalities that arrived during the 1990s.

During the 1980s, the United States began to witness a neoliberal replacement of traditional liberal values, which historically emphasized the private rights of individuals and governmental noninterference. While liberal motives still exist within neoliberal ideology, the neoliberal discourse places the government as an active partner in the creation of policies that allow individual freedoms to be realized through market transactions. Rivzi and Lingard (2010) addressed the ways in which neoliberal discourses “ontologize” the global market logic:

Global subjects . . . are asked to consider policy options through its presupposed conceptual prism, which revolves around such market principles as free trade; the production of profits through greater productivity; a minimalist role for the state; a deregulated labour market; and flexible forms of government. (p. 33)

Both political and business leaders during the 1980s gave voice to the neoliberal discourse by restructuring their agendas to address its principles. In the United States, this restructuring of agendas was witnessed through the policies created during President Reagan’s administration. Public sector policies during this time reflected neoliberal principles, ultimately mirroring the conservative party’s desire to reduce federal governance. Upon election, President Reagan (1981) spent

the majority of his inaugural address criticizing the federal government as inefficient, unproductive, and at risk within a global economic marketplace. In his address, Reagan listed a litany of economic ills left behind by former President Jimmy Carter. Specifically, Reagan called attention to rising inflation, continued unemployment, and a growing national deficit. This critique, drawn from the neoliberal discourse, emphasized the ways in which the “big government” solutions of previous administrations could no longer be considered a viable solution for economic stability (Reagan, 1981).

The discourses of neoliberalism during this time presented narratives of optimism and liberty, rejoicing in the closure of intrusive and inefficient governmental programs and stoking the fires of traditional liberal values by promoting individual empowerment through choice and freedom. The receiving audience would soon be provided with ample opportunities to empower themselves, as the federal government sponsored the dramatic reduction of public service programs. The dominant narratives during this period painted a desirable picture of a lean, efficient, and globally competitive government that would simultaneously free individuals as consumers and, through the market driven power of choice, hold professionals, bureaucrats, and service providers accountable for their actions (M. Dean, 1999).

In the early 1990s, global economies began to falter, nations faced enormous deficits, and policy makers expressed their skepticism of the neoliberal promises made during the previous decade. The cumulative sense of dissatisfaction opened the

door for the discourse of the Third Way (Latham, 2001). The ideological concepts guiding this discourse attempted to address the recognizable problems of a globally connected society without retreating to the perceived failures of welfare state policies. Latham (2001) outlined four specific values undergirding Third Way ideology: (a) *interdependence*, because nations and communities can only meet the challenges of globalization if they find new ways of working together and supporting each other; (b) *responsibility*, because in accepting the rights and benefits of citizenship, people also need to be made responsible for their actions and effort in society; (c) *incentives*, because in a world of constant change and uncertainty, people need to be encouraged to save more, to study harder, and to work more intelligently; and (d) *devolution*, because, far from engineering society in the old way, governments need to push powers of democracy and public provision closer to civil society. The principles of Third Way ideology were intended to resolve the tensions between the social democratic expansion of government established in the 1950s and 1960s and the globalized and market-driven dissolution of government established in the 1970s and 1980s.

Much like his predecessors who borrowed from the discourse of neoliberalism to reshape the governmental agenda, President Clinton relied upon the narratives of the Third Way discourse when framing the policy issues of his era. This discourse was purposefully crafted so that the solutions made available seemed to rise above the partisan bickering that often paralyzed governmental reform. The bipartisan framing of Third Way discourse provided hope that a significant restructuring of governance

could be realized. Clinton's (1991) reliance on the Third Way discourse became apparent during a series of three "New Covenant" speeches given during his initial run for presidency: (a) "The New Covenant: Responsibility and Rebuilding the American Community," (b) "A New Covenant for Economic Change," and (c) "A New Covenant for American Security."

Clinton (1991) used this series of speeches to craft a narrative that played to the desires of citizens who longed for a return to basic values such as hard work and community. The discourse of the Third Way also excited citizens by challenging the business community to promote economic growth through the expansion of the free market, while also holding businesses accountable for the responsible and ethical treatment of consumers. The New Covenant speeches provided Clinton with a vehicle for outlining a presidential agenda that promised to address welfare reform, college access, the elimination of wasteful government, and nationalized standards for education (Fitzsimons, 2006).

The globalization of governance supported by discourses of neoliberal and Third Way ideologies shaped the ways in which policy makers framed issues during the last several decades. Yet, as Hajer (1995, 2003) acknowledged, critical policy scholars should not rely solely on the theoretical critique of dominant discourses. Therefore, this dissertation provides the rigorous empirical research needed to support such critiques. Specifically, this study highlights how dominant discourses of this present moment and deliberative policy making worked together to shape the Title I

SIG program, which is promoted as the commonsense solution for low-performing schools.

So, while this dissertation ultimately is an analysis of the most recent iteration of the Title I SIG program and the federal government's continued effort to improve low-performing schools, it is also a critical interpretive analysis of the discourses and performative politics that shape policy solutions within this historically specific context of globalized governance. By examining both the performative aspects of policy making and the historically specific discourses that shaped the 2009 Title I SIG, this study attempts to offer policy scholars with a more nuanced understanding of the politics of policy making that appear during this specific moment in history.

Objectives and Purposes of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG program of 2009 (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) became the chosen solution for chronically low-performing schools. Specifically, I was interested in determining how the dominant discourses of globalization and the performative aspects of policy making worked together to define the range of policy solutions made available to those actors who participated in the shaping of the Title I SIG program. Additionally, I was interested in providing the field of educational policy studies with a critical alternative approach to traditional interest-based analyses.

Research Questions

In order to adequately address the purposes previously listed, this dissertation examined three research questions:

1. What are the meanings of *turnaround* found within the policy discourses of actors at the federal level?
2. What are the particular discourse coalitions that formed around the school-turnaround story lines used to support the Title I School Improvement Grant Program of 2009?
3. What are the performative practices that provided the Title I School Improvement Grant with credibility and attention?

Research Plan

To best address the purposes and questions guiding this dissertation I developed an instrumental case study design and employed an adapted version of Hajer's (1995, 2003, 2005a, 2006b) analytical framework allowing for the critical analysis of the discourses and performative aspects that shaped the Title I SIG program of 2009. The analytical work involved the examination of texts—documents and written or spoken statements—and the performative practices from which these texts arrived. Additionally, qualitative interviews with three specific sets of actors served to inform this study:

- *federal government actors*, those employed, appointed, or elected to positions within the federal government;

- *special-interest and/or advocacy actors*, nonprofit or for-profit employees who either were invited to participate in the dialogues that helped shape the current Title I SIG program or had an agenda specifically addressing the policy; and
- *university actors*, those professors who were asked either to participate in the Title I SIG program formation or to specifically target turnaround policies in their scholarly work.

To answer Research Questions 1 and 2, I first conducted “helicopter” interviews with persons from each of the three sets of actors under investigation. The initial interviews, which covered a broad spectrum of policy actors, provided insight into the causal chains that shaped development of the Title I SIG program. Next, I conducted an in-depth textual analysis of documents (congressional hearings, commissioned research reports, focus group transcripts, academic papers, etc.). Within this process, I organized documents based upon the timeline of events leading up to the revision of the Title I SIG program.

After an initial analysis of the helicopter interviews and text, I interviewed a second group of actors considered to be key informants in the development of the Title I SIG program. I then used a qualitative analysis software program (HyperRESEARCH) to code data based upon the general themes and story lines found to support these themes. Next, I recoded data based upon the dominant policy vocabularies that were relied upon to support the Title I SIG program. Finally, I coded data once again, seeking to highlight the performative dimensions of policy

making. This process allowed me to uncover the ways in which each performative practice utilized select pieces of evidence to support the Title I SIG revision.

To answer Research Question 3, I developed an interpretive accounting of the discursive structures and performative productions that I believe contributed to the rise of the Title I SIG program. During the last stages of analysis I revisited several of the participants who were selected for the second set of interviews, presenting them with the cumulative findings: the terms of the turnaround policy discourse, the formation of discourse coalitions, and the pinpointing of performative strategies. This member-checking strategy allowed me to gauge how actors related to the findings as presented and provided this study with a more nuanced answer to each of the research questions guiding this study.

Justification of the Study

Three primary motivators led to my choice in researching the deliberative politics that shaped the 2009 Title I SIG program: (a) the deliberative formation of education policy, (b) globalization, and (c) the revision of the Title I SIG.

Why the deliberative formation of education policy? First, the field of education policy studies has far too few analyses that focus on the interest-based formation of policy solutions (Opfer et al., 2008). Second, the politics of education post-NCLB has endured a radical transformation. It is no longer useful to employ traditional frameworks for analysis that attempt to categorize interests through the partisan or ideological labels that historically have shaped educational reform (DeBray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009). Finally, Hajer's (1995, 2003, 2005a, 2006b)

analytical framework is structured to facilitate a new empirical knowledge as to how performative practices and historically dominant discourses work together to structure a modern policy-making environment that is heavily contested and always in a state of flux.

Why globalization? Lingard (2009) provided three reasons that globalization should push scholars to rethink education policy analysis today: (a) the rescaling of politics and reorganization of nation-state authority; (b) the move from government to governance; and (c) the constant negation of values that, while originating from global networks, are rearticulated at the regional, national, provincial, and local levels. Lingard's justifications require those policy analysts who view policies as a product of historically specific cultural and political contexts to acknowledge the economic, political, and cultural reconfigurations that have taken place during this era of globalization.

Why the Title I SIG? On September 24, 2010, Davis Guggenheim, the respected filmmaker who previously captured America's attention about environmental policy with *An Inconvenient Truth*, released the critically acclaimed movie *Waiting for Superman*. Having already grossed well over \$7 million domestically (Subers, 2010), this film has become the lightning rod of a larger debate as to how educational policy should be leveraged to address the issue of low performing schools.

Backed by the Broad Foundation, the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, The Walton Family Foundation, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and many other

powerful interests, the persons involved with *Superman* created a social action campaign seeking to “build public awareness, ignite personal involvement and inspire real social change” (Waiting for Superman, 2010, para. 1). This campaign is now encouraging parents, celebrities, and all interested parties to make their voices heard to local, state, and federal policy makers in the hopes that the following core initiatives can be realized: (a) setting academic standards that are on par with the world’s best, (b) recruiting and rewarding great teachers, (c) creating and nurturing excellent schools, and (d) increasing literacy rates (Waiting for Superman, 2010).

As a former teacher and principal I have yet to meet a single educator who would not support the Waiting for Superman campaign’s core initiatives. Also, as a father of three young children, I have yet to meet a single parent that would not also support these initiatives. As I mentioned at the outset of this dissertation, certainly the quality and conditions of our public schools deserve serious attention. However, the debate as to how the nation should go about improving low-performing schools is founded upon a wide array of values and beliefs. Consider the following two statements:

I would recommend seeing *Waiting for Superman* if you haven’t already! We need great performance evaluations across the board, along with partnerships with unions on progressive new contracts. Our new contract includes student achievement outcomes along with clear and consistent expectations, objective classroom observations by master educators, contributions to the school community, etc. I believe No Child Left Behind (NCLB) got this issue on the table, and that President Obama is taking it to the next level with Race to the Top: in the past year states have taken leaps and bounds toward implementing higher accountability for student outcomes because of this initiative. We are definitely on the right track and there is momentum now. We just have to keep moving forward and pushing aggressively to make results in public schools a top priority. (Rhee, as quoted in Jambulapati, 2010, para. 14)

The message of these films [*e.g., Waiting for Superman*] has become alarmingly familiar: American public education is a failed enterprise. The problem is not money. Public schools already spend too much. Test scores are low because there are so many bad teachers, whose jobs are protected by powerful unions. Students drop out because the schools fail them, but they could accomplish practically anything if they were saved from bad teachers. They would get higher test scores if schools could fire more bad teachers and pay more to good ones. The only hope for the future of our society, especially for poor black and Hispanic children, is escape from public schools, especially to charter schools, which are mostly funded by the government but controlled by private organizations, many of them operating to make a profit. (Ravitch, 2010b, para. 3)

To be fair, the statements listed above are taken from only two persons, both with a very recognized voice in the education reform debates. However, these statements provide a powerful example of the continuum of issues, interests, and values informing the debate as to how our federal government should go about improving our nation's lowest performing schools.

Immediately upon entering office, President Barack Obama offered his administration's response to this debate by revealing an education policy agenda that aggressively targeted those schools considered to be chronically low performing. The primary goal of this agenda was to facilitate school improvement within the 5,000 lowest-performing schools over the next 5 years. Governmental support of this goal is significant, with \$546 million appropriated through the 2009 Title I SIG, and an additional \$3 billion being provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b).

Again, I think one would be hard pressed to find an educator or parent who wouldn't want to see 5,000 schools dramatically improve by 2014. However, the

revision of the Title I SIG program has several rather serious implications for states and districts. First, the Obama Administration's reshaping of SIG policy (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) signals a significant increase in federal education involvement. With a good portion of Title I monies being awarded on a competitive basis, those states and local districts seeking SIG funds must agree to implement one of the U.S. Department of Education's (2010a) four prescribed strategies for school improvement:

1. Turnaround means replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff, implementing a research-based instructional program, providing extended learning time, and implementing new governance structure.
2. Restarting means converting or closing and reopening the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
3. School closure means closing the school and enrolling students who attended it in other, higher performing schools in the district.
4. Transformation means replacing the principal, strengthening staffing, implementing a research-based instructional program, providing extended learning time, and implementing new governance and flexibility.

The limiting of SIG school improvement activities to four choices greatly reduces the flexibility of local and state education agencies to choose their own contextually specific methods for improving low-performing schools.

Subsequently, the four turnaround strategies serve as the root of the second set of rather serious implications. The four models listed in the SIG program raise a number of capacity issues, as districts are required to replace the principal, replace a significant portion of the teaching staff, turn management over to a private entity, or completely shut down low-performing schools. Both rural and urban districts and schools choosing to accept the provisions of Title I SIG will undoubtedly face a range of challenges, including the capacity to address human resource issues, increased expenditures, and issues brought about by the political melee that often occurs when attempting to close neighborhood schools.

Certainly, as it relates to the well-being of the children who attend public schools, the challenges previously listed should never deter the resolve to improve the quality of education being provided. Also, the purpose of this dissertation is not to provide a definitive declaration of whether or not the “significant implications” previously mentioned are necessary evils that must be faced to see dramatic improvement in those schools identified as chronically low-performing. However, as displayed by the two drastically different opinions of Rhee (as quoted in Jambulapati, 2010) and Ravitch (2010b), a range of competing values is informing the school improvement conversation. Thus, the discourses and deliberative processes that gave rise to these particular solutions at this particular time in U.S. history deserve further inspection.

Conclusion

The framing of the educational crisis has helped to create a political environment where educators, parents, and students are constantly inundated with a wide variety of reform efforts, many aimed at drastically improving the educational standing of low-performing schools. The historical inability of policy experts to develop a researched and scalable solution for these schools allowed for a massive increase in the number of special-interest groups within the educational policy arena, all offering their own best-practice solutions as to how low-performing schools should be transformed.

Consequently, the impetus for this study originated from the acknowledgement that the discourses and performances shaping policy solutions deserve the analytical attention of education policy scholars. This study was further motivated by the scarcity and narrow analytical focus of such studies. Based upon my epistemological beliefs, I sought to enrich the field of educational policy studies by applying an analytical framework informed by qualitative methodologies that investigated the politics of educational policy making. It was not the goal of this dissertation to provide any generalizable truths for the field of policy studies, but to provide a unique understanding of the performative practices and historically specific discourses that helped situate the 2009 Title I SIG program as the privileged solution for low-performing public schools.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Review of the Literature

This dissertation examines how the performative aspects of policy making and dominant discourses of globalization shaped the Title I SIG program of 2009. I begin this chapter with a critique of traditional policy studies and examine the critical interpretive response to traditional policy frameworks. Critical interpretive policy studies interrupt rationalistic explanations of policy making based upon the “seeable” behaviors of policy actors and, instead, consider the social construction of policy solutions through the interpretive analysis of policy discourses *and* practices (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). I conclude this chapter with a review of the literature by highlighting the historical and theoretical contexts that inform the critical investigation of the Title I SIG program.

Formal Structure of the Chapter

The first section of this chapter is divided into three subsections highlighting traditional and critical interpretive policy studies and the recognition of interests. Traditional policy frameworks and the argumentative turn that provided policy studies with a critical interpretive alternative are discussed. Discourse analysis and its role in policy studies are examined, and then argumentative analysis is introduced as a particular framework within discourse analysis. The next subsection analyzes Hajer’s (2003, 2005a, 2006b) argumentative framework for discourse analysis, thus providing the necessary groundwork for the discourse and performative dimensions of analysis used to guide this dissertation.

The second section of this chapter is divided into four subsections focused on the role that values and interests have historically played in the shaping of educational policies in the United States. The first subsection describes the deliberative turn in democratic theory and outlines the promises and perils realized in the deliberative recognition of values and interests. Then, the traditional values attributed to the purposes of schooling in the United States are reviewed. The third subsection examines recent investigations of interests in education reform studies. Then, the dominant discourses of globalization that have shaped the modern era of education reform are highlighted.

The final section of this chapter is divided into three subsections offering a more complete introduction to the Title I SIG program, frequently referred to as the U.S. Department of Education's turnaround policies. Having previously introduced Title I and its significance to the federal government's role in education policy, this part of the review examines the history of Section 1003(g) of the ESEA and NCLB (2002), known as the Title I SIG. The intricacies of the SIG program are highlighted, including its goals, objectives, and the scope of schools impacted by the SIG program. Finally, the body of school-turnaround literature and the research used to support the most recent iteration of the SIG program are reviewed.

Traditional Policy Studies and the Critical Response

Harold Lasswell (1936), often referred to as the founder of policy sciences, defined policy analysis as an attempt to discover "who gets what, when, how." Frustrated by the unproductive nature of public policy debate in the post-World War

II era, Lasswell established an applied social science that could provide empirical solutions for the problematic social issues of his time (Fischer, 2003b; Torgerson, 1985). Lasswell's desire was to create a "policy science of democracy" founded upon both quantitative and qualitative methods, the contextual consideration of problems, and a normative orientation based upon human values (Fischer, 2003b, p. 3).

The rise of policy sciences in the late 1960s and early 1970s can be attributed to several era-specific stimuli. First, societal issues such as environmental pollution, racial discrimination, poverty, and national security placed pressure upon policy sciences to develop applicable solutions. Second, there was a movement within policy sciences to look beyond the political composition of policy decisions and instead acknowledge the importance of socioeconomic factors such as income and education. Additionally, inspired by the intellectual framework of David Easton (as cited in Sabatier, 1991), policy sciences began to consider the entire policy-making process, from the initial articulation of policy demands to the final stages of collecting feedback on the effects of chosen policy solutions.

Sabatier (1991) categorized the initial era of policy sciences into four general typologies explaining the analytical tasks of policy sciences: (a) *Substantive area research* is the analysis of the politics of a specific policy area; (b) *evaluation and impact studies* are the interrogation of policy outcomes; (c) *policy process* is the analysis of factors affecting policy formulation, implementation, and effect; and (d) *policy design* is the analysis of policy research instruments and their efficacy. However, in the decades following this initial period, the understanding of what

policy analysis “is” and what policy analysis is supposed to “do” have been “muddled,” as the definition of policy analysis has been shaped and reshaped by an assortment of theories and specialized vocabularies (Theodoulou, 1995, p. 1). In an effort to provide operational clarity to the understanding of contemporary policy studies, Theodoulou (1995) highlighted five common elements and ideas most often used to define policy analysis: (a) Public policy includes what governments intend to do and what they actually do; (b) public policy is shaped by the actions of formal and informal actors; (c) public policy goes beyond legislative and executive orders, beyond rules and regulations; (d) public policy focuses on an intentional course of action defined by specific goals and objectives; and (e) public policy is concerned by both short- and long-term effects. Although each of these elements contributes to Lasswell’s (1936) ideal of a “policy science of democracy”, the contemporary dominance of traditional policy-science frameworks differs significantly from the multidisciplinary approach Lasswell envisioned.

Informed by the assumptions of scientific reasoning, traditional frameworks are based upon positivistic rationalities, thus attempt to identify the objective existence of a problem by formulating the goals and objectives meant to provide optimal success, determining the relevant consequences and probabilities of alternative solutions, and quantifying the costs and benefits of chosen solutions. Consequently, the purpose of such frameworks is to select the most effective and efficient policy solutions for the future based upon the objective analysis of empirical data (Fischer, 2003b). Studies based upon such rationalities dismiss the contested

arena of policy making; instead, they attempt to navigate the “messiness” of political interaction through the use of standardized measures (Patton, 1990), thus failing to provide insight as to how varied formations of power shape the actors and practices that guide policy making.

Traditional policy frameworks have contributed valuable insights into political behaviors (public opinion, participation rates, and voting percentages) and have offered an empirical understanding of campaigns, elections, and the workings of Congress (Pierson, 2007). However, these research efforts are limited by reliance on direct correlations to the construction of policy solutions and the interactions of varied interests. Additionally, many of these efforts consider the interests of political actors as a priori, meaning the behaviors of interest groups can be empirically defined through the naming of specific beliefs. Despite these limitations, the social sciences, particularly the field of policy studies, continues to be dominated by traditional approaches seeking to provide empirical truths. Pierson (2007) highlighted the effects of this domination, claiming that quantitatively based studies of American politics are considered to be “the most sophisticated, advanced, and ‘scientific’” (p. 145). Consequently, from 2005-2006 only 6% of articles found within the leading American political journals relied exclusively upon qualitative methodologies (Pierson, 2007).

A critical rebuttal. M. D. Young and Lopez (2008) claimed that years of positivistic research efforts created “blank spots” in the field of policy studies. Accordingly, the historical reliance on “time-worn assumptions” about *how* and *what*

to research facilitated the development of a policy studies field that would be defined by a “circular relationship between the tools of inquiry we use and our commonly accepted ideas of what we know or need to know” (M. D. Young & Lopez, 2008, p. 157). Hajer and Wagenaar (2003), speaking to the normative consequences such limited assumptions, offered the following:

Over the last several decades the critique of positivist policy analysis has shown that epistemological beliefs, wittingly or unwittingly, have normative consequences for one’s political preferences. What counts as justified belief and valid knowledge sets limits to the kind of questions and information that are acceptable in the political debate. And what has standing in societal discourse determines not only who is allowed into the halls of decision-making and who is kept out, it also designates what is considered a legitimate political argument in political discourse and what not, which rules of interpersonal political conduct are preferred over others, and, ultimately, what kind of society we envision ourselves living in. (p. 13)

Despite the continued dominance of policy studies based upon positivistic rationalities, a critical alternative response was introduced in the early 1980s. Critical scholars in this era questioned the positivist notion that policy sciences could provide value neutral and empirically objective claims (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Over the course of the past decade unprecedented numbers of policy scholars have sought to address the normative consequences of positivistic frameworks by questioning the beliefs, practices, and stated outcomes of such efforts (M. D. Young & Lopez, 2008). Although critical policy scholarship is founded upon a diversity of orientations, the purposes of this dissertation call for a review of critical interpretative scholarship, discourse theory, and the ensuing expansion of empirical policy studies.

The critical interpretive focus on practice. Wagenaar and Cook (2003) claimed the establishment of interpretive policy studies was perhaps the single most

important emergence within contemporary policy theory. With the recognition that mainstream policy studies are too often bound by a narrow focus on the cause-and-effect relationships of rational actors, critical interpretative analyses provide insights into socially constructed policy problems as well as the contextually specific variables that shape the content of chosen policy solutions. In contrast to the functionalist understanding of action as a natural successor to knowledge, interpretive policy studies consider socially constructed practices as a critical component of sense making. The centrality of practice to individual sense making is an important theoretical contribution to the field of policy studies. Interpreting practice from this perspective forces policy analysts to reimagine the political environment by redefining traditional conceptions of the actor–structure dichotomy, connecting interpretations of actions to political narratives, and placing limits on what can be understood from the interpretation of text alone (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003).

Although the recognition of practice is central to critical interpretative studies, there is a lack of consensus as to the definitive role practices play in the analysis of politics and policy making. Scholars such as Schoen and Rein (1994) have considered practice as what shapes sense making, thus determining how policy actors frame problems and situations. Others, such as Wagenaar (1997) and Forester (1993), have viewed practice as a narrative strategy used to help actors navigate the contested enactment of public administration. Wagenaar and Cook (2003) argued that despite the theoretical debate over the exact essence of practice, the investigation of practices should be a central component to all interpretative policy studies, as they coordinate

human activity and are the primary method humans use to negotiate their surroundings. As will be discussed in detail, the centrality of practice is important for policy studies seeking to investigate the interpretive interaction of competing interests.

Interpretative policy analysts engage a broad set of analytical tools to describe the social and political practices that contribute to the formulation of policy solutions. Yanow (2000) listed four distinct methodological steps used to guide interpretative policy studies:

1. First, analysts identify the artifacts—language, objects and acts—that construct meaning for involved actors.
2. Analysts provide a description of the interpretations, speech patterns, and practices that structure particular communities of meaning for a policy issue.
3. Analysts call attention to the discourses that inform sense making.
4. Finally, interpretative analysts pinpoint the sources of conflict emanating from the varied interpretations of diverse communities.

These foundational tasks reappear in this dissertation’s analytical framework, as this study examines the public domain of policy-making practices and calls for the critical interpretive understanding of the “local knowledge” (Yanow, 2000, p. 5) that shaped the latest iteration of the Title I SIG.

Interpreting the socially constructed aspects of policy practices certainly addresses a number of limitations within positivistic policy studies. But, interpretative analyses may fail to acknowledge the productive role discourses play in the formation

of policy solutions. Discourse theory, as it is applied in political studies, examines the role of language in the shaping and coordination of policy-related communication and activities.

Discourse analysis. The wide variance of antipositivist traditions within the field of policy studies prohibits a fixed definition of discourse (Howarth, 2000).

Therefore, the meaning of discourse, much like policy analysis, is often confused.

Wodak (2008), commented on this confusion and offered the following:

Discourse means anything from a historical monument, a *lieu de memoire*, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language per se. We find notions such as racist discourse, gendered discourse, discourses on un/employment, media discourse, populist discourse, discourse of the past, and many more—thus stretching a meaning of discourse from a genre to a register or style, from a building to a political programme. (p. 1)

The different meanings to which Wodak (2008) referred can be traced to five different schools of discourse theory: positivists, realists, Marxists, critical discourse analysts, and poststructuralists (Howarth, 2000). Despite the theoretical variance of definitions found within these traditions, the core task of discourse analysis operates under the assumption that actions, objects, and practices are socially constructed and are shaped by the social and political context of a historically specific time period (Fischer, 2003b). These assumptions guide a diverse range of approaches and methods. Van Dijk (1993) listed 12 normative principles discourse theorists consider vital to quality work within the domain of all discourse studies:

- *Naturally occurring text and talk* means that discourse is exclusively studied in actually or naturally occurring talk and text.

- *Contexts* means that discourse should be studied as a constitutive part of its local and global, social, and cultural contexts.
- *Discourse as talk* means that contemporary discourse studies focus on the analysis of ongoing verbal interaction as witnessed in informal and formal dialogue.
- *Discourse as social practice of members* means that discourse is both the social and written forms of social practice in sociocultural contexts;
- *Members categories* are used in discourse studies to consider the ways social members interpret, orient to and categorize the properties of their social world.
- *Sequentiality* requires the influence of discourse to be understood from a linear and sequential perspective.
- *Constructivity* means that the constitutive units of discourse may be functionally used, understood, or analyzed as elements of larger ones.
- *Levels and dimensions* are used in discourse analysis to theoretically decompose discursive layers while connecting relationships between various levels of discourse.
- *Meaning and function* is a basis of discourse analysis, which searches for meaning and functional implications.
- *Rules* are part of the analysis, as discourse is recognized as rule governed, but analysts often examine the violation of discursive rules.

- *Strategies* are applied by users of discourse in their efforts to realize their social goals.
- *Social cognition* means that shared sociocultural representations of language users play a fundamental role in discourse.

Acknowledging the cross-disciplinary nature of these principles, the multidisciplinary goal of discourse analysis is to provide a critical analytical framework that examines the social construction of the issues (discourse, or language, text, practices, etc.) inherent within social science research. The antipositivist enactment of this goal reshaped social science research by producing arguments that moved beyond the objectivist biases of modern theories and contributed to the renewal of disciplines defined by rationalist explanations. As a result, many mainstream theorists have been encouraged to look beyond the technocratic paradigms of traditional policy studies (Torfing, 2005).

Ultimately, the addition of discourse analysis to a critical interpretative policy framework helps reframe the actions of political actors by providing an often-neglected understanding of how discourses interact with the practices of policy making. A framework guided by critical interpretive and discourse theories dismisses the notion that political actors are the sole origin of social relations; instead, actors and dominant discourses are considered collaborative partners in the coconstruction of policy making within the context of a given time period. Hajer's (1995, 2003, 2005a, 2006b) argumentative discourse analysis provides one such example of an analytical framework that attempts to appreciate the socially constructed and complex

relationship existent between actors, their policy-making practices, and the historically specific existence of dominant discourses.

Argumentative discourse analysis. The increased emphasis on argumentation in policy studies can be attributed to Fischer and Forester's (1993) release of *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Subsequently, the rise of argumentative discourse analysis has been particularly important to the field of policy studies, contributing to the works of influential policy scholars such as Healy (2005), Innes and Booher (2010), Schoen and Rein (1994), Hajer (1995, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b), and numerous others.

Although substantial progress in critical policy studies had been previously established, the ideas proposed by Fischer and Forester (1993) pushed policy scholars to reconsider what an analyst does, how language and modes of representation influence the work of an analyst, and how discourses define the parameters of an analyst's research activities. Argumentative frameworks differ from discourse-only perspectives in that they look beyond the interpretations of political language to examine how the socially constructed politics of policy making is coconstructed by deliberative practices and dominant discourses (Fischer & Forester, 1993).

As a critical rebuttal to the scientific assuredness of positivistic policy studies, the constructivist foundations of argumentative discourse analysis are founded upon relativist ontological beliefs¹, transactional epistemological beliefs, and hermeneutic

¹ Crotty (2003) defined ontology, epistemology, and hermeneutic/dialectical in the following manner: (a) ontology: the study of being, that which is concerned with "what is," with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality (p. 10); (b) epistemology: the way of looking at the world and making

methodologies². Scholars operating with these constructivist beliefs investigate the ways in which humans are able to construct meaning through interaction and interpretation (Crotty, 2003). Yanow (2000) addressed the historical significance of argumentation in policy studies: “Interpretative policy analysis rests on a long tradition of philosophical argumentation that stands on its own, without reference to positivist argument. Its hallmark is a focus on meaning that is situated in a particular context” (p. 13). Thus, argumentative discourse policy studies forgo a realistic and value-neutral stance; instead, the focus is placed upon the search for a “local knowledge” and understandings that originate from local conditions and lived experiences (Yanow, 2000, p. 5).

Argumentative policy studies move beyond the rational observation of political actors in order to grapple with the ideas, values, feelings, and meanings that underlie the practices of deliberative policy making (Fischer, 2003b). The argumentative discourse framework developed by Hajer (2003, 2005a, 2006b) provides policy studies with an analytical model useful for the critical study of policy formation. The next section examines Hajer’s three-dimensional analytical model and its potential application to the field of education policy.

The Three Dimensions of Hajer’s Argumentative Discourse Analysis

Hajer (2003, 2005a, 2006b) developed his three-dimensional framework for policy analysis as a way to examine the chaos of policy environments that are defined

sense of it, involving what is entailed in knowing, thus how we know what we know (p. 8); and (b) hermeneutic: theoretical viewpoint that considers an affinity between text and reader—a commonality that provides a basis for the interpretation that is to emerge (p. 90).

³ Hajer referenced *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), among others.

by high stakes, unclear division of the roles of political actors, and the lack of an authoritative system able to differentiate among the many interests contributing to deliberative policy making. The following review of Hajer's analytical model will not include the deliberative dimension of Hajer's framework; instead, the focus is on Hajer's discourse and dramaturgical (performance) dimensions. Although this dissertation does include the qualitative analysis of deliberative forums (hearings, meetings, etc.), the deliberative dimension of Hajer's framework demands that an investigator be physically present during the enactment of deliberative politics, which for this particular study was logistically impossible.

That being said, the discourse and performative dimensions of Hajer's (2006a) framework allowed for the examination of the learning that takes place within participatory politics. Additionally, the dual focus on discourse and practices of policy making provide a critical alternative to traditional policy studies by embracing the argumentative view that the beliefs of actors are never fully understood and are constantly being renegotiated by the practice of policy making and dominant discourses that shape deliberative politics.

The role of discourse in Hajer's analytical framework. The discursive dimension of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) analytic framework is founded upon the poststructural conceptualization of discourse found within Foucault's later work³ and what Hajer (1995) labeled the "social interactive" (p. 52) scholarship of Harre and

³ Hajer referenced *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), among others.

Billig.⁴ First, a Foucauldian analysis of discourse examines the languages of particular institutions that “regularize and normalize the conduct of those who are brought within the ambit of those institutions” (MacLure, 2003, p. 176). This poststructural understanding calls into question the a priori view of interests of traditional policy studies, choosing instead to view actors as historically bound to the constructed discourses of particular institutions.

Hajer’s focus on the constitutive power of institutional discourses is realized through his belief in the formative concept of *epistemic* notions. Hajer (2003) borrowed this term from Foucault, defining it as the “regularity in thinking of a particular period, structuring the understanding of reality without the actors necessarily being aware of it” (p. 106). This view of discourse suggests that policy studies should examine the ways in which actors are able to secure, maintain, and reshape their discursive position in the midst of political negotiations and controversies.

Uncomfortable with Foucault’s unwillingness to fully consider the agency of political actors, Hajer (1995) incorporated into his framework social-interactive theory as a way to connect the abstract essence of Foucault’s discourse theory to the work and study of political events. First, whereas social-interactive theory does acknowledge the constitutive nature of language, it is the argumentative interaction that is considered to be key in the actual formation of discourses. Second, social-interactive theory assumes that discourses are actually created and reproduced

⁴ Hajer referenced several works, including Harre (1993), Davies and Harre (1990), Billig (1989), and Billig et al. (1988).

through interactive speech situations. Hajer's (1995) comments provide further clarification:

The rules and conventions that constitute social order have to be constantly reproduced and reconfirmed in actual speech situations, whether in documents or debates. Consequently, the power structures of society can and should be studied directly through discourse. (p. 55)

This view of discourse creation pushes against a Foucauldian interpretation of discourse analysis. Although actors are not completely free from the constitutive power of institutional discourses, they hold specific positions and are thus entangled in the socially construction of meaning. The following section inspects the specific elements that construct Hajer's discursive dimension of policy analysis.

Hajer's terms of policy discourse. Explaining his unique interpretation of discourse analysis, Hajer (1995) suggested,

Any discourse analysis aims to show how language shapes reality. Yet under this common denominator discourse analysis hide a variety of approaches. Some focus much more on the analysis of linguistic elements, while others would include the study of the institutional practices within which discourses is produced as well. (p. 103)

Hajer's (1995) analytical methods mirror the latter of these two approaches by examining three specific layers of discourse: *story lines*, *policy vocabularies*, and *emblematic issues*. Although the analysis of emblematic issues contributes to Hajer's analytical framework, the questions guiding this dissertation call specifically for a focus on the discursive elements of story lines and policy vocabularies.

Story lines. Hajer (1995) described story lines as the short narratives people cling to and promote as a way to make sense of the knowledge, experience, or expertise that may exist within the larger constructs of a policy debate. Consequently,

the main function of story lines is to create a discursive unity in the midst of competing discourses. Rather than relying upon “comprehensive discursive systems” for their cognitive recognition of a problem, actors are “evoked” through particular story lines that offer a sense of credibility (Hajer, 1995, p. 56). Hajer (1995) attributed the discursive evocation of actors to three elements found within story lines: (a) *metaphors*, the vehicles for the discursive reduction of complexity; (b) *constitutive myths*, which explain cohesion by narrating a foundational event; and (c) *dystopian myths*, which makes people cohere to avoid a catastrophe.

Story lines have three primary functions within Hajer’s (1995) analytical framework:

1. First, story lines help to reduce the complexity of political issues, thus enabling the acceptance of a chosen policy solution and providing closure to a policy debate.
2. The repetition and eventual acceptance of story lines establish a “ritual character,” which results in consensual permanencies, or “tropes,” that are used to rationalize chosen policy solutions (Hajer, 1995, p. 63).
3. Story lines contribute to the development of discourse coalitions by allowing actors to build and expand their own understandings of a policy issue that may exist beyond their own level of expertise.

In this sense, story lines help fashion an inclusive grand narrative, allowing all political actors an opportunity to contribute to the final shaping of a policy solution. Consequently, story lines bring together actors informed by completely different

word views, thus creating political coalitions populated by previously independent interests in the spirit of a “common political project” (Hajer, 1995, p. 65).

Policy vocabularies. Hajer (2003) described policy vocabularies as the sets of written political concepts used to structure particular policy issues. As policy makers work with and through constructed story lines, they are also developing concrete policy vocabularies. Hajer’s (2003) study of nature development helped provide clarity to such vocabularies. In his examination of Dutch environmental policy, Hajer (2003) found terms such as *main ecological structure*, *target types*, and *ecological corridors* were often used to structure the researched activities of policy-making actors, thus determining what was considered to be a legitimate policy action. In regards to deliberative politics, the promotion and acceptance of policy vocabularies lend credibility to assumptions (perhaps hidden) that ultimately determine the shape and scope of policy solutions made available.

Together, Hajer’s descriptions of story lines and policy vocabularies established an analytical framework to examine how the informal practices of governance and the dominant discourses of a given period are uniquely shaped by the actions of discourse coalitions. Yet, Hajer (2006b) argued that discourse analysis alone is insufficient for policy studies:

A problem with much work on discourse is, however, that it is too much focused on language, whereas linguistic analysis should ideally be related to the analysis of the practices in which a particular language or languages is/are employed. (p. 46)

The beliefs put forth in this statement provided the impetus for the dramaturgical dimension of Hajer’s policy framework and confirmed the critical interpretive belief

in the centrality of practice to deliberative sense making. The interpretive examination of policy making provides insights into particular policy environments by interpreting the connections between policy making and the construction of political narratives (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). The next section outlines the dimension of performance in Hajer's analytical framework.

The role of performance in Hajer's analytical framework. The centrality of performance to Hajer's analytical framework is founded upon the critical interpretive belief that contemporary policy studies attempting to examine the "nature of modern democracy" should be founded upon the three pillars of interpretation, practice, and deliberation (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 16). The interpretive pillar is offered as a rebuttal to the positivist assumption that reality can exist beyond the socially constructed interactions of human beings. From this perspective, Hajer's performative dimension recognizes that knowledge is socially constructed during the interactions that take place within deliberative politics. Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) considered this the "ontological correlate" (p. 17) to Fischer and Forester's (1993) *The Argumentative Turn*, meaning that political actors create their sense making by interpreting the behavioral dispositions of their peers.

Hajer's focus on performance was also founded upon the second dimension of contemporary policy sciences, which calls into question the positivistic notion that the actions of political actors are a natural byproduct of certain understandable knowledge. Specifically, positivistic rationalities assume the performance of policy making can be analyzed without considering the socially constructed and contested

views of irrational actors. Instead, Hajer's performative dimension considers practices as essential to the ways in which actors interpret their environment. Actors from this viewpoint "learn about the world in public, shared processes in which they test what they have learned" (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 20).

Hajer's performative dimension was also founded upon the deliberative pillar previously mentioned, as the performance of political actors is recognized as taking place within deliberative policy-making structures. The acknowledgement of values and value conflict is an important component of policy analysis. Hajer's performative analysis rejects the positivistic understanding that values are ephemeral expressions of feelings that somehow exist beyond the reach of policy studies. The recognition of competing values is paramount to the contemporary enactment of deliberative politics, especially during an era in which the governmental expansion of inclusive policy making has increased the deliberative possibilities for those interested in creating a role for themselves within the participatory structures of bureaucratic decision making (Warren, 1992).

Hajer's terms of policy performance. Hajer (2005a) coined the performance dimension of his analytical framework as "dramaturgy" (p. 449). Deliberative politics from this perspective consist of a sequence of "staged" performances in which deliberative actors collaboratively determine the rules of policy making. Hajer (2005a) elaborated on the need for a performative dimension in policy studies:

Today politics and policy are often made in unstable settings. In such cases, performing not only co-determines which rules are followed in the process. It also co-determines which definition of reality is followed, what temporal-spatial frame is seen as "appropriate," and what constitutes legitimate

intervention. This understanding of politics as performance recovers a sense of politics as an artistic endeavour. Politics is an art, and the analysis of politics as performance brings out the skilful way of persuading, the way in which different audiences are “acted upon,” are each approached in a manner appropriate to convincing the group, etc. (p. 449)

In an attempt to examine the artful practice of deliberative politics, Hajer’s (2005a, 2006b) framework focuses on four aspects of political performance: *scripting*, *staging*, *setting*, and *performance*. Together, the exploration of these political performances enriches policy studies dependent solely on the methodologies available in discourse analysis.

Scripting. Hajer (2005a) described scripting as the deliberative actions of actors who, by determining the “settings” of a political performance, define the play’s characters and therefore provide “cues for appropriate behavior” (p. 449). This conceptualization of scripting captures the ways in which the rules of deliberative policy making are constantly being defined and redefined by the actions of political actors. In this sense, depending upon the policy director and the script being presented, actors assume a role as active or passive, collaborator or protestor, or competent or incompetent (Freeman & Peck, 2007).

Staging. Hajer (2005a) described staging as the purposeful management of political interactions; thus actors in this sense draw from “existing symbols and the intervention of new ones, as well as to the distinction between active players and (presumably passive) audiences (‘mis en scene’)” (p. 449). This understanding of staging was adapted from the work of Murray Edelman (as cited in Hajer, 2005a), who considered politics as a drama where the setting and staging of political events

were key elements in the performance of governmental interactions. Specific to Hajer's analytical framework, staging can be interpreted as the active manipulation of policy settings such as presentations, town hall forums, conferences, and colloquiums.

Setting. Hajer (2005a) described setting as the physical structuring of political interactions through the use of specific "artifacts" used during the enactment of deliberative policy making (p. 449). The political setting from this perspective is considered to be influential in the shaping of deliberative interactions through the reproduction of political meanings, the enactment of political significations, and the overall performativity of deliberative policy making (Hajer, 2006b). For Hajer (2005b), the idea of setting cannot be limited to the recognizable norms enacted in deliberative forums; instead, setting should be understood as the "actual things" (stage set, artificial devices) that provide structure to such forums (p. 629).

Performance. Hajer (2005a) described performance as the "contextualized" interactions that shape social realities such as the "understandings" of social issues (p. 449). This understanding of performance was adapted from Kenneth Burke's 1969 analysis (as cited in Hajer, 2005b) of how the "grammar of dramatism" could be used to explain the actions and motives of actors. Hajer's analytical framework considers performances as purposefully sequential and collaboratively shaped by both the actors and those invited to participate in the play that is deliberative politics. This particular focus on performances allows policy studies to untangle the conditions that must be present in order for actors to be recognized in the act of deliberation. Additionally, it provides policy studies insight as to how the actions of political actors relate to each

other in the performance of deliberative policy making, thus helping to provide clarity as to which actions actually influence the final composition of policy solutions (Hajer, 2005b).

The discourse and performative dimensions of Hajer's analytical model provide education policy studies with a critical interpretive framework that can be used when examining the social and discursive construction of educational policy solutions. Although the scholarship put forward by discourse theorists has expanded the field of education policy studies, the analysis of political discourse alone is insufficient. Policy studies also must examine the ways in which institutional contexts and the performances of political actors determine the policy solutions made available to the policy-making community.

Hajer (2003) addressed the necessity of a performative focus, highlighting what he called the "triple task" (p. 110) for scholars focused on deliberative policy making: (a) Policy analysts must renew their methods so as to be able to understand the complex ways in which meaning is hidden in policy-making discourse and thus be able to anticipate political controversies; (b) policy analysis must consider the variety of experiments with collaborative planning, interactive policy making, and consensus dialogues; and (c) policy analysts must renew their efforts to deliver on Lasswell's call for a policy science of democracy by showing how these new interactive practices might fulfill a role in renewing democratic governance in a new modernity. These three tasks support the purposeful exploration of discourses and participatory processes in policy studies, such as those that have shaped the Title I SIG of 2009.

The Consideration of Values, Interests, and Global Reconfigurations

The reorganization of modern governance structures—through decentralization, devolvement, and diffusion of bureaucratic decision making—transformed policy making by providing access to new arrays of interests previously excluded from the formal stages of policy formulation. Subsequently, today's enactment of deliberative politics takes place within a highly politicized arena complicated by an intense competition between the various interests and values, each attempting to define exactly how policy issues are framed, and each looking to determine exactly which policy solutions will receive recognition (Gottweis, 2003). In an attempt to reconsider how interests should be recognized within this context, many scholars are reframing traditional notions of democracy theory through the ideals of deliberative theory (Dryzek, 2000).

Dryzek (2000) suggested the “deliberative turn” in democratic theory took place in the early 1990s. Prior to this period, democratic theory focused primarily on the aggregative enactment of democratic ideals. Aggregative devices, such as voting and electoral representation, limit the expression of differences, as they promote the consolidation of interests by those provided with authoritative power. Additionally, the aggregation of interests requires no justification from those in power, as the citizenry is provided opportunities to contribute via democratically endorsed practices (Gutman & Thompson, 2004).

Although deliberative enactments of democracy ultimately pursue the aggregated consensus of a citizenry, deliberative practices such as citizen juries or

deliberative polling require citizens and representatives to engage in the public justification of political reasoning. Subsequently, the deliberative recognition of interests calls for a more inclusionary enactment democracy by challenging the traditional belief that democratic decision making should be confined to the representative actors and institutions of a liberal democratic state (Dryzek, 2000). By expanding traditional understandings of democratic governance, deliberative theorists help reconceive the ways in which competing interests are, and can be, involved during the participatory formation of policy solutions.

Deliberative theory is a diverse field of study, but Chambers (2003) highlighted the five common tasks of deliberative theorists: (a) critique of the institutions that fail to achieve normative democratic standards; (b) investigation of how pluralism exists beyond the traditional aggregative or realist models of democracy; (c) exploration of the communicative processes inherent to opinion and will formation; (d) critical investigation of arguments and reasons brought to defend policy and law; and (e) the deep reading of rights, popular sovereignty, and constitutionalism. Specific to this dissertation, it is important to consider how these tasks may be constrained by the dominant discourses of a specific era.

Scholars supportive of deliberative ideals claim the enactment of deliberative practices contributes to

- the autonomy of citizens who are able to consider policies and their broader political questions (Chambers, 2003; Gutman & Thompson, 2004; Sanders, 1997),

- the promotion of a civically minded reflection that facilitates the development of meaningful learning opportunities (Barber, 1984; Fischer, 2003b; Sanders, 1997; Thompson, 2008),
- the democratic legitimization of the constitutional order (Chambers, 1996; Gutman & Thompson, 2004),
- the promotion of tolerance between adversarial opinions (Chambers, 2003; Dryzek, 2000; Gutman & Thompson, 2004; Thompson, 2008),
- the amelioration of debilitating effects caused by interest group competition (Hiskes, 1998; Sanders, 1997),
- the establishment of an atmosphere where solutions can be reached even when taking on the complex issues within large and pluralistic societies (Morris, 2001),
- the founding of a considerate and evidence-based overview of political decisions (Chambers, 1996),
- a renewed faith in democracy (Fishkin, 1995), and
- the institution of social capital for those actors choosing to participate (Fishkin, 1995; Putnam, 2000).

Although these benefits point toward a more inclusive enactment of democracy, empirical support of deliberative practices is inconclusive. Thus, further research efforts are needed to answer the following questions: Are the benefits of deliberative participation being realized within modern governance structures? Which actors are being provided with access to deliberative policy making? In what ways can the

investigation of deliberative practices provide for the normative expansion of deliberative ideals?

Although the empirical investigation of deliberative practices continues to grow, many scholars have called attention to the potential perils of deliberative participation. While recognizing the theoretical appeal of deliberative participation, scholars have claimed that the enactment of deliberative practices may

- prompt a reserve and cautiousness further privileging certain populations (Sanders, 1997);
- consume too many resources, thus becoming extremely difficult to facilitate (Reich, 1988; Sanders, 1997);
- focus too much on the reaching of consensus (Barber, 1984; Morris, 2001; Sanders, 1997; Taylor, 1992; I. M. Young, 1989, 1990);
- press participants toward an unobtainable universality (I. M. Young, 1989, 1990);
- create greater inequalities in social and political capital, thus further privileging traditionally dominant powers (Fischer, 1985, 2003b; Gutman & Thompson, 2004; Karpowitz & Mansbridge, 2005; Phillips, 1995; Taylor, 1992; I. M. Young, 1989, 1990); and
- fail to address the deliberative call for inclusion and difference recognition (I. M. Young, 1989, 1990).

Understanding these potential drawbacks is especially important during an era defined by the normative expansion of deliberative opportunities.

The modern shift towards a more open and participatory governance makes it necessary for education policy scholars to examine how actors and interests participate in the deliberative shaping of policy solutions. Subsequently, the following section examines the traditional investigation of interest-group participation in the formation of education policy solutions.

The historical role of values in education. Recognizing that deliberative competition between interests shapes the formation of policy solutions, it is important to consider the traditional values often attributed to educational policies within the United States. The educational policy arena historically has been the site of contentious debates over the ways policy makers should normatively address the following values: individual, collective, general welfare, and efficiency (Hoschild & Scovronick, 2003; Springer, Houck, & Guthrie, 2008). Together, these values often collide, making the argumentative interplay among political actors an important area of investigation for policy studies.

Individual interests. Public schools in the United States continue to shoulder the responsibility of helping individuals attain personal success. Within America's pluralistic culture, competing interests constantly seek to redefine how public schools should address the development of individual success. Hoschild and Scovronick (2003) highlighted three separate interpretations of individual success: absolute, relative, and competitive.

First, there are those who believe that schools have a responsibility to provide individuals an education where they are able to achieve an absolute success.

Attainment of absolute success is thought to be realized when students are able to achieve a level of individual success that surpasses that individual's original level. Others hold firm to the notion that schools should facilitate an individual's ability to achieve relative success. This interpretation promotes an egalitarian view of education that would allow some students to exceed the success levels of their parents and possibly other classmates. Finally, others place value on the opportunity to achieve competitive success. Those seeking to ensure this type of success often have no interest in egalitarian offerings; instead, the primary goal of competitive success is to provide students with a specific advantage over their peers (Hoschild & Scovronick, 2003). Each understanding of individual success has specific ramifications for the framing of issues considered in deliberative policy making.

Collective interests. From the onset of public schooling, education has been promoted as a way to instill a societal sense of common good (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Those supportive of collective values promote educational policies that provide *all* students with access to a quality education. These values are founded upon the belief that schools still have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring the equality of educational opportunities (Guthrie, Garms, & Pierce, 1998).

Apple and Beane (1995) claimed most citizens consider democracy as a central tenet of their social and political relations. The historically persistent desire to educate democratic citizens is founded upon a belief in the common good. Although citizens often cling to the freedoms of individual liberty, educators are still expected

to expose students to a common set of democratic values and practices (Hoschild & Scovronick, 2003).

Welfare interests. M. Dean (1999) explained that policies placing a value on general welfare are meant to “enforce solidarity and prevent dissolution by the provision for the needs of the national population, ensuring the rights and liberties of socially responsible citizens and neutralizing the threat of social dangers” (p. 153). In educational settings, welfare goals are most often realized in policies mandating equal opportunity and inclusion. Of all the values structuring educational policy, general welfare is often the most heavily contested. Policy debates regarding the welfare of students are frequently contentious, especially when educators seek to simultaneously implement policies promoting the differential treatment of students and policies mandating that certain students be provided with equal, not differential, opportunities. Educational policies promoting the value of general welfare often collide with those who privilege the collective and individual goals of others (Hoschild & Scovronick, 2003).

Interests valuing efficiency. Governmental reform efforts over the past 200 years sought to balance a competition between values that support the desire for social equality and values that support the desire for economic efficiency (Guthrie et al., 1998). Due to the perceived failures of the welfare state, the last several decades of educational policy reflect a definitive turn towards values of efficiency.

Many of the educational solutions being offered today frame governmental interventions as obstacles to efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness (Chubb &

Moe, 1990). Values of efficiency promote a view of economic governance deemphasizing macro-economic policy in lieu of reforms that promote competition and efficiency (M. Dean, 1999). Efficiency desires fuel the push for school productivity and promote the idea that monies being directed toward public education are in fact an inefficient use of governmental resources (Rice & Schwartz, 2008). Rather than policies being informed by whether or not schools have an adequate amount of financial resources needed to achieve desired results, reforms based on efficiency often privilege the desire to restrict monies with the expectation that schools will be able to pursue the efficient improvement of educational outcomes (Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

The previous review of traditional values is admittedly acritical in orientation and is in no way comprehensive. However, this discussion provides for a basic understanding of the traditional interests considered to guide the formation of educational policy. This discussion also provides the contextual landscape necessary for a broader discussion highlighting the dominant discourses of this historically specific moment.

The investigation of interests in education policy studies. Educational policy scholars have recognized that the empirical investigation of interests should be a major focal point for policy studies (Cibulka, 2001; Malen, 2001; Mawhinney, 2001; Opfer et al., 2008). Despite this recognition, there is a substantial lack of research focused specifically on the activity of educational interest groups (Opfer et al., 2008). Currently, interest-based studies are often limited to analyses that rely on

an adapted version of three dominant frameworks: Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams framework, Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) punctuated equilibrium framework, and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) advocacy coalition framework. Although each of these frameworks differs in its explanation of policy formation, the research put forward is frequently bound by the ontological, epistemological, and methodological limitations of traditional policy frameworks discussed earlier. Subsequently, each considers the role of interests from an actor-centric perspective, meaning they fail to adequately explore the ways in which socially constructed relationships and historically specific discourses determine the structure and content of particular policy solutions.

Multiple streams. The multiple streams framework provided by Kingdon (1995) considers policy formation to be a sociopolitical process that takes place within three conceptual streams: problem, policy, and politics. Specifically, Kingdon's framework is designed to discern what actors are involved in policy making, when they are involved, and in what ways their involvement is acknowledged. This framework is ultimately concerned with how policy problems arise, how and what policy solutions are developed, and how political processes contribute to the creation of a policy agenda.

Although the term *agenda* is often attributed to a wide variety of concepts within political science, Kingdon (1995) defined this term as "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time"

(p. 3). Thus, key policy players place issues of importance on the agenda. Kingdon suggested two separate factors, participants and processes, structure the shaping of policy agendas and the listing of policy alternatives. The multiple streams framework is based upon the premise that policy making happens through a set of defined processes, including agenda setting, the listing of potential policy alternatives, the authoritative choice among specified alternatives, and the implementation of policy solutions.

Drawing from the theoretical foundations of Kingdon's (1995) framework, DeBray (2006) attempted to answer questions concerning how and why NCLB arrived as a policy solution, and how and why during NCLB's formation Republican policy makers drastically altered their ideological stance on educational reform. DeBray sought to uncover the construction of particular policy-making coalitions, the types of negotiation and bargaining strategies driving policy formation, and the identities of actors responsible for setting the NCLB agenda.

In DeBray's (2006) attempt to understand how NCLB gained recognition as a policy solution, she detailed the ways in which partisanship and ideological preferences shaped NCLB's agenda and alternatives. Offering implications for policy studies, DeBray explained that policy analysts should recognize the important role U.S. Presidents play during the agenda-setting process, the ways traditional interest groups are asked to be involved in the creation of policy alternatives, and the financial lures federal policy makers use to encourage state and local policy compliance.

DeBray's (2006) empirical research provided a interest-based explanation of how NCLB received recognition as the federal policy solution, offered suggestions for the ways in which institutional relationships evolved to marginalize the voice of educational practitioners, and provided a theoretical explanation for how policy solutions will be crafted within modern governmental structures.

Punctuated equilibrium. Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) punctuated equilibrium theory was intended to build upon Kingdon's multiple streams model by highlighting the ways in which policy subsystems should be considered during the agenda setting process. The punctuated equilibrium framework attempts to provide insight into the conditions contributing to the creation of policy monopolies, the institutional structures that house monopolies, the decay of monopoly structures, and the contextual factors that contribute to monopoly failure.

Baumgartner and Jones (1993) defined a policy monopoly as "a set of political understandings concerning the policy of interest, and an institutional arrangement that reinforces that understanding" (p. 6). The punctuated equilibrium framework is based upon the premises that traditional policy-making bodies are in direct competition with new policy players; policy agendas are prone to dramatic alterations; and, although political systems can enjoy elongated periods of stability, they are susceptible to punctuated periods of dramatic change.

McGuinn's (2006) analytical framework was heavily informed by Baumgartner and Jones's scholarship but designed to address several specific limitations. McGuinn provided an alternative explanation of how major policy

solutions surface. Specifically, McGuinn promoted an adapted analytical framework, the policy regimes framework, that “places contemporary political and policy developments in their historical context and explains how reformers were able to overcome both institutional and political obstacles to policy change” (p. 4).

The policy regimes framework provided insight into three distinct policy puzzles: (a) the conditions that brought together liberals and conservatives during the recent push for federally mandated educational reform, (b) the conditions that allowed for the recent increase in governmental activism, and, (c) the conditions that lead to major policy alteration. McGuinn’s (2006) scholarship offered a wide range of implications for educational policy analysis. First, McGuinn claimed the effectiveness of interest groups should not be explained through power dynamics alone. Instead, McGuinn suggested policy analysts should consider interest-group influence to be contextual in nature, dependent upon the salience and visibility of particular policy issues, determined by whether or not interest groups are framed as mainstream or extreme, reliant upon the ability of interests to block potential opponents, and located within party-specific agendas.

McGuinn’s (2006) analytical framework provides educational policy studies with an alternative to the analyses based upon punctuated equilibrium theory. Instead of viewing policy solutions as dramatic ruptures in political monopolies, McGuinn’s historical approach suggested that policy analysts should investigate how subtle shifts in interests and political contexts provide the basis for the formation of policy solutions.

Advocacy coalitions. The advocacy coalition framework of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) examines the role that interest-based coalitions play in the development of policy solutions. A policy analysis using the advocacy coalition framework investigates how the belief systems of policy elites shape policy learning and how specific conditions contribute to policy learning within a system of competing coalitions. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith described advocacy coalitions as cohorts of actors, both governmental and private, who share normative and causal belief systems and who work for differing periods of time in a coordinated fashion. The advocacy coalition framework is based upon a core set of foundational premises: (a) Policy analyses must investigate how technical information shapes problem definition and problem solutions; (b) policy analyses should be structured to analyze periods of 10 or more years; (c) policy analyses should focus on policy subsystems rather than specific governmental structures; (d) policy analyses must move beyond the traditional approaches to include those actors who generate, evaluate, and disseminate policy and those who exist beyond the federal level of policy formation; and (e) policy analyses must incorporate the investigation of belief systems—the values and perceptions of policy actors (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

Mintrom's (2000) analysis of school choice as a policy solution was founded upon the theoretical constructs of the advocacy coalition framework. Specifically, Mintrom attempted to explain how the prominence of policy entrepreneurs shaped an educational discourse that ultimately allowed school choice to be recognized as the policy solution of merit. Mintrom's study provided insight into the processes that

structure policy innovation and suggested reasons why an understanding of policy entrepreneurship is important for educational studies.

Offering implications for policy studies, Mintrom (2000) explained that policy analysts must seek to determine the origin of the shared beliefs structuring advocacy coalitions, view policy networks as vital resources for policy entrepreneurs, consider temporary coalitions as a significant actors during the formation of policy, and not limit the understanding of policy coalitions to predefined models. Mintrom's empirical work provided the field of educational policy studies with an interest-based explanation of how school choice arrived as a federal policy solution. Mintrom's research placed policy entrepreneurs at the center of policy formation, with the belief that through the investigation of entrepreneurial relationships, policy analysts will gain a better understanding of the behaviors that lead to the formation of policy solutions.

The wealth of mainstream policy analyses informed by Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams, Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) punctuated equilibrium, and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) advocacy coalitions provides educational policy studies with a wide array of theoretical and empirical insights into how interest-group participation gives rise to particular policy solutions. The contributions of DeBray (2006), McGuinn (2006), and Mintrom (2000) attempted to address several of the limitations in traditional frameworks. Cumulatively, these scholars called policy studies to task for failing to acknowledge the ideological preferences of interest-based actors, the historical and social contexts within which educational policies are

constructed, and the interest-based orientations of advocacy coalitions. The combined work of these authors served to expand the field of educational policy studies, thus providing a more contextually rich understanding of how interests are involved in the formation of specific policy solutions.

Despite this expansion, Hajer's (1995) critique of realist analytical frameworks revealed at least two additional limitations. Hajer (1995) pressed critical policy scholars to recognize that traditional frameworks are limited by the belief that interests can be assumed as given. Tracing the rise of policy solutions to a concretized understanding of interests fails to appreciate the critical interpretative understanding that both language and context are socially constructed within the moment. This failure overlooks the importance of social practices, in which the beliefs of actors are continuously shaped and reshaped in an intersubjective manner.

Next, Hajer (1995) offered a related critique calling into question the ways in which mainstream studies place an a priori value on individual beliefs. Policy studies that situate empirical findings against recognizable beliefs or belief systems fail to consider the argumentative understanding that discourses themselves are able to create new meanings and new identities, thus shaping the historically specific position of the actors involved.

Overall, empirically narrow understandings of interests prevent mainstream frameworks from considering how the dynamic interaction between deliberative practices and dominant discourses link together to shape policy solutions. The

recognition of these limitations provided the impetus for this dissertation study to seek a more theoretically diverse approach to the investigation of interests.

The global (re)shaping of education interests. Hajer's (1995) examination of environmental politics was based on his belief that governmental, or institutional, responses to environmental issues are fully dependent on how such problems are framed and defined. Through an examination of the European emergence of ecological modernist discourses, Hajer (1995) highlighted how the negotiation of these discourses within deliberative politics ultimately determined the range of institutional innovations made available to the European policy-making community. The purpose of this section is to examine the dominant discourses shaping the politics of education in the United States during this specific moment in history.

Over the two last decades an increasing number of scholars have called attention to the global reconfiguration of educational purposes (e.g., Apple & Beane, 1995; Ball, 2007, 2008; Blackmore, 2007; Rivzi & Lingard, 2010). Subsequently, it is important that policy studies acknowledge the particular narratives that compose the discourse of education globalization. Citing the work of Ball (2008), Jensen and Walker (2008), and Levin (1997), this section provides a brief description of three narratives contributing to the discourse of educational globalization: (a) market and choice; (b) management and surveillance; and (c) performativity and accountability.

Market and choice. Although the economy and its relation to public schooling have been central to the educational debate in the United States for over a century (Glass, 2008), the market and choice discourse of globalization arose in the 1970s in

response to global economic crises (Ball, 2008). Factors such as mass unemployment, the deregulation of the international marketplace, and the inability of state revenues to cover social expenditures ruptured citizens' belief in the welfare state. As a result, in response to the failure of industrialized nation, a set of ideas and development strategies known as the Washington Consensus redefined the economic priorities of the United States. The term *Washington Consensus* was coined by John Williamson in 1989 when he identified 10 policy instruments organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the U.S. Treasury believed to be justified responses to the global reconfiguration of the international marketplace (Williamson, 2008). Based upon rationalities supportive of a market economy, openness to the world, and macroeconomic discipline, the 10 Washington Consensus strategies were fiscal discipline, reordering public expenditure priorities, tax reform, liberalizing interest rates, competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, liberalization of forward direct investment, privatization, deregulation, and property rights (Williamson, 2008).

Thus, the modern era of education reform has been shaped by economic rationalities that promote the building of an educational system able to prepare a globally competitive workforce and secure the economic welfare of the state (Levin, 1997). The discourse of market and choice frames parents as savvy consumers able to choose the appropriate provider for their children's education, thus, through the principles of competition, assuming schools will respond by improving their educational services (Jensen & Walker, 2008; Levin, 1997). This discourse was

woven directly into the policies of NCLB. Promoted as a law that would ensure stronger accountability, more local freedom, proven pedagogical methods, and choice for parents, NCLB (2002) privatized supplemental education services, allowed governmental monies to be used for faith-based initiatives, and created new options for parents that included private and charter school selection. The market/choice discourse upon which NCLB was founded assumed parents would be given the best opportunity to achieve positive results for their children if they pursued their own self-interest and realized themselves as savvy consumers of educational services.

Management and surveillance. The discourse of management and surveillance can be traced to what is often labeled as the *third wave* of modern school reform efforts. Also referred to as *systematic reforms*, educational policies in the late 1980s and early 1990s pushed for the decentralization of educational governance and decision making. This shift in governance was intended to provide local educators and parents with decision-making authority over issues such as staffing and budgeting (Ball, 2008; Levin, 1997).

A primary example of this type of decentralized reform was introduced through NCLB (2002) with the federal government's mandate that each state monitor the implementation of site-based decision-making⁵ policies within local school districts. Site-based decision-making policies were intended to increase student

⁵ Research focused on local decision making provides many different labels for the actual process: *school-based management, school-site autonomy, school-site management, school-centered management, decentralized management, school-based budgeting, site-based decision making, responsible autonomy, school lump-sum budgeting, shared governance, the autonomous school concept, school-based curriculum development, and administrative decentralization* (Clune & White, 1988). For the purpose of consistency in this analysis, I have chosen to use the Texas Education Agency's (as cited in Texas Education Code Section 11.253. Campus Planning And Site-Based Decision-Making) label, *site-based decision making*.

achievement levels by capitalizing on the following core assumptions: (a) Those closest to the students will make the best decisions concerning their children's education; (b) teachers, parents, and school staff should have influence on policies; (c) those who implement the decisions should have a voice in the decisions; and (d) if those implementing the decisions feel a sense of ownership, they are more likely to implement decisions effectively (Bauer, 1992). Ball (2008) addressed the paradoxical nature of such reforms:

On one hand, they are frequently presented as a move away from bureaucratic, centralized, forms of employee control. Managerial responsibilities are delegated, initiative and problem solving are highly valued. On the other hand, new forms of very immediate surveillance and self-monitoring are put in place, for example, appraisal systems, target setting, output comparisons. (p. 48)

Ultimately, the policies informed by market and surveillance discourse established local authorities and parents as self-governing entities who were monitored closely by the state and federal government in their pursuit of centralized objectives (M. Dean, 1999).

Performativity and accountability. Ball (2008) described performativity as a “regime of accountability” (p. 49) used to measure the productivity and output of subjects and organizations. In the United States, the discourse of performativity and accountability facilitated the spawn of a high-stakes testing system reliant upon standardized examinations as a way to measure a school's effectiveness (Levin, 1997).

The central tenants of NCLB reinforced the discourse of performativity and accountability by tying state funding to the issuance of standardized exams and by publicly penalizing those schools failing to meet accountability targets (Darling-

Hammond, 2010). Additionally, NCLB (2002) as founded upon a legislative command that every student in every school would reach the standardized ideal of proficiency in both reading and mathematics by 2014. Ravitch (2010a) addressed the foundational assumptions of NCLB, each of which appears to highlight the reach of the performativity and accountability discourse:

1. First, NCLB operated under the premise that the public reporting of test scores would facilitate quality school reform.
2. NCLB policies assumed punitive measures for those working in low-performing schools would lead to school improvement.
3. NCLB policies drew a direct correlation between poor test scores and the efficacy of teachers and administrators.
4. Finally, NCLB policies assumed that high achievement levels on standardized assessments of basic skills corresponded with the delivery of a quality education (Ravitch, 2010a).

As witnessed in the era of NCLB, the discourse of performativity and accountability reshaped the values of education to address the principles of competition and standardization. Consequently, through the structuring of educational research efforts, the reconfiguration of local school governance, and the narrowing of pedagogical offerings as a response to standardized testing, this era of reform can be defined by the performance-driven regulation of students, teachers, and local administrators (Jensen & Walker, 2008).

The earlier review of neoliberal and Third Way narratives provides insight into the global discourses of market and choice, management and surveillance, and performativity and accountability. The globalized narratives of neoliberal and Third Way ideologies promote self-interest and moral responsibility, entrepreneurial competition, and regimes of accountability. Consequently, policy studies should investigate how these discourses contribute to the types of policy solutions that receive consideration at this moment in history. Additionally, studies should examine whether or not the traditional values attributed to the shaping of educational reform efforts within the United States receive recognition in today's educational environment.

Certainly, the neoliberal and Third Way narratives of globalization provide insight into the modern era of education reform. However, Hajer (1995) suggested that policy scholars must not depend solely on discursive understandings; instead, scholars should attempt to provide empirical evidence to further explicate how the emergence and acceptance of such dominant discourses are taken up in an act of deliberative policy making. The empirical analysis to which Hajer referred is presented in the final chapters of this dissertation. The final section of the literature review provides a brief descriptive background of the policy serving as the central target of this dissertation, the Title I SIG, commonly referred to as the turnaround policies.

The Title I SIG and the Turnaround of Schools

The passage of NCLB (2002) signaled the most comprehensive expansion of federal education policy in the history of the United States. A major component of this expansion was Section 1003(g) of Title I, labeled as the SIG. The authorization of the SIG program was intended to provide a separate Title I program allowing states to apply for monies that would be earmarked and distributed to low-performing districts and schools for specific improvement activities. Addressing the importance of the SIG program, Margaret Spellings was quoted in a U.S. Department of Education (2008) press release:

No Child Left Behind shines a spotlight on schools and holds them accountable for results. School Improvement Grants support the steps states and school districts are taking to improve standards and outcomes in low-performing schools so that our nation's students can succeed in the classroom and beyond. (para. 2)

Initially, the law ensured SIGs would range between \$50,000 and \$500,000; however, the federal government failed to authorize SIG funds, forcing state education agencies to supplement SIG monies with funds from the Title I basic grant (Sunderman & Orfield, 2006).

The SIG program offered assistance to qualifying schools that failed for 2 consecutive years to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward NCLB's (2002) achievement targets. Expectations for the SIG program were that these monies would facilitate the improvement of student proficiency, growth in the number of schools meeting AYP, and the creation of a comprehensive data set that could be used to shape the continuous improvement of low-performing schools (NCLB, 2002). The

SIG program developed by the G. W. Bush (Bush II) Administration provided states and local school districts with a significant amount of decision-making authority, as they were allowed to spend SIG funds on the research-based strategies they deemed appropriate for their low-performing campuses.

Title I SIG 2.0: What is it? In August 2009, the Obama Administration appropriated \$546 million to the Title I SIG and provided an additional \$3 billion to this program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009). The regulatory nature of SIG monies under President Obama’s plan signaled a major change from the previous SIG program established under President Bush II. The decision-making authority of state and local education agencies was greatly diminished through three primary measures. First, schools seeking SIG monies would be required to choose from a list of four prescribed school-improvement strategies (“Obama Administration Announces,” 2009):

1. *Turnaround* means districts must replace the school principal, at least 50% of the school’s staff, and adopt a new governance structure while implementing a reshaped instructional program.
2. *Restart* means districts must close failing schools and reopen them under the management of a charter school operator (which could be a private entity).
3. *School closure* requires districts to close failing schools, sending all students to high-achieving campuses in the district.

4. *Transformation* means districts must provide a massive professional development effort that addresses teacher and leader effectiveness, comprehensive instructional reform strategies, extended learning, teacher planning time, and operating flexibility.

Second, state education agencies were asked to develop a formula separating low-performing schools into three separate tiers. Although this scaffolding of low-performing schools was meant to ensure SIG funds reached those schools considered to have the greatest need, some campuses that traditionally would have qualified for school funds would no longer be eligible.

Third, as an attempt to steer schools away from what many consider to be the less rigorous strategy for school improvement, the Department of Education created the “Rule of 9,” stating that any district with nine or more Tier I and II schools could not implement the transformation model in more than 50% of its schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b).

Title I SIG: Who needs it? The stated goal of the SIG program is to turn around (i.e., turn low-performing schools into high-performing schools) the nation’s 5,000 lowest-performing schools between 2009 and 2014 (“Obama Administration Announces Historic Opportunity,” 2009). Data from the SIG division labeled 13,000 campuses as in “need of improvement.” Additionally, the data provide a bleak picture for the immediate future, as schools are entering the restructuring stages of improvement at much higher rates than they are exiting. The Figure shows the rapid

increase of those schools considered to be entering the restructuring stages of improvement (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007).

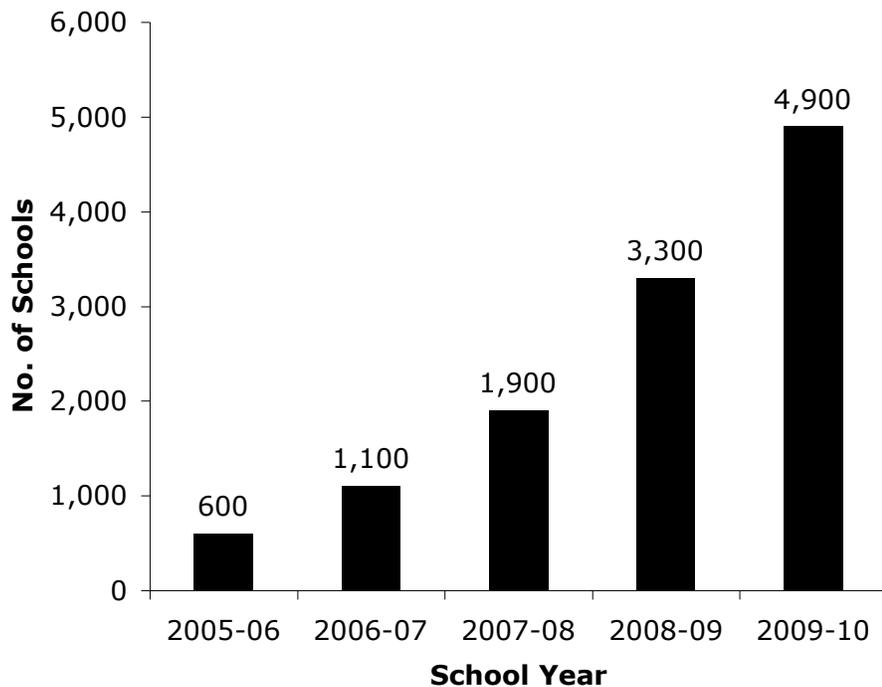


Figure. Number of schools in restructuring between 2005 and 2010. Data from *The Turnaround Challenge*, by A. Calkins, W. Guenther, G. Belfiore, and D. Lash, 2007, p. 2, Boston, MA: Mass Insight Education & Research Institute.

Title I SIG: What are its foundational assumptions? Brady (2003) claimed the turnaround-based solutions of the SIG program were founded upon four general assumptions about the nature of failing schools and the strategies necessary to facilitate school-wide transformation:

1. Turnaround policies assume that, regardless of the sociocultural challenges of a community, all students are able to succeed on standardized test measures.

2. These policies assume that tangible deficits exist within the teachers and leaders of chronically low-performing public schools.
3. Transformation of failing schools is assumed to be supported by current research.
4. Finally, turnaround policies assume that school leaders and teachers within poor-performing schools lack the proper will or motivation to do what is necessary (Brady, 2003).

The foundational assumptions guiding the strategies as presented in the 2009 SIG program, when combined with the increased rhetoric surrounding the “intractable problem of chronically low-performing schools” (Hassel & Steiner, 2003, p. 13), create a powerful narrative, thus shaping the range of policy solutions from which policy makers must choose. The turnaround solution, much like the previous reform efforts promoting decentralization, promises to provide local communities with increased levels of autonomy over educational decision making by allowing them to choose the prescriptive fate of local schools.

Turnaround research: What do we know? Although *turnaround* is a relatively new and ambiguous term within educational studies, the story lines supporting the narrative of an educational crisis have contributed to the rapid expansion of comprehensive school reform efforts labeled as turnaround (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Despite this dramatic increase, there is a surprising lack of empirically based turnaround studies. While social scientists have attempted to address this gap by detailing the challenges and strategies of turning around schools

(Brady, 2003; Duke, 2006; Herman et al., 2008; Leithwood & Strauss, 2008; Murphy & Meyers, 2008) the majority of turnaround research is based upon small-scale case study projects founded upon rationalistic assumptions. Subsequently, the research currently guiding the field of turnaround studies often attempts to isolate the causal factors allowing schools with high percentages of low-income and ethnic-minority students to outperform their peers (Orr, Berg, Shore, & Meier, 2008). A recent Institute of Educational Sciences report offered a critique of these efforts, claiming that they are “particularly weak in determining causal validity for several reasons, including the fact that there is no way to be confident that the features common to successful turnaround schools are not also common to schools that fail” (Herman et al., 2008, p. 6).

Duke (2006) claimed that although the education profession has certainly grown in its ability to locate and name key components of the school improvement process, tremendous gaps remain in the turnaround research. Speaking directly to these gaps, Duke highlighted six specific turnaround issues that call for further research: (a) understanding school decline, as little is known about how schools decline; (b) examining teamwork, as collaboration amongst staff and teachers must be in place for school improvement to begin; (c) assessing interventions, as high-poverty schools typically offer a variety of interventions targeted at low-performing students; (d) detecting midcourse corrections, as post hoc interviews and surveys provide a gap in knowledge concerning corrections that were made in the midst of improvement; (e) identifying unintended consequences, as all reform efforts have the potential to

encounter unexpected happenings that could serve to hinder or help; and (f) pinpointing personnel problems, as little is known about personnel issues in low-performing schools or how turnaround principals deal with personnel issues.

Additionally, turnaround studies often fail to consider the external factors that may contribute to a school's low performance. Murphy and Meyers (2008) addressed the importance of these factors: "The most prominent external causes contributing to school failure are urban setting, minority population, and low socioeconomic status. . . . It is clear from the literature that these concepts are highly correlated" (p. 259). At first glance, this statement appears to originate from a deficit mindset; however, Murphy and Meyers provided a detailed explanation regarding how these populations are confronted with a myriad of external hindrances, including those that originate from state-sponsored systems of high-stakes accountability. Murphy and Meyers suggested that the "impoverished communities in which youngsters at failing schools often live make it difficult to live up to the what the accountability system considers to be successful" (p. 259).

Ultimately, positivistic frameworks riddled with a variety of serious limitations are supporting the dramatic expansion of the turnaround research movement. This understanding further reinforced the purposes of this dissertation. Specifically, it is important for educational policy scholars to understand how dominant discourses and deliberative politics led to the privileging of a policy solution based upon such a limited and problematic body of research.

Conclusion

The two guiding purposes of this dissertation were (a) to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG of 2009 became the commonsense solution for chronically low-performing public schools and (b) to highlight how a framework focused on the analysis of discourse and the performative aspects of policy making can benefit the field of educational policy studies. In my attempt to address these purposes, I have worked to provide the field of educational policy studies with a better understanding of how deliberative policy-making structures and dominant discourses influence the ways in which policy experts address the current understanding of the educational crisis.

In order to properly address these purposes, this chapter examined traditional policy frameworks and the argumentative turn that provided policy studies with a critical interpretive alternative; discourse analysis and its role in policy studies and argumentative analysis as a particular framework within discourse analysis; Hajer's (1995, 2006a) argumentative framework for discourse analysis, the *deliberative turn* in democratic theory, and the promises and perils realized in the deliberative recognition of values and interests; the traditional values attributed to the purposes of schooling in the United States; recent investigations of interests in education reform studies; and the dominant discourses of globalization that have shaped the modern era of education reform. Although numerous studies have addressed policy solutions that call for the comprehensive reform of low-performing public schools, there is currently a significant gap in the research addressing how interests are involved in the

creation of these solutions. Of greater concern, very few efforts within educational policy studies have investigated how historically specific discourses and deliberative politics work together to determine the types of policy solutions that receive recognition. The review and critical interpretation of the previous literature provided this study with a more informed understanding of the gaps in interest-based research. Consequently, this review supported the further exploration of the ways in which discourses and deliberative policy-making structures interact to shape the range of policy solutions made available for U.S. public schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

This chapter provides an overview of the research methods and design structuring this study. As mentioned previously, the purpose of this dissertation was to examine how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG of 2009 became the chosen policy solution for chronically low-performing schools. This study also addressed how the confluence of interests, dominant discourses, and performative politics determine which education policy solutions are considered during a specific moment in history. In order to provide a qualitative and critically interpretive understanding of how the Title I SIG program came into being, I employed an instrumental case study design and used an adapted version of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006a) three-dimensional analytical framework. Specifically, qualitative research was conducted, providing this study with an investigation of texts—documents and written and spoken statements—and the political performances from which these texts arrived. Three explicit groupings of actors served as the analytical focus of this research: (a) federal government actors, who are those employed, appointed, or elected to positions within the federal government; (b) special-interest and advocacy actors, nonprofit or for-profit employees who were invited to participate in the dialogues that helped shape the Title I SIG program or who had an agenda specifically addressing the policy; and (c) university actors, or those professors who were asked to participate in the formation of the Title I SIG program or specifically targeted turnaround research as a scholarly focus.

This chapter begins with a restatement of the research questions used to guide this study. Next, I outline the reasons supporting my use of qualitative case study methodologies to address the purposes of this dissertation. I then review the critical reframing of policy studies and the critical interpretive focus on discourses and practices that shaped the investigatory goals of this dissertation. Afterward, I review my adaptation of Hajer's (2003, 2006a) three-dimensional analytical framework as a detailed road map for data collection. This is followed by a description of the research design and an explanation of the methods selected to collect data. I then offer an accounting of how the chosen methods served to answer each of the three research questions guiding this dissertation. I conclude this chapter with an examination of the ethical sensitivities, positional considerations, and limitations further defining this qualitative inquiry.

Research Questions

In order to adequately address the purposes previously listed, this dissertation examined three research questions:

1. What are the meanings of *turnaround* found within the policy discourses of actors at the federal level?
2. What are the particular discourse coalitions that formed around the school-turnaround story lines used to support the Title I School Improvement Grant program of 2009?
3. What are the performative practices that provided the Title I School Improvement Grant program with credibility and attention?

Qualitative Research Methodology

The diverse range of epistemological and ontological beliefs within social sciences provides each qualitative tradition with its own internally local assumptions (Patton, 1990). Thus, a wide variety of qualitative methodologies is used to inform an expansive field of theoretical approaches. These traditions include ethnography, phenomenology, heuristics, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, ecological psychology, systems theory, chaos theory, nonlinear dynamics, hermeneutics, and orientational qualitative (Patton, 1990). Additional classification of qualitative inquiry is provided through the following typologies: case study, grounded theory, life history, historical methods, and action and applied research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Despite the paradigmatic diversity found within the field of qualitative studies,

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offered a principal definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

This particular understanding of qualitative research provided the most suitable inquiry model for this dissertation, as its investigatory focus was on the interpretation of sociopolitical practices and historically specific discourses that shape education policy at the federal level. Additionally, the diverse range of methods informing this dissertation's inquiry model was supported by Ball's (2008) suggestion that the

analysis of policy making might be strengthened by drawing from a number of the genres and techniques found within the classifications and typologies of qualitative inquiry listed above. In the following sections I offer a more extensive rationale for my choice of qualitative inquiry.

Case study analysis and qualitative inquiry. Case study research provides an ideal vehicle for the critical interpretative analysis of the discourses and practices structuring policy making. As a commonly used approach within social sciences, case study research encourages thick descriptions of real-life events (Yin, 2009). Specific to this study, case study research provided a qualitative inquiry-based framework for investigating federal policy making in its situated context. Stake (1995) explained when researchers may choose to use case studies: “We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts” (p. xi). By focusing on the context-specific interactions that inform policy making, case study research provides an especially appropriate model for critical interpretive policy analysis. Case study methods encourage researchers to work in the most data rich of all settings, the actual site where social interaction is taking place. Once a researcher selects a site for investigation, he or she is expected to build a strong conceptual structure organized by the selection of key issues and the ordinary experiences and disciplines of knowledge (Stake, 1995). As a former school leader, I have been intimately involved with a number of comprehensive school reform efforts. Consequently, the selection of this case was certainly of “very special interest” (Stake, 1995, p. xi), as it allowed me to investigate policy-making interactions taking place at

the actual sites that produced the Title I SIG, one of the more intensive school reform efforts in recent history.

The case study structure of this dissertation is considered *instrumental*, as its main purpose was to provide insights into the development of a particular policy solution. The analysis of a case within instrumental case studies is secondary to the researcher's overall understanding of an external interest (Stake, 2005). Although the investigation of a case is the central task for a researcher, in the instrumental model analysts view the case in a supportive role as they attempt to understand a larger issue. Thus, although an examination of the events responsible for crafting the Title I SIG program was unquestionably a central task of this dissertation, I was ultimately interested in how dominant discourses and deliberative performances are shaping the broader arena of education politics at this specific moment in history. My interest in the qualitative investigation of education policy served as the impetus for the following section, as I review the critical interpretive alternative to traditional policy studies.

The critical (re)framing traditional policy sciences. Scholars during the latter half of the 20th century framed policy as something that “was—or should be—removed from politics” (Torgerson, 2003, p. 113). This apolitical framing of policy issues was commonplace until political projects of the Vietnam era began to question the usefulness of rational decision making, the unreliability of empirical data, and public policies' inability to address the dramatic shift in political contexts (DeLeon, 1999). Therefore, failure to generate a significant body of knowledge that could be

used to solve the social and economic issues of this era helped inspire the rise of postempirical policy studies seeking to examine the interconnectedness of politics to knowledge and policy to social scientific expertise (Fischer, 2003b).

Critical policy studies in the late 1980s offered an alternative to the apolitical policy investigations dominating the early era of policy sciences. Specifically, critical scholars questioned the “scientific” foundation of positivist policy sciences by revealing the political biases characteristic of policy studies (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. xiv). From this viewpoint, the notion of the policy analyst as an unbiased provider of empirical truth was interrupted. Instead, critical studies viewed analysts as inescapably biased, due to the socially constructed and interpretive nature of policy analysis (Fischer & Forester, 1993). This critical turn in policy sciences reframed the work of policy analysts and their understandings of policy actors. As an alternative to traditional policy studies and the sanitized observation of political decision making, critical policy scholars acknowledge the beliefs and values structuring policy analysis and offer interpretations that recognize both the possibilities and limitations of such efforts.

Miles and Huberman (1984) maintained that the methodological preferences of social scientists should always be stated up front, claiming that readers should not have to discern the standpoint from which a researcher operates. The methodological preferences guiding this dissertation were drawn from postempirical scholarship informed by the critical interpretive analysis of policy discourses *and* practices. Policy studies in this tradition investigate the scientific accounts of reality rather than

reality itself; examine the vocabularies and concepts used to know and represent objects and their properties as socially constructed by human beings; and consider scientific policy analyses as productions put forth by a diverse group of observers, each informed by an individual, subjective framework for understanding (Fischer, 2003a).

Discourse. The analytical framework of this dissertation was informed by the discourse analytical assumption that actions, objects, and practices are socially constructed and are thus shaped by the social and political context of a specific time period (Fischer, 2003a). Discourse analysis contributes to interpretive policy studies by examining the social construction of the policy texts (discourse, or language, text, practices, etc.) within deliberative policy making. By reframing the discursive actions of those actors who helped develop the Title I SIG program, discourse analysis would allow this study to provide a critical understanding of how discourses both shaped and were shaped by the practices of policy making. Consequently, this study considered actors and dominant discourses as collaborative partners in the coconstruction of policy solutions.

Practice. The analytical framework of this dissertation was also informed by the critical interpretive belief that the socially constructed practices of policy actors are an integral component in the formation of the discourses shaping public policy. Pushing against the positivistic notion that the reality of policymaking can be derived through the analysis of observable actions, critical interpretive studies examine the accounting of how actions contribute to the meaning making taking place within

deliberative settings (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Therefore, the social construction of practice was central to this study's assumption that the sense making of federal actors must be viewed through an analysis of the actors' interpretations of the policy-making environment. This assumption allowed this study to move beyond the a priori understanding of a policy environment and helped connect the everyday interactions of political actors to the construction and reconstruction of the political narratives used to support the Title I SIG program.

Founded upon the assumptions of social constructivism, interpretive policy analysts can draw from a broad range of methodological tools when examining how the actions of political actors shape the final formulation of policy solutions. Each of these tools assesses what Hajer (1995) described as the public domain of policy making and allows policy analysts to develop a critical understanding of what Yanow (2000) described as the "local knowledge" (p. 5) of a policy-making community. Therefore, by focusing on the social and discursive construction of policy solutions, this dissertation provides a critical alternative to mainstream policy studies bound by positivistic rationalities focused on cause-and-effect relationships.

A Hajerian analytic for the discourses and performances of policy making. Hajer's (1995) analytical work sought to understand how ecological modernization, as the dominant conceptualization of environmental problems, guided policy practices and policy solutions. Four guiding questions shaped Hajer's (1995) thesis on environmental policymaking: (a) What can be thought within its structures; (b) where does it hit its conceptual limits; (c) is ecological modernization to be

understood as the materialization of the original ideas of the environmental debate in its early stages, or does it signify the collapse of critical discourse; and (d) to what extent does it facilitate a more reflexive form of modernization? Together, these questions provide educational policy studies with a strong theoretical heuristic for considering how the globalized discourses of education shape those solutions deemed legitimate for education reform at a given moment in history.

The three-dimensional framework developed by Hajer (2003, 2005a, 2006b) is intended to examine policy environments defined by high stakes, unclear division of the roles of political actors, and the lack of an analytical framework able to differentiate among the competing interests in deliberative politics. This dissertation was based upon an adapted version of this framework, placing emphasis on the discourse and dramaturgical (performance) dimensions. By examining both the discourses and practices that shape policy making, this dissertation would provide a critical alternative to traditional policy studies by operating with an argumentative assumption that the beliefs of actors are constantly being renegotiated through the practice of policy making.

The role of discourse. Hajer's (1995, 2003, 2005a, 2006b) analytical framework examines three specific layers of discourse: story lines, policy vocabularies, and emblematic issues. To best answer the questions guiding this dissertation, focus was on the discursive elements of story lines and policy vocabularies. This study examined how dominant discourses shaped the ways in which the federal government, states, and local school districts turn around low-

performing schools. Specifically, this dissertation investigated how the career of *turnaround* language determined the politics of education reform and the final crafting of the Title I SIG of 2009.

Hajer (1995, 2003) viewed story lines as the short narratives people cling to in their effort to determine how their knowledge, experience, and expertise may contribute to a specific policy debate. Consequently, story lines create a discursive unity in the midst of competing interests. Hajer (1995, 2003) viewed policy vocabularies as political concepts that facilitate the structured understanding of particular policy issues. Deliberative actors invoke story lines and while doing so call upon specific policy vocabularies that structure the researched activities of policy actors and determine what should be considered as a legitimate policy solution (Hajer, 2003).

The role of performance. The performance, or dramaturgical, dimension of Hajer's analytical framework focuses on a sequence of "staged" performances through which policymakers coconstruct the rules of policy making. This framework investigates four specific aspects of political performance: scripting, staging, setting, and performance. Together, the exploration of these performances provides an extension to policy studies relying solely upon discourse analysis. Hajer's concept of scripting is used to examine how the rules of deliberative politics are continuously being redefined by the actions of political actors. The concept of staging is used to interpret the active manipulation of policy settings through devices such as presentations, town hall forums, conferences, and colloquiums. Hajer's (2005b)

concept of setting is used to examine the “actual things” (stage set, artificial devices) that structure the enactment of deliberative politics. Finally, the concept of performance is used to examine which conditions must be present in order for actors to be recognized in deliberative politics and provides insight as to which of these actions influences the final composition of a policy solution.

Data Collection Techniques

By focusing on the discourse and performance dimensions of Hajer’s framework, this dissertation examines how globalized discourses and deliberative politics shaped the Title I SIG program as the chosen solution for low-performing schools. Hajer’s (2006a) offering of a 10-step prescription for data collection was intended to provide policy analysts with the iterative inquiry model necessary to examine the social and discursive formation of policy solutions. This iterative approach for collecting data is based upon the belief that a discourse analysis is an investigation of “what is being said to whom, and in what context” (Hajer, 2006a, p. 72). Specifically, this approach examines the social constructive learning that takes place as people react to one another in deliberative settings. Hajer’s (2006a) 10 steps of data collection are the following:

1. *Desk research* involves an initial survey of the documents and positions in a given field. This step is meant to provide the researcher with a first chronology and first reading of events.

2. *Helicopter interviews* involve targeting a select group (three or four) of initial actors who can provide an overview of the field from different viewpoints.

3. *Document analysis* involves the analysis of documents in an attempt to understand the story lines, metaphors, and sites of discursive struggle.

4. *Interviews with key players* involve interviewing a broader group of key players and using the questions and interviewer–interviewee interactions as a way to develop generative learning that will serve to uncover shifts in recognition, moments of learning, and reversals of opinion.

5. *Sites of argumentation* involve the search of data that can be used to account for the argumentative exchanges.

6. *Analyze for position effects* means sifting through the collected data to find instances when the involved actors get caught up in interplay or positioning.

7. *Identification of key incidents* involves the identification of incidents that help the researcher to understand the discourse-related dynamics in a chosen case.

8. *Analysis of practices in particular cases of argumentation* involves going back to the data to see if the meaning of what is being said can be related to the practices in which it was said.

9. *Interpretation* involves creating an account of the discourse-related structures of a particular discussion, of practices, and of the sites of production.

10. *Second visit to key actors* involves revisiting a select group of key actors and presenting them with the initial findings to see if they might recognize some of the hidden structures of language.

This particular roadmap for discourse analysis emphasizes the play between the qualitative researcher and the discourses under examination. By working through

each of these 10 steps, a qualitative researcher is able to build a narrative of the discursive formations and deliberative actions that give rise to particular policy solutions. With guidance from the prescriptive discourse analysis model detailed above, the review of documents and interview data were used to analyze the discourses and performative practices that gave rise to the Title I SIG of 2009.

Documentary review. Each stage of analysis was informed by the review of both primary and secondary data resources. The initial review of resources included past Title I SIG policy documents, the current Title I SIG program, the scholarly and technical reports cited by the U.S. Department of Education as the foundation of the current Title I SIG program, technical and research reports distributed by special interests and advocacy organizations targeting both the past and current versions of the Title I SIG program, and media accountings of the debate surrounding the final iteration of the Title I SIG program.

Initially, review of primary and secondary resources allowed me to develop an overview of the positions in the debate on the Title I SIG and helped to cultivate an initial chronology of important events contributing to the final revision of the Title I SIG program of 2009. Additionally, this documentary review helped me target an initial group of actors who I believed, through interview, could provide a more detailed overview of the numerous viewpoints that shaped the debate surrounding the Title I SIG program. As the analysis progressed, the continued review of documents formed my initial conceptualizations of the story lines and policy vocabularies used to support the Title I SIG program. In the final stages of analysis I was able to develop

an interpretive understanding of the ways in which discourses and deliberative performances structured the discussion, practices, and final production of the Title I SIG of 2009.

Interviews. Babbie (2008) defined qualitative interviews as a “conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent” (p. 336). Thus, for this dissertation, interviews were of primary importance during my attempt to access the “local knowledge” (Yanow, 2000, p. 5) of federal policy making as it related to the specific topic of the Title I SIG program. The 10-step discourse analytic model previously discussed informed the order and structures of selected interviews.

All interviews were conversational and thus semistructured. Yanow (2000) claimed that conversational interviews yield two kinds of data, spoken language and nonverbal language. Conducting semistructured interviews allow for qualitative interactions that provide greater “breadth” than other, more rigid interview structures (Fontana & Frey, 2005). A total of 26 interviews were conducted with government actors, special-interest or advocacy actors and university actors. Each of the interviews was conducted in a 6-month period ranging between September 2010 and February 2011. Due to requests for anonymity, a comprehensive listing of interview participants is not provided; however, each source is cited appropriately throughout the analysis. Additionally, because several interview participants fit within multiple categories, the total number of actors from each of the three target populations appears larger than the total number of actors interviewed. As an example, several of

the persons interviewed were previously employed by the federal government (government actors) but at the time of the study were working with a special-interest or advocacy organization. Table 1 provides a listing of the number of interviews that can be attributed to each category. See the Appendix for a detailed listing of interviewees and their roles.

Table 1

Number of Interviews in Each Category

Role	Number
Government actors (Carter, G. W. Bush, Clinton, & Obama administrations)	12
Special-interest & advocacy actors	13
University actors	6

Helicopter interviews and sampling techniques. Targeting the three sets of actors, I selected an original listing of interviewees, crafted an interview schedule, traveled to Washington, DC, and conducted open-ended and semistructured interviews with policy actors in order to elicit their narrative understandings of the Title I SIG program. Participants involved in the first round of informal helicopter interviews were chosen after the extensive survey of the documents and positionings previously mentioned and were selected through confirming/disconfirming case sampling. Patton (1990) described this style of sampling as important during the early stages of fieldwork, as the researcher is attempting to gather data and confirm the importance of emergent patterns. Thus, the three categories of actors under examination were developed through the textual analysis of the Title I SIG of 2009.

Initial analyses revealed that actors from the three categories mentioned were often provided with the greatest access to the deliberative spaces in which this policy was crafted. Data collected from initial helicopter interviews revealed a great breadth of information, thus providing a broad overview of the education reform environment in which the Title I SIG program was developed.

Key informant interviews and sampling techniques. The second round of interviews, with key informants, took place after I had completed additional textual analyses, allowing me to develop an initial understanding of the discourses structuring the Title I SIG debate. Those persons determined to *be key informants* were chosen through both snowball and opportunistic sampling methods. Snowball sampling allows a qualitative researcher to pinpoint information-rich informants by asking initial contacts to locate key actors or incidents that play an important role in the issues under investigation (Patton, 1990). Key informants were selected through the snowball technique, as a convergence of specific policy actors appeared during the conversations in the initial helicopter interviews. Key informants were also chosen through the use of the opportunistic sampling method. This method for sampling allows qualitative researchers to make “on-the-spot” decisions and emphasizes the “primary strength” of qualitative inquiry, which is to remain open to new investigatory opportunities as they emerge (Patton, 1990, p. 179). This method of sampling worked particularly well within the iterative framework guiding this study, as the back-and-forth analysis of primary and secondary data brought forward new

sets of actors as my understandings of the story lines and policy vocabularies structuring the Title I SIG program continued to evolve.

The final round of interviews, the second visit with key informants, was conducted after I had searched the performative aspects of argumentation, analyzed the collected data for positioning effects, identified key incidents, and examined the practices in particular cases of argumentation. These interviews, originating from the snowball and opportunistic sampling methods previously mentioned, allowed me to present key actors with my initial findings and check their understandings of the story lines and policy vocabularies I identified as structuring the deliberative creation of the Title I SIG program.

Critical Interpretation of Data

Having collected a voluminous amount of qualitative data, I was faced with the challenge of how to organize, explore, and make sense of a diverse grouping of narratives. Consequently, I researched qualitative data analysis software and decided to purchase HyperRESEARCH to strengthen my qualitative inquiries. Developed by ResearchWare (2010), the functionality of HyperRESEARCH allowed me to code and retrieve data and conduct five comprehensive phases of data analysis, each designed specifically to address the overall purposes and questions guiding this dissertation.

The first phase of data analysis involved the constant comparative search for *turnaround* meanings, which began with an initial survey of the primary and secondary documents related to the Title I SIG program. Next, these meanings were

developed through a set of helicopter interviews that provided a general overview of how the Title I SIG program first appeared in the field of educational policy studies. Initial coding during this phase revealed three dominant policy discourse themes (categorizations) that appeared to capture the *turnaround* meanings found within the Title I SIG debate. These themes included (a) expected outcomes of turnaround (Title I SIG) policies and (b) problems justifying turnaround (Title I SIG) policies.

The second phase of data analysis involved recoding collected data in an attempt to trace the development of story lines used to support the Title I SIG program. During this phase I developed a set of subthemes in relation to the three dominant themes previously mentioned. As an example, the dominant theme of “problems justifying the Title I SIG policy” included a range of subthemes such as the “need to realize an unprecedented economic opportunity,” the “need to break through bureaucratic complacency,” and the “need to address civil rights issues. I identified each of these subthemes as the story lines used by policy actors to promote the revision of the Title I SIG program.

In the third phase of policy analysis I recoded data in an attempt to locate the dominant policy vocabularies relied upon by actors to support the Title I SIG program. Policy vocabularies became apparent as the emergence of strategic narratives was identified. After identifying the most commonly produced strategic narratives, I grouped them into a broader policy vocabulary based upon the ways in which these narratives were employed. As an example, strategic narratives of innovation,

economy, and global competition were most often used in the “innovation policy vocabulary.”

Eventually, the first three phases of data analysis revealed the emergence of a dominant policy discourse: “educational globalization.” Together, I found the story lines and policy vocabularies shaped by the broader discourse of educational globalization were used to support the most recent revision of the Title I SIG program. Ultimately, these discourses, aided by a range of deliberative performances, determined what policies would be considered as viable solutions in the attempt to turn around low-performing schools.

The fourth phase of data analysis focused on the performance dimension of deliberative politics. During this phase, I recoded data in an attempt to uncover the ways in which performative practices—scripting, staging, setting, and performance—were used to promote the Title I SIG revision. This process allowed me to develop a historical understanding of the performative collaborations that structured the deliberative politics of the Title I SIG program. Additionally, I was able to highlight emergent trends as to which actions actually influenced the final composition of the Title I SIG program.

The fifth and final phase of data analysis brought together the critical interpretive linkages between the discourse and performance dimensions of policy making. This phase was characterized by the triangulation of large quantities of data as I revisited multiple sources. Wodak (2008) suggested that biases in discourse analysis, although always present, could be minimized by the examination of a wide

range of historical, organizational, and political sources, providing the researcher with insight as to the social and political discursive fields in which events are embedded. Thus, my revisiting of the diverse range of primary and secondary sources used to interpret the story lines, policy vocabularies, and performative dimensions of this study helped eliminate potential issues of validity caused by an overreliance on limited data sets.

The purpose of Research Question 1 was to discover the *turnaround* meanings located within the policy discourses of actors at the federal level. Hajer's (2006a) iterative approach to building recognizable narratives provided a guide allowing me to move back and forth between written and spoken text, thus creating opportunities to find or trace the discursive structures of *turnaround* meanings. Although each of these 10 steps contributed to my understanding of turnaround meanings, the initial iteration of analysis targeting Research Question 1 ended with the first interview of key players. Involving a greater diversity and larger number of actors, helicopter interviews provided key insights as to the causal chains that could be recognized during the development stages of the Title I SIG program.

The goal of Research Question 2 was to provide an understanding of the various discourse coalitions that formed around the school-turnaround story lines previously brought to light. My understanding of discourse coalitions first emerged during the textual analysis of documents (congressional hearings, commissioned reports, focus group transcripts, etc.). This step provided particular insights about the dominant discourses and performative practices central to the crafting of the Title I

SIG program. Next, I revisited the textual data collected to determine how certain groups of actors or institutions positioned themselves at different stages during the development of the Title I SIG program. I then revisited key incidents that highlighted the discursive contestations of actors during this developmental stage. The next phase of analysis involved the revisiting of data in an effort to draw connections between what was said by actors and the deliberative performances that conveyed meaning.

The goal of Research Question 3 was to provide an understanding of which deliberative performances provided turnaround policies with credibility and attention. To answer this question, I developed an interpretive accounting of the discursive structures, practices, and deliberative sites of production that contributed to the rise of the Title I SIG program as the credible solution for school turnaround. The last step of analysis was conducted during the revisiting of key informants, those persons selected for the second set of interviews. During this step, I presented key informants with my understanding of the meanings I was able to draw from their interviews—the terms of the turnaround policy discourse, the formation of discourse coalitions, and the pinpointing of specific structures and deliberative performances. These conversations served as a member-checking strategy, thus allowing me to gauge how actors related to the findings being presented and providing this study with a more nuanced answer to the research questions guiding this dissertation.

Ethical Considerations

Marshall and Rossman (2011) claimed researchers have a responsibility to follow three specific moral principles when attempting to structure an ethical research project: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. To address the principle of respect, the participation of interviewees was always garnered through unforced consent, and I honored specific requests for privacy and anonymity. Additionally, I refrained from using the personal stories of participants as a means to a researched end. Although I had lived the previous version of the Title I SIG program as an employee of a state agency and I had investigated the most recent version of the Title I SIG program, I certainly was unaware of what insights my qualitative interactions with participants would produce. The moral principle of beneficence is realized in research by protecting the studied population. Although *protection* is a broad and often ambiguous term, I took measures to ensure the narratives collected during my qualitative inquiry would not cause harm to the researched participants. Marshall and Rossman considered justice to be distributive in nature, meaning the researcher has a responsibility to focus on the “redress” of what is perceived as “past social injustices” (p. 47). Cary (2006) warned that those who participate in qualitative inquiry are often confronted with surprising issues not originally considered as part of the investigation. Thus, the principle of justice pushed me to consider how I was to address any surprising issues presented in the participants’ narratives. Ultimately, I sought to address a number of issues that I perceived as pertaining to social justice, while also making sure that I did not vilify any particular actor.

Positionalities and Limitations

My interpretation of the data collected was certainly colored by a positionality informed by my experiential past. Having served as a teacher, principal, and state-level policy actor, I developed a positioned opinion of the promises offered by deliberative politics. Specifically, in my own experiences, the promises of deliberative policy making often fell flat, as the persons, practitioners, and communities most impacted by policy solutions were frequently unable to negotiate the politics of deliberative policy making. Subsequently, my experiences shaped an understanding that, when enacted, deliberative practices are often used as mechanisms to promote consensus around dominant story lines, thus failing to authentically consider a wide range of values and belief systems. However, my unique positionality and understandings of deliberative practices are limited by a lens of privilege shaped by my status as a White male.

Epistemologically, my analyses of story lines and policy vocabularies were shaped by a critical belief that language is shrouded in power; thus, discourses are always productive forces that deserve investigation. Methodologically, my interpretation of voice was informed by the works of scholars such as Lather (2007), Britzman (2000), and Foley (1994). From Lather, I leave this study knowing that I am unable to “unpack some *real* as to enact the ruins of any effort” that might “monumentalize” the lived experiences of the actors voices informing this study (p. 40). From Britzman, I acknowledge my inability to provide a “fixity” to the studied actors’ identities and thus understand the findings of this dissertation are unable to

present those studied as “noncontradictory subjects who say what they mean and mean what they say” (p. 28). From Foley, I leave this project aware that I am unable to real(ize) the collected voice of those being studied, as I choose not to operate under the assumption that I as a researcher am able to act as a blank “recording machine” that simply presents the “facts” (p. xix).

Together, the voices of these scholars serve as a warning, reminding me that the findings of this study are a subjective coconstruction. Specifically, my sharing of the qualitative narratives informing this study is limited by my own critical interpretation of a select group of voices, which are themselves offering a purposeful interpretation of the details that define one specific moment in history. Moreover, the range of voices were limited by issues of time and finance that prevented me from locating and visiting with each of the actors who contributed to the final shaping of the Title I SIG program. Furthermore, the voices populating this study were chosen by sampling methods shaped by in-the-moment decisions based upon my critical interpretive understandings of data.

It should also be noted that studies targeting major policy players as a way of understanding policy texts must confront the methodological issue of access (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010). Undoubtedly, issues of access shaped the findings of this study, as I was forced to navigate a number of gatekeepers. Although I was given a wide array of access due to the political connections of mentor scholars, I understand that the policy being investigated is controversial and therefore the access I was given was strategic and guarded, and the narratives offered might have been shaped accordingly.

Conclusion

Of the troublesome social issues facing U.S. citizens, perhaps no issue receives more attention than the overabundance of low-performing K-12 schools. Approximately 5,000 schools—5% of K-12 campuses in the United States—qualify as chronically low-performing (Duncan, 2009d). According to Hajer (1995), the deliberative nature of policy making regulates how political actors choose to address social problems such as the surplus of low-performing K-12 schools in the United States.

In August 2009, President Barack Obama’s administration chose to address the social crisis of low-performing K-12 schools by appropriating \$3.546 billion to the Title I SIG. The regulatory nature of SIG monies under President Obama’s plan signaled a major change from the previous SIG program established under President Bush II, as the decision-making authority of state and local education agencies was greatly diminished by three primary measures: (a) the mandate of prescriptive strategies for school improvement; (b) the scaffolding of low-performing schools, leaving some campuses ineligible to receive SIG funds; and (c) the calculated restrictions on the transformation model of school improvement strategies made available to districts, forcing schools to move toward the turnaround, restart and closure models (“Obama Administration Announces,” 2009). Despite this dramatic shift in federal involvement, there is a surprising lack of empirically based research supporting the turnaround efforts as prescribed in the Title I SIG program.

Consequently, this dissertation is based upon two primary objectives: (a) to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG program of 2009 became the chosen solution for chronically low performing schools, and (b) to offer the field of education policy studies with a critical alternative approach to traditional interest-based analyses. Thus, while this study is ultimately an analysis of the most recent iteration of the Title I SIG program and the federal government's continued effort to improve low-performing schools, it is also a critical interpretive alternative to the more dominant traditional policy frameworks based upon positivistic rationalities.

The overall purpose of this chapter was to provide a methodological understanding of how an examination of how discourses and political performances coconstruct what is thinkable in regards to policy solutions. Thus, this study benefits the field of educational policy studies by highlighting the ways in which normalized policy-making structures at this moment in history influence how policy experts choose to address the issue of low-performing public schools. By providing policy scholars with a critical interpretive understanding of the coconstruction of policy solutions at this moment in history, this dissertation explains how the recognition of deliberative politics may help to establish a transformed arena for public deliberation, hence enabling the citizenries' potential to (re)imagine democratic decision making.

Chapter 4: The Reconfiguration of Economic Policies in the Post–Cold War Era:

Examining the Narrative Foundations of the Title I SIG

Over the course of the past several years, apocalyptic story lines of an educational crisis in the United States encouraged rapid expansion of comprehensive school reform efforts labeled as *turnaround* (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 2, turnaround reform efforts are supported by a surprising lack of empirical research. Although numerous scholars have attempted to address this gap by detailing the challenges and strategies of school turnaround efforts (Barth et al., 1999; Brady, 2003; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Duke, 2006; Herman et al., 2008; Leithwood & Strauss, 2008; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002), the majority of turnaround research efforts are based on small-scale case studies founded upon positivistic rationalities and the a priori understanding of causal factors contributing to low-performing schools. Similarly, the discourses promoting the Title I School SIG of 2009 and the school turnaround reform movement are confined by a narrow understanding of which turnaround solutions should be considered for low-performing schools, who should serve as the providers of such solutions, and under what conditions such solutions should be forced upon a school community.

Understanding the current school reform environment and the push to embrace turnaround strategies requires recognition of how linkages between historically specific discourses and policy-making enactments have determined the

range of solutions presently considered. Yet, this understanding of politics cannot be developed solely through an analysis of present conditions, as the enactment of politics is informed by historically specific discourses (Hajer, 1993). In this sense, the historical trajectory of education reform policy must be situated within the broader context of the federal government's diminished commitment to publically funded programs (education, welfare, etc.). Since the economic collapse of the 1970s and the subsequent rejection of Keynesian economic principles, the federal government has continuously scaled back its spending on public sector projects, deciding to develop policies based upon the assumptions of market-based liberalism in the hopes of remaining globally competitive in an international marketplace.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explain how the current school reform environment and the push to embrace turnaround strategies are informed by two historically related elements: (a) the continual threat of economic instability that began in the 1970s as the interconnectedness of global economics became apparent and (b) the subsequent institutionalization of economic policies intended to secure the health of the economy and establish the United States as a dominant force in the global capitalist marketplace. Specifically, it is important to understand how the ideas shaping international and domestic economic policies during the era of globalization provided the rhetorical and regulatory foundations for the Title I SIG program of 2009 and the school turnaround reform movement.

In order to provide this understanding, I have divided this chapter into three sections. The first section examines the liberal reconfiguration of economic policies

that began in the early 1980's. In this section I describe the key events and issues contributing to the global economic crisis. Additionally, I present a brief overview of the ideas presented in Milton Friedman's (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom*, one of the more influential texts offering credibility to story lines used to support the substantial reform of economic policy.

The second section describes the evolution of economic policy during the post-Cold War era (1989—2009). Within this section I highlight how the United States' efforts to maintain a position of dominance in the global marketplace further emboldened the liberalization of economic policies. Additionally, I provide a brief overview of how ideas presented in the *Washington Consensus* (G. H. W. Bush, or Bush I), the *Third Way* (Clinton), and the *Ownership Society* (G. W. Bush, or Bush II) offered credibility to story lines supporting a distinct range of economic policy solutions.

The third section of this chapter focuses on education reform within the post-Cold War era (1989—2009). In this section I draw linkages between the ideas and story lines used to support the reconfiguration of economic and education policies during this era. The review of ideas within this chapter provides a historical understanding of how the discourses and policy enactments of the last three decades of economic reform provide the rhetorical and regulatory foundations for the discourse of education globalization. This examination provides the contextual backdrop necessary for the final three chapters of this dissertation, which explore the

discourses and practices contributing to the development of the Title I SIG program of 2009.

Importantly, I do not attempt to address the entire political spectrum of economic and education politics in the years being examined. Rather, the first two sections of this chapter contemplate a selection of the key ideas, story lines and policy outcomes that eventually gave rise to the discourse of educational globalization. First, I examine the key ideas of essential texts that established the narrative foundations required to promote specific policy story lines. Next, I describe how policy story lines, as presented through the narratives of presidential administrations, helped solidify an exclusive policy reality and thus helped to establish coalitional support for a specific range of policy solutions. Afterward, I emphasize a select range of key policy outcomes, domestic and international, as they provide an example of how policy makers set dominant policy story lines into action. Together, the consideration of these elements reveals how the historical construction of *discourse coalitions*—the ensemble of story lines, actors promoting story lines, and resultant practices—were responsible for the reconfiguration of economic policy and thus have helped structure the modern era of education policy. Admittedly, historical analyses are never truly comprehensive. I certainly have not captured the entirety of texts and ideas informing the story lines under examination, covered the complete range of voices that promoted such story lines, or highlighted each and every policy outcome that was brought into existence due to the coalitional support of story lines. However, influenced by Hajer (2005), I believe this chapter is the contextual precursor

necessary for the final three chapters of qualitative analysis. To understand the modern regulation of the educational crisis, it is important to reflect on the historical regulation of the economic crisis induced by globalization. Furthermore, this chapter offers insight as to how a specific way of regulating economic and education policy is being forged, and how the forging of these regulatory ideals is a constantly evolving process that plays out through the narratives woven in speeches, books, policy documents, and other texts (Fairclough, 2000). In sum, the analysis put forward in this chapter is an initial attempt to make sense of the way in which something as devastating as the educational crisis is being managed through educational policymaking.⁶

Acknowledging Global Economic Interdependence

As the 1970s arrived, Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter faced the unhappy truth that the extraordinary economic growth enjoyed by the United States in the Post–World War II era was coming to an abrupt halt. Due to a decade of stagflation characterized by a steep decline in economic growth, high rates of unemployment, and the extreme escalation of inflation, the once prosperous economies of industrial nations faltered (Gilpin, 2000). Additionally, the global dominance of the U.S. economy diminished considerably when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised oil prices by 70% in 1973. The confluence of stagflation and increases in the price of crude oil concerned U.S. investors. Thus, by the end of 1974 President Ford witnessed the Dow Jones

⁶ This particular sense-making thought is a direct tribute to Maarten Hajer (2005).

Industrial Average drop 40% from those levels established in 1972 (Quinlan, 2011). Thus, although Ford was not directly connected to Watergate, the scandalous departure of his predecessor and the nation's growing concern about the faltering condition of the economy allowed Jimmy Carter, relative outsider and governor of Georgia, to defeat Ford in the 1976 election (Zelizer, 2010).

Yet, much like Ford, Carter would also fall prey to the political backlash of a nation concerned with an unstable economy. Confronted by a second oil crisis and record high numbers in the U.S. misery index,⁷ Carter would also be defeated by a former governor. Unable to counter Ronald Reagan's redemptive narrative promoting economic salvation and the strengthening of individual and economic liberties made possible through the fundamental restructuring of federal government, Carter would be soundly defeated in the 1980 election. Drawn from the conservative discourses of neoliberal ideology (J. Dean, 2009), President Reagan's (1981) narrative claimed the "big government" policies of previous administrations should no longer be viewed as viable solutions for the economic instabilities facing the country.

Establishing a story line: Militant Government or Citizens' Marketplace.

Milton Friedman's (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom* outlined the economic philosophy of the "free private enterprise exchange economy" (p. 13), or competitive capitalism. From its very first pages, *Capitalism* issued an assault on the economic policies of big government by calling attention to the monstrous effects of governmental intervention. Offering a critique of President Kennedy's claim that

⁷ The index is the sum of the unemployment rate and the inflation rate over the preceding 12 months (Norris, 2008).

citizens should ask how they might serve the country, Friedman argued that the “free man” should instead ask, “How we can keep the government we create from becoming a Frankenstein that will destroy the very freedom we establish it to protect” (p. 2)? As a response to this rhetorical question, Friedman outlined two broad principles constituting the “rightful” role of government: (a) Government must be limited, as its major function is to protect individuals from enemies and fellow citizens, and (b) the power of government must be dispersed, as the enactment of government is best realized at the local level.

The summative purpose of *Capitalism* was to draw out an oppositional binary in what Friedman (1962) argued were the only two options for the coordination of economics. The first option was that of the Militant Government, which regulates economics through “coercion—the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state” (Friedman, 1962, p. 13). Friedman framed the second option as that of the Citizens’ Marketplace government, which regulates economics through the “voluntary co-operation of individuals—the technique of the market place” (p. 13). The anti-big-government ideas presented in Friedman’s *Capitalism* were further reinforced during the 1970s, as the significant weakening of the world economy disrupted consensual acceptance of Keynesian economic policies promoting the government as the regulatory protector of the capitalist marketplace (J. Dean, 2009).

The narratives of the Reagan Administration. President Reagan first introduced his own Friedman-inspired story line to a national audience in a 1964 speech supporting Republican presidential nominee Barry Goldwater. A former

Democrat, Reagan used this speech to further reinforce Friedman's warning of the Militant Government:

A government can't control the economy without *controlling the people*. And they [Founding Fathers] knew when a government sets out to do that, it must *use force and coercion* to achieve its purpose. They also knew, those Founding Fathers, that outside of its legitimate functions, government does nothing as well or as economically as the private sector of the economy. (Reagan, 1964, p. 194, emphasis added)

Fifteen years later, during a speech announcing his presidential candidacy, Reagan once again used Friedman's Militant Government story line to begin laying the necessary foundation for his dramatic reform of economic policy:

No problem that we face today can compare with the need to restore the health of the American economy and the strength of the American dollar. Double-digit inflation has *robbed* you and your family of the ability to plan. It has *destroyed* the confidence to buy and it *threatens* the very structure of family life itself as more and more wives are *forced* to work in order to help meet the ever-increasing cost of living. At the same time, the lack of year growth in the economy has introduced the justifiable *fear* in the minds of working men and women who are already over extended that soon there will be fewer jobs and no money to pay for even the necessities of life. And tragically as the cost of living keeps going up, the standard of living which has been our great pride keeps going down (Reagan, 1979, p. 11, emphasis added).

For over a decade, Reagan crafted a powerful narrative framing the Democrats' structuring of government as controlling, coercive, and threatening. Subsequently, after defeating President Carter in a landslide election, Reagan believed the citizens of the United States had embraced his story lines, thus giving him a clear mandate to enact his economic agenda based upon the principles of Friedman's Citizens' Marketplace.

Domestic policy implications. Domestically, the economic policies introduced during the Reagan era sought to reduce government spending, decrease income and

business taxes, deregulate governance, and halt inflation rates (Ackerman, 1982). During his 8 years in office, President Reagan passed nine separate tax acts, such as the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. Additionally, the “Friedman Doctrine,” a term often attributed to the economic policies of the Reagan administration, discouraged corporations from investing in workplace issues of social responsibility, such as pensions, profit sharing and other worker benefits. The economic policies of this era created the regulatory structures necessary for corporate global expansion, as millions of government jobs were cut and the trade value of the dollar was increased to counter the currencies of competing countries (Choate, 2008). The domestic policies initiated during Reagan’s administration were promoted as the common sense solutions for the global economic crisis and received credibility from Reagan’s continual reinforcement of the Citizens’ Marketplace story line. Based upon the assumption that markets, not bureaucracy, were the ideal allocation of societal resources, the economic policies of this era directly countered the Keynesian belief that governments could adequately manage their own economies (Greenspan, 2007).

International policy implications. In the realm of international affairs, the Reagan Administration began placing significant pressure on Europe and other trade partners to remove protectionist trade laws. Consequently, during the eighth round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, also referred to as the Uruguay Round, the United States convinced European trade partners to liberalize their stance on economic policy by deregulating trade restrictions (Gilpin, 2000). Using political force to redefine the rules of international trade, the United States gained the upper hand in

the global marketplace, as agreements reached during the Uruguay Round strengthened the global economic positioning of the United States by reducing tariffs on manufactured goods and reducing or eliminating a variety of import quotas and subsidies (Gilpin, 2000).

The liberalization of economic policies during the Reagan Administration reinforced the deregulatory principles of Friedman's Citizens' Marketplace by encouraging businesses to take advantage of the loosely structured manufacturing laws in developing countries. Consequently, many U.S. corporations enjoyed substantial increases in profit due to the outsourcing of jobs and the reduction of costs associated with labor. However, not all companies prospered under the expansionist rules of global competition, as those unable or unwilling to adapt soon faltered and became targets for corporate acquisition (Choate, 2008).

The Post–Cold War Expansion of Global Economic Policies

The international rejection of policies founded upon the Militant Government story line set the stage for the global economic events of the 1980s. As Alan Greenspan (2008) noted in his memoirs, this rejection was symbolized in the 1989 destruction of the Berlin Wall, considered to be a watershed moment in the history of global economics:

The defining moment for the world's economies was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, revealing a state of economic ruin behind the iron curtain far beyond the expectations of the most knowledgeable Western economists. *Central planning was exposed as an unredeemable failure*, coupled with and supported by the *growing disillusionment over the interventionist policies* of the Western democracies, market capitalism began to quietly displace those policies in much of the world. (p. 12, emphasis added)

Over the span of just 10 years, major shifts in global economic politics provided the necessary conditions for the financial prosperity experienced by the United States during the 1990s and fashioned how the United States would respond to future economic crises. As Quinlan (2011) suggested, the industrial powers of the world came to a consensual agreement that growth and prosperity could be achieved if economic policy were reshaped to reflect the central tenets of free market capitalism. Thus, Friedman's story line of the Citizens' Marketplace emerged as a dominant force in global politics, further solidifying the status of the United States as an economic superpower.

Establishing a story line: Retreat in the face of crisis or push forward through the Washington Consensus? John Williamson (1990) coined the term *Washington Consensus* as a way to identify 10 policy instruments he believed actors in "Washington"⁸ should collectively endorse as an economic agenda that would address the debt crisis in Latin America and contribute to the overall health of the global marketplace. The 10 policy instruments that constituted Williamson's (1990, 2008) original list were the following:

- *fiscal policy discipline*, balancing expenditures with income;
- *reordering public expenditure priorities*, reducing nonmerit subsidies to basic health care, education, and infrastructure;

⁸ Members of Congress, senior members of the presidential administration, international financial institutions, economic agencies of the U.S. government, Federal Reserve Board, and the think tanks (Williamson, 1990)

- *tax reform*, establishing a broad tax base and emphasizing marginal tax rates;
- *liberalizing interest rates*, allowing the market to determine positive interest rates;
- *a competitive exchange* promoting an export growth;
- *trade liberalization*, competitively pricing imports while protecting domestic interests;
- *liberalization of inward foreign investment*, encouraging direct investment from foreign markets;
- *privatization* promoting the private replacement of state-operated enterprises;
- *deregulation*, ending policy regulations that restricted economic growth; and
- *property rights*, allowing private interests to purchase property at competitive rates.

Each of the 10 policy instruments listed in the Washington Consensus was motivated by Williamson's (2008) belief that, beyond privatization, the economic policies of Reagan and Thatcher had been "discarded as impractical or undesirable fads" (p. 16). Thus, while the Washington Consensus addressed certain elements of Friedman's Citizens' Marketplace story line (expansionist goals, endorsement of the free-market), it also established an alternative story line promoting a more active role for the government (state-sponsored privatization and liberalization of economic

policy). Consequently, unlike the Friedman-inspired promotion of laissez-faire economic policies and the radical decentralization of governance, the ideals of the Washington Consensus honored governmental deregulation but envisioned a more active role when seeking to expand the marketplace through the reform of economic policy.

The narratives of the Bush I (G. H. W.) Administration. The economic story line promoted by George H. W. Bush during his 1988 candidacy was hybrid in construction, drawn from the promises of the Citizens' Marketplace story line and from the promises of privatization and liberalization as presented in the Washington Consensus. Vice-President Bush, in his acceptance speech for the presidential nomination, sought to capitalize on the positive economic growth initially realized during the Reagan era by reinforcing both the Citizens' Marketplace and Militant Government story lines:

I know the liberal democrats are worried about the economy. They're worried it's going to remain strong. And they're right, it is. With the right leadership.

But let's be frank. Things aren't perfect in this country. There are people who haven't tasted the *fruits of the expansion*. I've talked to farmers about the bills they can't pay. I've been to the factories that feel the strain of change. I've seen the urban children who play amidst the shattered glass and shattered lives. And there are the homeless. And you know, it doesn't do any good to debate endlessly which *policy mistake of the '70s is responsible*. They're there. We have to help them. But what we must remember if we are to be responsible—and compassionate—is that *economic growth is the key to our endeavors*. (G. H. W. Bush, 1988, para. 35-36, emphasis added)

Bush I placed specific emphasis on the promises of free-market expansion and reinforced Reagan's narrative of the Militant Government by reminding citizens of the potential consequences of policies that would threaten the rights of free citizens

by operating upon the assumption that governmental regulation and oversight were necessary for the greater society.

However, upon election, Bush I began revising his narrative, as he needed to address the rapidly increasing deficit attributed to the laissez-faire economic policies of the Reagan Administration. Consequently, Bush I began endorsing a Washington Consensus story line supportive of a more active government, laying the groundwork for an economic agenda that would reduce the national deficit through policies that would capitalize on the promises of economic expansion in the global marketplace. In his 1990 State of the Union address, Bush I offered the following:

In the tough competitive markets around the world, America faces the great challenges and great opportunities. And we know that we can succeed in the global economic arena of the nineties, but to meet that challenge, we must make some fundamental changes—some crucial investment in ourselves. Yes, we are going to invest in America. This administration is determined to encourage the creation of capital, capital of all kinds: physical capital—everything from our farms and factories to our workshops and production lines, all that is needed to produce and deliver quality goods and quality services; intellectual capital—the source of ideas that spark tomorrow's products; and of course our human capital—the talented work force that we'll need to compete in the global market. (G. H. W. Bush, 1990, para. 15, emphasis added)

Bush's speech wove together the story lines of the Washington Consensus and the Citizens' Marketplace. While countering concerns over the growing deficit with the promises of an active government and global economic expansion, Bush's repetition of *market* and *capital* served as a dog whistle for those who had profited from the economic policies of the Reagan era. Unlike Reagan, who effectively used the financial crisis of the 1970s to promote the binary choice of story lines, Citizens' Marketplace (good) versus Militant Government (bad), Bush I had no solidified evil

to confront. Subsequently, Bush I was given the difficult task of developing a story line that could address both the failures and perceived successes of Reagan's economic agenda. Medhurst (2006) claimed Bush's inability to build consensus around such a story line is what eventually brought an end to his presidency. Perhaps Bush I was a victim of circumstance, or perhaps of his own failure to recreate the oratorical success of Reagan; regardless, his inability to build coalitional support behind his policy narratives substantially weakened his political capital.

Domestic policy implications. During the 4 years he served as president, Bush I was presented with a number of challenges undermining the stability of the economy. Increasing trade deficits, the collapse of the savings and loan industry, and swollen rates of inflation caused many to question the story lines of the Citizens' Marketplace economy, as Americans attributed their own struggles during the early 1990s to the policies of the federal government (Hall, 2002). Although Bush's campaign message initially appealed to those in support of Reagan's economic agenda and the expansionist optimism of the Washington Consensus, Bush's policy responses to the economic realities facing the United States were characterized as fiscally austere and monetarily stringent (Canova & Turgeon, 2004). Additionally, Bush I angered many within his own party as he distanced himself from certain aspects of the Citizens' Marketplace storyline, revoking his campaign promise of "no new taxes" through the passage of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

Thus, on the domestic front Bush's economic narrative seemed clouded, as he had failed to develop consensus around a dominant economic policy story line.

Langford (2006), addressing Bush's rhetorical failures, offered the following:

“Because Bush had trouble developing a master narrative, he ended up talking about a wide variety of ‘visions,’ which resulted in his ‘vision’ seeming to be convoluted and continually changing” (p. 22). Ultimately, Bush's inability to build coalitional support around a domestic policy agenda helped sealed his defeat to Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. Despite the inability of Bush I to establish consensus around his domestic economic policies, he made significant headway in international policy affairs.

International policy implications. Just a year into his presidency, President Bush I began exploring opportunities to capitalize on Reagan's deregulation of international economic and trade policies. In June 1990, Mexico's president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, traveled to Washington, DC, to visit President Bush. Salinas arrived in the hopes of launching the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA; Gilpin, 2000). Crafted as an economic policy among the United States, Mexico, and Canada, NAFTA sought to present transnational corporations with new opportunities, as they would be allowed to take advantage of Mexico's low-wage labor policies. Additionally, NAFTA established agreement around the story lines of liberalization and privatization presented in the Washington Consensus. Endorsing the liberalization of trade policy, NAFTA created safeguards for foreign investors and protected the profit margins of private interests in the United States by allowing them to reap the rewards of deregulated import requirements (Choate, 2008).

While on the political front, U.S. leaders hoped NAFTA would reduce the flow of illegal Mexican immigrants, the primary purposes of NAFTA were to

liberalize trade policies and encourage private investment. The initial NAFTA agreement established a 10-year phase-out plan that would eliminate many of the trade barriers on industrial goods (Gilpin, 2000). Thus, the final crafting of NAFTA opened the once-protectionist Mexican economy and strengthened the global economic positioning of the United States (Cohen, 2001). Bush I eventually passed NAFTA in August 1992, and although several of his Republican opponents and a majority of Americans were opposed to the law, his future opponent Bill Clinton offered his support (Choate, 2008). The appeal of the promises issued in the Washington Consensus story line helped Bush I build support behind his international policy agenda, which offered a particular range of policy solutions meant to secure the United States' role as a dominant force in the global marketplace.

Establishing a story line: Old Left or Old Right, or the Third Way In a 1995 meeting at Westminster, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair presented President Bill Clinton with a single-page note outlining three problems—definition, differentiation, and dissemination—that, if left unaddressed, would cause great damage to those political parties “left of centre” (Blumenthal, 2003, p. 306). Sidney Blumenthal, Clinton’s White House communication aide, captured Blair’s commentary on the three issues presented in his Westminster document. On definition, Blair stated,

The labels of the left of centre attached themselves...*big government, tax and spend, liberal or social issues, indifference to the family*—are *discredited*. ...The values are still relevant and popular. ...*We have to find radically different means* of meeting traditional ends. (as cited in Blumenthal, 2003, p. 305, emphasis added)

On differentiation, Blair stated, “The truth is the *era of grand ideologies is over*... We need to *colonise certain key issues* as ours... *The right* need to be seen as *sectarian, selfish* and, in a sense, *anti-patriotic, anti-one nation*” (as cited in Blumenthal, 2003, p. 305, emphasis added). On dissemination, Blair explained,

The left of centre suffers from a chronic lack of confidence. One part is seen as pragmatic, out to win but *unprincipled*; the other just *longs for the past to come back* again. There is a dire lack of academic and intellectual backbone to sustain the modern left-of-centre project. The commenters often don’t understand it. There is no sense of an intellectual movement for change. This feeds cynicism and disillusion that is wholly unjustified. (as cited in Blumenthal, 2003, p. 306, emphasis added)

The issues highlighted by Blair speak to the rhetorical war being waged in Great Britain between the Tories and what he considered to be the Old Labour movement. Feeling as if he understood what the people of Great Britain truly desired, Blair outlined a series of issues that, if responded to properly, would help him establish a new narrative placing the Tories on the defensive. Blair (1998) maintained addressing each of these issues was paramount to the formation of a “new politics” in Great Britain, which he labeled as the “Third Way” (p. 1). Commenting on the ideas supporting the Third Way story line, Blair offered the following:

It is a *third way* because it moves decisively beyond an Old Left preoccupied by state control, high taxation and producer interests; and a New Right treating public investment, and often the very notions of “society” and collective endeavor as evils to be undone. (p. 1)

As Driver and Martell (2002) discussed, the essential purpose of Blair’s Third Way story line was to weave together the appealing narratives of the left (a commitment to public investment) and right (neoliberal belief in the market) in order to establish a

more “pragmatic political project” that could circumvent partisanship and provide a “fertile landscape for public policy making” (p. 85).

The narratives of the Clinton Administration. Clinton believed the fusion of left and right ideals within the Third Way story line gave his administration the best opportunity to develop bipartisan consensus around policies that would effectively address the circumstances inherent to rapid economic globalization (Romano, 2006). The hybridity of Clinton’s Third Way story line was made apparent during a speech he gave to a joint session of Congress in 1993:

The [economic] plan I offer you has four fundamental components. First, it *shifts our emphasis in public and private spending from consumption to investment*, initially by jumpstarting the economy in the short term and *investing in our people*, their jobs, and their incomes over the long run. Second, it *changes the rhetoric of the past into the actions of the present by honoring work and families in every part of our public decision-making*. Third, it substantially reduces the Federal deficit honestly and credibly by using in the beginning the most conservative estimates of Government revenues, not, as the executive branch has done so often in the past, using the most optimistic ones. And finally, it seeks to earn the trust of the American people by paying for these plans first with *cuts in Government waste and efficiency*; second, with *cuts, not gimmicks, in Government spending*; and *by fairness, for a change, in the way additional burdens are borne*. (Clinton, 1993a, emphasis added)

The inclusion of phrases such as “consumption to investment,” “investing in our people,” “changes the rhetoric of the past,” and “government waste and efficiency” highlights the Third Way construction of Clinton’s economic agenda. Seeking to end partisan bickering, Clinton’s agenda attempted to instill hope that the economic dilemmas facing the United States could be successfully addressed through public investment (Left narratives) and the substantial reform of government policy (Right narratives).

Domestic policy implications. Upon entering office, Clinton was tasked with developing a domestic economic agenda that would address increasing tax rates, the drain on domestic resources via the global outsourcing of labor, a growing budget deficit, and the distrust of government solutions (Campbell & Rockman, 2000). Thus, a month into his presidency Clinton convened an economic conference in Little Rock. Hosting a wide diversity of policy experts, the intent of the Little Rock conference was to develop a “new policy for prosperity” that would provide bipartisan solutions for pressing issues such as the federal deficit, the new economy, globalization, and education (Blumenthal, 2003, p. 46).

A year later Clinton presented an economic package seeking to reduce the deficit by over \$500 billion. Shaped by the ideals promoted within the Third Way, Clinton’s economic package outlined a 5-year plan that would reduce over half of the deficit through spending cuts (Right narratives within the Third Way), with the remaining deficit being addressed through increases in the taxes of those citizens with the highest incomes (Left narratives within the Third Way; Quirk & Cunion, 2000).

Throughout his presidency Clinton relied on the tenuous coalitional support for a domestic economic agenda founded upon the story lines of the Third Way. Conservative interests often fought Clinton against efforts to act upon the Left narratives in the Third Way, as witnessed in the vitriolic debates surrounding Clinton’s proposal for a national system of health care. Additionally, persons within his own party balked at Clinton’s enactment of the Right narratives in the Third Way, as they were opposed to the atypically moderate posture Clinton assumed on social

policies. As an example, many Democrats were outraged with Clinton's passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1995 (Hacker, 2002), which, among a number of provisions, capped federal expenditures on welfare and limited the duration of federally funded welfare benefits for most recipients (Rodgers, 2006). Despite such pushback, Clinton was able to build support around the centrist policies promoted by the Third Way story line, as such policies became viewed as the commonsense solutions that would allow the United States to remain relevant in a rapidly shifting global economy.

International policy implications. Clinton faced challenges in building coalitional support for his international policy agenda. Although Clinton had previously backed the free trade aspects of President Bush's NAFTA, upon election, he faced an emergent anti-NAFTA coalition populated by persons from both sides of the political spectrum. However, despite significant protests Clinton believed the United States could ill afford to revert to the isolationist international economic policies of the past, as retreating to a protectionist stance could reduce the dominant role of the United States in the global marketplace by diminishing U.S. economic influence and slowing rates of U.S. economic productivity (Blumenthal, 2003).

Sensing the public's rejection of the global expansionist goals of NAFTA, Clinton launched an enormous campaign meant to mobilize the Third Way story lines supporting policies that would encourage growth in the global marketplace. Cohen (2001) described the full extent of Clinton's public and private efforts to secure coalitional support of NAFTA:

In the public arena, this [coalition building] included continuous speeches by the president, advertising campaigns by the corporate community, a press conference that brought all the living ex-presidents to the White House to endorse the agreement, and the famous Ross Perot-Al Gore debate on the Larry King Show. Behind the scenes, the Administration helped to organize a pro-NAFTA coalition of business groups, centrist environmental groups, and key elements in the foreign policy establishment to support the public relations and legislative efforts. (p. 104)

In the end, the NAFTA agreement of 1993 was passed in spite of protests by traditional Democratic constituencies (labor unions, environmental groups, and business manufactures). Surprisingly, Clinton's success was due, in large part, to the probusiness interests of both Democrat and Republican parties (Peterson, 2000). In the speech given during his signing of the NAFTA agreement, Clinton reinforced the public investment and free-market values of the Third Way story line:

I believe we have made a decision now that will permit us to *create an economic order* in the world that will *promote more growth, more equality*, better preservation of the environment, and a greater possibility of world peace. We are on the verge of a *global economic expansion* that is sparked by the fact that the *United States in this critical moment decided that we would compete, not retreat*. (Clinton, 1993b, para. 8, emphasis added)

Ultimately, the ability of Clinton to reinforce issues of “growth,” “equality,” and the need for the United States to “compete, not retreat” helped him actualize his international agenda and build momentum behind the “new politics” of the Third Way. Whether it was the controversial inclusion of China in the World Trade Organization, or the passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, Clinton was able to consistently build coalitional support around the Third Way story line and was thus able to avoid partisan paralysis in legislative politics and further solidify the United States role as a dominant force in the global marketplace.

Establishing a story line: Ownership society or return to big government?

The story lines giving shape to the economic policies of President George W. Bush were rooted in his concept of the Ownership Society. Barnes (2006) linked Bush's first documented use of the terms *ownership* and *society* to a CNN interview during his presidential campaign of 2000. Governor Bush began weaving a story line that would lend credibility to his plans for overhauling the Social Security system and eventually would shape the domestic and international policies of his administration. Bush's Ownership Society story line drew heavily from liberal economic theory brought to prominence in the Reagan era by the ideas of Milton Friedman, as the central principles of the Citizens' Marketplace were based upon the idea that governmental intervention in labor and market policies diminished the fundamental rights of free individuals (Nolan, 2008). Linking the promises of individual freedom to the construction of an Ownership Society was a central task for the Bush Administration. Whereas the term *ownership* historically has been associated with the liberal economic values of the conservative party, Bush II is ultimately credited with creating the Ownership Society as a story line to promote the political agenda of the conservative party (Brown, 2006).

The views on governance promoted within the Ownership Society story line resembled the laissez-faire and promarket ideals of Milton Friedman, but they also were drawn from the active role of governance previously established by the Washington Consensus. Bush's policies sought to simultaneously decrease and increase the role of government, depending on the issues being confronted. As an

example, while Bush II reduced the governmental oversight of payroll taxes and health care, he expanded the role of government by strengthening the regulation of federal subsidies provided to minorities and low-income homeowners (Barnes, 2006). After developing the Ownership Society story line for a number of years, Bush II used his second inaugural address to reinforce its promises and lay the foundation for the domestic and international policy agenda of his second term:

In a world moving toward liberty, we are determined to show the meaning and promise of liberty. In America's ideal of freedom, citizens find the dignity and security of economic independence instead of laboring on the edge of subsistence. This is the broader definition of liberty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act, and the GI Bill of Rights. And now we will extend this vision by reforming great institutions to serve the needs of our time. To give every American a stake in the promise and future of our country, we will bring the highest standards to our schools and build an ownership society. We will widen the ownership of homes and businesses, retirement savings, and health insurance, preparing our people for the challenges of life in a free society. By making every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny, we will give our fellow Americans greater freedom from want and fear and make our society more prosperous and just and equal. (G. W. Bush, 2005, para. 20, emphasis added)

Addressing the procurement of “liberty,” the benefits of finding the “dignity and security of economic independence,” and the need for “preparedness” to face the challenges of a “free society,” Bush II reminded persons about the positive aspects of living in an Ownership Society.

The economic successes enjoyed by the United States within the global marketplace were often attributed to the deregulation policies of prior administrations. The fiscal gains the nation was able to secure within a fragile global economy facilitated the emergence of a dominant conservative movement, allowing Bush II to solidify the coalitional support of his Ownership Society story line. However, and

most unfortunately, Bush II was forced to govern through the events of 9/11. On the policy front, Bush II viewed the events of 9/11 as a “moment of opportunity” in which the United States could extend the “moral” benefits of free market fundamentalism to the rest of the world (Nolan, 2008, p. 17). Thus, the momentum Bush II built around his domestic agenda and the events of 9/11 reinforced a set of policies that typified the emergence of a new conservatism, allowing Bush to pass a number of domestic and international policies informed by the promarket principles upon which Reagan operated and by the ideals of the Washington Consensus promoting a purposeful expansion of government.

Domestic policy implications. Whereas much attention is given to the international affairs of President Bush II, his 8 years in office were characterized by an ambitious domestic agenda that sought to address a range of issues, such as taxes, education, health care, energy, clean air, labor, regulatory reform, and financial sector relief (Graham, 2010). Upon election, President Bush’s agenda seemed difficult to realize, as he inherited a particularly challenging political environment shaped by the controversial election results of 2000. Having lost the popular vote, Bush II failed to garner the desired mandate needed to act upon his “compassionate conservative” agenda that promised to use the power of the government to address social issues such as education, while staying true to the Friedman-inspired policies of Reagan by slashing taxes, pushing for deregulatory policies, and reducing government spending (Zelizer, 2010).

Despite his failure to secure such a mandate, Bush enjoyed success with his domestic agenda during his first term, as he passed two of the largest tax cuts in American history, the most far-reaching education reform policy since 1965, and one of the more significant expansions of modern health care (Wroe & Herbert, 2009). Thus, although Bush II's second term was significantly tarnished by a number of financial crises and his failed attempts to reform both Social Security and immigration policies, his early ability to build coalitional support behind the Ownership Society story line led to one of the more substantial reconfigurations of federal governance in a generation (Wroe & Herbert, 2009). The new conservatism policies of President Bush II provided the regulatory structures necessary for expansion of the free market, while increasing the role of governance through the regulatory oversight of social policy.

International policy implications. Upon entering office, the Bush II Administration immediately sought to distance itself from the foreign policies of President Clinton. While Bush II continued Clinton's efforts building stronger trade relationships with Latin America and China, his administration shifted focus from the problems in Yugoslavia toward more traditional security concerns such as developments in Russia, China, and the Middle East (Naftali, 2010). Much of this shift can be traced to the influence of key advisors such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

During Bush II's initial year in office, Rumsfeld sought to influence the budget and Bush's international agenda by lobbying Secretary of Treasury Paul

O'Neill with a memo titled "Talking Points, FY01 and FY02-07 Budget Issues" (Suskind, 2004). Unlike usual commentaries on the state of the budget, Rumsfeld outlined five issues within the global landscape he believed were guiding foreign policy:

1. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent creation of hostile regional powers;
2. The liberalization of trade policy allowed resource poor nations to acquire destructive military technology;
3. The civil sector's creation of advanced military technologies spread globally, thus allowing for "asymmetric" responses to United States military efforts;
4. China, Russia, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and others are investing in new military technologies; and
5. New threats to United States security can emerge quickly without warning. (Suskind, 2004, pp. 76-78)

Thus, even before the events of 9/11, Bush II's international agenda focused heavily on defense specific issues within the Middle East and Asia. While the Bush II Administration addressed issues such as the global AIDS epidemic and civil unrest in Sudan, the Ownership Society story line of Bush's policy agenda was most pronounced in his "crusade" to develop policies, defense and economic, that would "shape the next stage of the world democratic movement" in places such as Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, China, all Islamic countries and Palestine (Barnes, 2006, p. 121). In the end, the ability of President Bush II to rally support behind his notion of the Ownership Society allowed his administration pass a number of key domestic and international policies. Yet, it was exactly this story line that Illinois Senator Barack

Obama consistently used as a foil in his successful run for president, calling out the social Darwinist roots of Bush's economic philosophy (Berry & Gottheimer, 2010).

The historically interrelated emergence of economic conditions, economic policy story lines, presidential narratives, and policy outcomes, as described in the previous sections, offers insight into how the continual presence of an economic crisis shaped the discourses and regulatory responses to economic and social issues facing the United States over the past 30 years. Developing an understanding of recent historical attempts to regulate what many considered an economic crisis provides insight into attempts to regulate the educational crisis, particularly how the institutionalization of certain economic policy responses might have influenced approaches to the regulation of low-performing schools.

The Post–Cold War Expansion of Federal Education Policies

Generally speaking, the federal role in education has continued to expand since the passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958. However, the decisions made during the Charlottesville Summit, President Bush I's convening of the nation's governors in 1989, launched a new era in the federal reformation of public schools. Thus, in order to make sense of the political environment in which the Title I SIG program of 2009 was created, it is important to examine the nuances of the federal government's role in education during the post–Cold War era. Therefore, this section describes the educational narratives of three presidential administrations, Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II, highlighting how the policy story lines of each administration influenced both the expansion and intent of the federal government's

role in education. This section concludes with an overview of how each administration called upon a unique story line to promote a specific range of education policy solutions.

Setting the stage for education reform in the post–Cold War era. The 1983 release of the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* forever changed the landscape of education politics. Although *A Nation at Risk* was written to alarm the American public about the decrepit conditions of public schools and the subsequent threats of global competition, it failed to support Reagan’s Citizens’ Marketplace story line promoting the deregulation of educational bureaucracy. Addressing Reagan’s disappointment with the findings of *A Nation at Risk*, Ravitch (2010a) offered the following, “It did not echo Reagan’s oft-expressed wish to abolish the U.S. Department of Education. It did not support or even discuss his other favorite education causes: vouchers and school prayer” (p. 25). However, *A Nation at Risk* launched what became known as the *excellence movement* in school reform, as states begin aggressively pursuing control of the education reform agenda (Wirt & Kirst, 2005).

While not explicitly labeled as a primary task of the *A Nation at Risk* report, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) dedicated an entire section defining what was meant by “excellence” in education. Specifically, the commission defined excellence at the levels of the individual learner, the school or

college, and the society. Addressing the expectation for excellence, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported,

Our goal must be to develop the talents of all to their fullest. Attaining that goal requires that we expect and assist all students to work to the limits of their capabilities. We should expect schools to have genuinely high standards rather than minimum ones, and parents to support and encourage their children to make the most of their talents and abilities.

Thus, excellence as a policy story line began to take shape around policies encouraging the creation of high standards. Two years before *A Nation at Risk* was released, this storyline had gained credibility through the efforts of a new interest group founded by Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch and called the Educational Excellence Network. Frustrated with the perceived ineffectiveness of school reform efforts, the original mission of the Educational Excellence Network was to “reinvent” K-12 education through the establishment of high standards, which the Educational Excellence Network (1996, para. 11) considered to be the “prerequisite” element necessary for schools to make a difference in a rapidly changing society. The combination of intense conservative criticisms, the public impact of the *A Nation at Risk* findings (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and the lobbying efforts of groups such as the Educational Excellence Network brought an end to the narrative of equity, which had been a central principle of education reform efforts since the passage of ESEA in 1965 (McGuinn, 2006). The narrative of equity would be replaced with the call for excellence, which wielded a great deal of influence in the politics of education reform for years to come.

The narratives of education reform during the Bush I Administration. As previously mentioned, although Bush I was able to capitalize on the conservative movement established by Reagan, he faced a number of economic challenges during his 4 years in office, which called into question the economic agenda of his predecessor. Having failed to develop a convincing narrative about the direction of economic policy, Bush I sought to establish himself as a key player in the politics of education reform during the 1970s (Manna, 2006; Vinovskis, 2008). The National Governors Association would become a major influence in President Bush I's efforts to develop the support needed for an education policy agenda that would push for the establishment of national standards (Vinovskis, 2009). Bush I, having promised during his campaign to meet with the National Governors Association, convened the Charlottesville Summit of governors in September 1989. As Vinovskis (2009) explained, the overriding purposes of the summit were to "reiterate the centrality of education for improving the nation's economic well being" and establish a new core of rigorous standards that would serve as performance goals for the nation's schools (p. 24). While many political battles took place during the crafting of these goals, President Bush I, who had promoted himself as the "education president," used his State of the Union address in 1990 to unveil the final formation of six formal goals that would guide his educational agenda. After listing each goal, President Bush I provided justification for his reform agenda, which ultimately shaped the "excellence movement" during his era:

Ambitious aims? Of course. Easy to do? Far from it. But the future's at stake. The nation will not accept anything less than *excellence* in education.

These *investments* will keep America *competitive*. And I know this about the American people: *We welcome competition*. We'll match our ingenuity, our energy, our experience and technology, our spirit and *enterprise* against anyone. *But let the competition be free, but let it also be fair*. America is ready (G. H. W. Bush, 1990, para. 29-30, emphasis added)

The purposeful crafting of this speech reinforced the hybrid purposes of the Washington Consensus story line, as it called for free-market expansion *and* the intervention of an active government. Although initially Bush I was able to build coalitional support around the idea that the United States must look to education policy to remain competitive in the global marketplace, he would have great difficulty enacting his educational agenda throughout the 4 years he served as president.

Bush I's first effort at educational reform, the Educational Excellence Act, sought to expand the role of federal education and solidify the status of the national education goals developed at the Charlottesville Summit. However, due to partisan bickering, Bush's efforts were thwarted, and thus the most substantial educational reform victory during his presidency was the partial passage of an education reform agenda titled America 2000. Although the Bush I Administration was unable to secure funding for most of the items listed within the America 2000 plan, funding was allotted for the nation's first set of national academic standards (Jennings, 2000). Jennings (1998) cited this as a defining moment in the "excellence movement," as the standards reform efforts launched during Bush's administration successfully rearranged the values of educational reform from "providing 'inputs,' such as higher teacher salaries, to producing 'outputs,' particularly higher test scores for children" (p. 17). This shift in values was given additional credibility by Bush I's Washington

Consensus story line, which called for a more active government in the monitoring of federal expenditures.

The narratives of education reform during the Clinton Administration. A major theme of Governor Clinton's campaign was the failure of a Republican economy that was burdened by increased tax rates and a significant budget deficit (Campbell & Rockman, 2000). Claiming the Republican response to a declining economy was insufficient, the Clinton Administration reinforced the economic story line of the Third Way to establish an agenda on education reform. McGuinn (2006) offered insight as to Clinton's strategy: "The focus on schools enabled Clinton to call for federal leadership and spending in a policy area where it had broad public support and was unlikely to engender welfare type criticism" (p. 76). Clinton, seeking to capitalize on the "new politics" of the Third Way that Blair envisioned, developed an education agenda placing value on public investment while also providing greater access to free-market interests. A year into his presidency, Clinton began outlining his narrative for an education agenda during an address given to a joint session of Congress:

We have to ask more in our schools of our students, our teachers, our principals, our parents. Yes, *we must give them the resources* they need to meet high standards, *but we must also use the authority and the influence and the funding of the Education Department to promote strategies that really work* in learning. *Money alone is not enough.* We have to do what really works to increase learning in our schools. We have to recognize that all of our high school graduates need some *further education in order to be competitive in this global economy.* So we have to establish a *partnership between businesses and education and the Government* for apprenticeship programs in every State in this country to give our people the skills they need. (Clinton, 1993a, emphasis added)

Much like his predecessor, Clinton's inclusion of phrases such as "money alone is not enough," "competitive in this global economy," and "partnership between business and education" situated his education reform agenda as a necessary component of America's efforts to remain competitive in a troubled and increasingly global economy. Additionally, while Clinton's emphasis on public investment perhaps pushed against the policy preferences of President Bush I, in the end, his Third Way story line promoted policies that were similar to those privileged within the Washington Consensus.

As previously mentioned, Clinton inherited an educational environment where the values of equity had been replaced by the excellence movement, which was built upon the assumption that focusing on outputs and high standards would address the poor performance of schools and thus better prepare America's students for the rigors of a global marketplace. Although coloring his educational narrative with aspects of the Third Way story line, Clinton reinforced the principles of the excellence movement established during the Bush I presidency. In the first of three New Covenant speeches given during his presidential campaign, Clinton (2001) began outlining the values that would define his educational agenda:

This new covenant must also *make some challenges to the hardworking middle class*. Their challenge centers around work and education. I know Americans worry about the quality of education in this country and want the best for their children. Under my administration we'll *set high national standards* for what our children need to know based on the *international competition*. And we'll develop a *national examination system* to measure whether they are learning it or not. *It's not enough just to put money in schools*. We have to *challenge our schools to produce and insist on results*. (para. 60, emphasis added)

The inclusion of phrases such as “high national standards,” “measure,” and “produce and insist on results” further reinforced the Excellence story line, which placed a value on educational outcomes over inputs. By the time Clinton entered office, 42 states either had developed or were in the process of developing content standards, and 30 states had started to develop performance standards (Jennings, 1998).

The initial centerpiece of Clinton’s educational agenda was the Goals 2000 bill first introduced in 1993. Although the Goals 2000 bill further emphasized Bush I’s standards-based reform agenda, Clinton and Secretary of Education Riley placed primary importance on the shaping of this legislation as a “systematic reform” that would facilitate the alignment of content standards, curriculum, and student assessments at the state level (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 67). Thus, the 1994 passage of Clinton’s Goals 2000 signaled a significant change in education reform, as the federal government became much more involved in the oversight of state and local education. States were given the ability to develop their own standards but also were required to seek approval from the U.S. Department of Education before they could receive federal funds provided by the Goals 2000 legislation.

After the passage of Goals 2000, the Clinton Administration turned attention to the revision of the ESEA. At the center of Clinton’s efforts to overhaul ESEA was his desire to revise the Title I program. Believing federal programs had failed to keep pace with the movement to increase standards, Clinton suggested that academic expectations would also apply to all Title I schools. Additionally, Clinton maintained Title I should no longer be considered as a stand-alone program but should become a

program in which everyone in the school shared responsibility. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Title I program, the emphasis on the importance of inputs was replaced by a focus on holding Title I districts, schools, and populations accountable for outputs (DeBray, 2006).

Subsequently, Clinton's passage of the Improving America's School Act (previously ESEA) in 1994 signaled a significant increase in the federal oversight of education. The Improving America's School Act required states to develop school improvement plans, content standards, and assessments benchmarking AYP. Schools were also expected to begin publishing test results and would be held accountable if failing to meet state targets for 2 consecutive years. Additionally, the Improving America's School Act opened up provisions for choice, allotting a portion of federal funds for the establishment of charter schools and allowing districts to use Title I funds to help students transfer to successful public schools (McGuinn, 2006). Two years after the passage of the Improving America's School Act, Clinton (1996), in a speech given during his campaign for a second term, reinforced the story lines he used to endorse its provisions:

We must give parents, all parents, the *right to choose* which public school their children will attend *and to let teachers form new charter schools* with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job. We must keep our schools open late so that young people have someplace to go and something to say yes to and stay off the street. We must *require that our students pass tough tests* to keep moving up in school. A diploma has to mean something when they get out. (para. 35, emphasis added)

Two months later in a presidential debate with Senator Bob Dole, Clinton outlined the Third Way economic story line that provided credibility for his administration's proposals in education reform:

I believe that the purpose of politics is to *give people the tools to make the most of their own lives*, to reinforce the *values of opportunity and responsibility*, and to build a sense of community so we're all working together. I don't believe in discrimination. I believe you can *protect the environment and grow the economy*. I believe that *we have to do these things with a government that's smaller and less bureaucratic* but that we have to do them nonetheless. (Clinton, 1996b, emphasis added)

Phrases such as “values of opportunity and responsibility,” “protect the environment and grow the economy,” and “government that’s smaller and less bureaucratic” are drawn directly from the hybrid formation of the Third Way story line, as they simultaneously call for public investment, market solutions, and the deregulation of government. As a whole, the educational reforms passed during President Clinton’s 8 years in office upset many Republicans and Democrats, as conservatives questioned the federal increase in government oversight of education and liberals balked at Clinton’s decided shift away from educational inputs.

The narratives of education reform during the Bush (G. W.)

Administration. The 2000 election between Governor George W. Bush and Vice-President Al Gore was a unique moment in history, as it was largely defined by the debate over education (McGuinn, 2006). Bush II and Gore held distinctly dissimilar beliefs about the role federal government could and should play in the education of America’s children. Jeanne Allen (2001), Founder of the Center for Education Reform, attempted to summarize the differences between the education agendas of

Bush II and Gore during a debate between Bush's educational advisor Nina Rees and Gore's advisor Jonathan Schnur:

Vice President Gore believes that schools are failing because they don't have enough resources, whereas Governor Bush believes that schools are failing in spite of the resources. So the biggest contrast is Bush looks at this as a way for the President to provide rewards and incentives with the federal money for schools that are doing well, and to come down on schools that are failing, whereas Gore says, "you know what, they're failing because their buildings are falling apart, or their class sizes are too big, et cetera. (para. 9)

While overly simplistic, Allen's commentary provides an understanding of Bush II's belief in incentivizing success and punishing failure.

Whereas Gore's campaign enjoyed the political clout earned by serving as Vice-President during a particularly good economic era, Bush II's campaign had a decided advantage in the education debate. Running as the "education governor," Bush II often publicized the significant reform of education that took place during his tenure in Texas. In his memoirs, *Charge to Keep: My Journey to the White House*, G. W. Bush (1999) began outlining his Ownership Society story line supporting the policies within his education agenda. Central to this story line was Bush II's suggested reform for the Title I program. Bush II promised to provide parents with ownership over their child's education, offering those who had children attending "persistently failing" schools a \$1,500 grant that would allow them to choose additional tutoring services (later known as *supplemental educational services*) or to relocate their child to another public school, charter school, or private school. G. W. Bush (1999) claimed this particular revision would allow parents to "choose hope over failure," adding that he refused to "trap children in schools that do not teach and

will not change” (p. 234). Summarizing his goals for educational reform, G. W. Bush (1999) offered the following:

The goal is to *strengthen public schools by expecting performance*. The goal is also to make sure our *federal government no longer pays schools to cheat poor children*. *More competition and more choices for parents* and students will raise the bar for everyone. ... This is what I mean by “compassionate conservatism.” (p. 234)

Bush II’s emphasis on themes such as “strengthen public schools by expecting performance,” “no longer pays schools to cheat poor children,” and “more competition and choices for parents” were drawn directly from his economic Ownership agenda, which supported policies seeking to increase the role of government oversight, establish punitive measures for wasteful government programs and expand market competition through the mechanism of choice.

Although Bush II’s inheritance of the presidency was shrouded in controversy due the contestation over votes in Florida, the prioritization of education within his campaign agenda gave him the perceived authority to commence an ambitious restructuring of the federal government’s role in education (Vinovskis, 2009). Unlike previous presidents, Bush II entered office with his own highly defined plan for education reform. The “Texas plan,” built around standardized testing and accountability for performance, meshed well with Clinton’s Goals 2000 in that it allowed states to maintain control over their own standards, allowed states to develop their own tests, and continued Clinton’s efforts to hold Title I programs accountable for student performance (Ravitch, 2010).

By his 2nd day in office, Bush II had provided Congress with an initial outline for his NCLB agenda. Perhaps due to his slim margin of victory, Bush II, from his first days in office, made a concerted effort to shape NCLB in a bipartisan fashion. Bush II immediately garnered the support of many Democrats by ignoring Republican requests for vouchers and promising to not scale back the increased role of federal government established during the Clinton Administration (McGuinn, 2006). Thus, purposeful maneuvers to address the desires of both parties helped solidify coalitional support of NCLB and secured its legacy as one of the most significant bipartisan legislative efforts in modern political history.

NCLB (2002) was founded upon four pillars: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) more freedom for states and communities, (c) proven education methods, and (d) more choices for parents. The strategies listed within each of these four pillars structured a new framework for accountability. Secretary of Education Rod Paige described the intent and foundation of this framework in a Senate subcommittee meeting:

No Child Left Behind provides a new framework of accountability for ensuring that the Federal *investment in Title I is well-spent and delivers the results* intended when it was first authorized 36 years ago: closing the achievement gap between poor children and their more advantaged peers. (*Fiscal Year 2002 Request*, 2001, para. 8, emphasis added)

The accountability framework and the four pillars upon which it was founded were drawn directly from Bush II's desire for the United States to realize its status as an Ownership Society. The duality of Bush II's economic Ownership Society story line is apparent within NCLB, as measures such as school choice and vouchers for

supplemental educational services are informed by the Friedman ideals of the Ownership narrative, while increased federal oversight of accountability are based upon the active governance ideals promoted within the Washington Consensus. In the end, Bush II's ability to develop coalitional support behind NCLB redefined the meaning of school improvement, as the next decade of reform efforts would be characterized by accountability, high-stakes testing, data-driven decision making, choice, charter schools, privatization, deregulation, merit pay, and competition (Ravitch, 2010).

Conclusion

The examination of presidential narratives and policy outcomes in this chapter illustrates how both Democrats and Republicans alike were forced to respond to the establishment and continued evolution of a globally interdependent economy. The repercussions of the global economic collapse during the 1970s realigned how presidential administrations would prioritize the values guiding both domestic and international policies. With the exception of a slight peak after Reagan's election and another short boon during the Clinton years, each president during the last four decades would face the threat of economic instability. Consequently, as the domestic and global economy continued to evolve, each administration—Reagan, Bush I, Clinton, Bush II—would craft a narrative that, while dissimilar to their predecessor, could still build the coalitional support necessary for a domestic and international policy agenda focused on securing the nation's position of dominance in the global economic competition. Therefore, over the course of the past several decades the

education reform agenda would increasingly resemble the nation's institutionalized regulatory responses to the global economic crisis. Although the values of democracy and equity that founded the passage of ESEA and Title I have not completely disappeared, they have been largely overshadowed by the discourses of efficiency, accountability, and economic survival.

With the historical background provided in this chapter serving as a historical-contextual touchstone, in Chapter 5 I examine how dominant discourses shaped the ways in which the federal government, states, and local school districts were able to consider the turnaround of low-performing schools. Specifically, I describe how the career of turnaround language, through story lines and policy vocabularies, determined the politics of education reform and the final crafting of the Title I SIG program of 2009. Subsequently, in Chapter 6 I examine how certain political performances (i.e., a sequence of staged events), determined the rules of the deliberative politics involved with the revision of the Title I SIG program. I conclude this dissertation in Chapter 7, in which I provide policy scholars with a critical interpretive understanding of the coconstruction of current education policy solutions and then describe how the recognition of deliberative politics may offer radical democratic possibilities for public policy making, thus transforming the citizenry's potential to (re)imagine the democratic dimensions of deliberative politics.

Chapter 5: The Discursive Construction of the Title I SIG Program of 2009

Over the course of the past several years there has been a noticeable crescendo in the politics of education (Cooper, Cibulka, & Fusarelli, 2008; Glass, 2008), as increasing interests have focused their political energies toward influencing the debates surrounding school improvement (Kaestle & Lodewick, 2007) and school-turnaround reform efforts (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Debray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) offered their insights on the current education reform environment and what they consider to be the establishment of a “new politics”:

New policy has created a new politics of education, in the sense that the law [NCLB] has spurred the mobilization of established interest groups, induced the creation of new entrants, and pushed these groups into new and often cross cutting coalitions. (p. 25)

The influx of new entrants and the cross-pollination of interests in the school improvement debate contribute to what Hajer (2006b) described as the policy-making phenomenon of multisignification. Hajer (2006b) defined multisignification as a situation in which actors conceive of policy issues in different terms, and thus the very meanings at stake are often unclear. This concept is helpful when considering a new era of education politics inhabited by a wide array of interests each attempting to make sense of the significance of low-performing public schools, and each entering the school improvement debate operating from a unique system of signification. Thus, policy-making authorities in this political environment must establish a consensual understanding of relevant signifiers as they attempt to solidify the coalitional support necessary to authorize a particular agenda for school turnaround reforms.

Situated within this context is the Title I SIG program under section 1003(g) of the ESEA. Issued as a competitive monetary grant, the Title I SIG program is a federal framework for school turnaround reform that specifically targets “persistently low-performing” public schools. States and local school districts receiving Title I SIG monies must implement one of the four reform strategies sanctioned by this framework within those schools identified to participate.

Seeking to promote “significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional program of a school” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 12), the Title I SIG program of 2009 has been a major issue in the school improvement debate. Having endured significant criticism for the lack of empirical research supporting each of its four turnaround strategies (Ravitch & Mathis, 2010), the Title I SIG program has also been an issue of concern for Democrats and Republicans alike, who have questioned how turnaround strategies, once enacted, will affect the students, teachers, leaders, and communities of participating schools. Consequently, the Obama administration’s release of the Title I SIG program has contributed significantly to the “mobilization” of bipartisan interests and development of “cross cutting” coalitions to which Debray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009, p. 25) referred.

Hess (2008) suggested the interests involved in the school improvement debate can be categorized into two specific “camps” (p. 3). The *capacity builders* are those who either seek school improvement through tools such as professional development, mentoring, rigorous curricula, and formative assessment or emphasize formal accountability systems, standards, and incentives in driving systemic change

and the adoption of best practices. The *choice-based reformers* are those promoting charter schooling and school vouchers as the means necessary to bypass dysfunctional education systems or as the means to place pressure to force significant reform on existing districts (Hess, 2008). Undoubtedly, as noted in Chapter 1, a number of prominent personalities in today's school improvement debate appear to fit within Hess's interest-group classifications. Yet, as DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) suggested, recognition of the intermixing of coalitional interests in the new politics of education makes it inappropriate to view the politics of school reform through partisan, ideological, or group prisms. Thus, while the discourses of *capacity* and *choice* have undoubtedly been present in the school improvement debate, this type of binary ordering assumes the rules structuring the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG program were based upon the predetermined arguments of capacity building and choice-based interests, which discounts the real-time negotiation of rules that takes place during the act of deliberative policy making.

This chapter is based upon the argument that in order to gain credibility the storylines of all interests had to resonate within the broader discourse of educational globalization. In this sense, while interests in the school improvement debate were free to contest specific aspects of the Title I SIG program proposed by the Obama/Duncan Administration, their arguments had to align with a particular range of policy solutions deemed as credible solutions for the education and economic crisis as presented in 2009.

Purpose of the Chapter

The primary objective of this study was to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG program of 2009 became the chosen solution for chronically low-performing schools. To address this objective the following two chapters offer an explanation of how discourses, policy vocabularies, story lines, and the performative aspects of policymaking co-constructed the range of policy solutions made available to those participating in the deliberative construction of the Title I SIG program.

This investigation is based upon the critical interpretive assumption that the analysis of policy must extend beyond a reading of political language to examine the socially constructed politics of policy making. Thus, this study operates on the assumption that policies are developed in coordination with dominant discourses *and* the deliberative performance of politics (Fischer & Forester, 1993).

The purposes of Chapter 5 were to examine the discourses, policy vocabularies, and story lines structuring the Title I SIG program as a way to provide insight as to the discursive meanings of *turnaround* found within the policy discourses of actors at the federal level and to offer an understanding of why discourse coalitions formed in support of the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda. To address the purposes of this chapter, I conducted a constant comparative search for *turnaround* meanings, coding and recoding both primary and secondary texts and interview data to uncover the story lines associated with the turnaround reform movement from the Clinton/Riley era to the commencement of the

Obama/Duncan era. I also investigated the inscription of policy vocabularies as embedded within the Title I SIG program of 2009 and described how the convergence of discourse coalitions provided the initial support needed for the Obama/Duncan Administration to enact their turnaround reform agenda. During this phase of analysis, I examined a number of Title I SIG program documents (past and present), the scholarly and technical reports used to support the current iteration of the Title I SIG program; the works of advocacy organizations involved in the debate on turnaround reforms; and data collected from the 26 interviews I secured with government, special-interest or advocacy, and university actors. This examination was guided by an understanding of discourse as that which regulates how actors are able to discuss and rationalize issues during deliberative policy making (Fairclough, 2000; Hajer, 1995; Jensen & Walker, 2008).

I begin this chapter by presenting the discourse of educational globalization as the dominant narrative structuring the debate as to what should be done, by whom, and under what circumstances when confronting the persistence of chronically low-performing public schools. Next, I outline the emergence of story lines initiated during the Bush/Paige/Spellings and Clinton/Riley administrations that launched the early use of turnaround as a construct in the school improvement debate. Due to issues discussed in this chapter, I then interrupt the analysis of story lines to examine how the Title I SIG program and its components as listed in the *Blueprint for Education Reform* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) and the Title I SIG guidance document (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b) operationalize the

discourse of educational globalization through the enactment of specific policy vocabularies. I conclude this chapter by describing how the further development of story lines during and after the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG program of 2009 established a discursive unity. I explain how this contributed to the development of discourse coalitions in support of the policy vocabularies embedded within the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda.

Educational Globalization: Providing Discursive Structure in an Era Defined by Institutional Ambiguity and Multisignification

The growing interconnectedness of global economies and the perpetual threat of economic instability have shaped public policy debates in the United States since the economic crises in the late 1970s. As discussed in Chapter 4, international events such as OPEC's dramatic increase in the price of crude oil during the Carter presidency undermined the authority of once sovereign polities by destabilizing domestic economies and facilitating the rearrangement of institutional politics. Hajer (2006b) described this political reorganization as "institutional ambiguity" (p. 43). Offering further explanation, Hajer (2006b) asserted,

Established institutions often lack the powers to deliver the required or requested policy results on their own. They therefore have to interact in (1) multi-party, (2) polycentric (and often trans-national) and, almost by necessity, (3) inter-cultural networks of governance. (p. 43)

Although Hajer's insights speak to the rearrangement of European politics, the concept of institutional ambiguity captures how the threat of economic crisis and a globally connected marketplace dislocated the traditional rules guiding domestic and international policy making in the United States. Due to an interdependent and

rapidly evolving global economy, legitimate decision making in the United States could no longer reside under the constitutional authority of the states or federal government. Consequently, during an era where the regulatory boundaries for a global marketplace were first being developed, rules for federal decision making could not be made in advance and were thus continually reinterpreted and renegotiated in the deliberative enactment of politics.

Hence, due to the emergence of a globally interdependent economy, issues such as trade, energy, environment, labor, health care, welfare, taxation, and education had to appear as credible responses to the procurement of economic growth and stability in order to secure top billing on the political agendas of federal policy makers. Although each of these issues has received recognition at different points in U.S. history, education, specifically the “chronic failure” of public schools, has emerged as an emblematic issue, one that serves as an effective metaphor for the nation’s economic crisis. Therefore, the politics of education in this moment appear to operate upon a discursive chain of reasoning that suggests the following: If educators have the courage to make difficult decisions and do what is morally necessary and turn around the lowest performing schools, then the United States can provide the educational opportunities necessary to secure its dominant position in the global economy.

Newly appointed Secretary of Education Arne Duncan offered a preview of this reasoning during his Senate confirmation hearing: “The President-elect views education as both a *moral obligation and an economic imperative*. In the face of

rising *global competition*, we know that education is the *critical*, some would say the only, road to *economic security*” (*Confirmation of Arne Duncan*, 2009a, para. 9), emphasis added). Though Duncan’s testimony also cited issues of social justice as the moral justification for education reform, the global reconfiguration of educational purposes begin to emerge through Duncan’s rhetorical linking of urgency (“imperative,” “critical”), global competition, education reform, and economic security. Thus, Secretary Duncan’s Senate confirmation testimony served as an effective introduction for the discourse of educational globalization, which has functioned as the dominant discourse in the Obama/Duncan school reform agenda.

Many scholars have called attention to the global reconfiguration of educational purposes (e.g., Ball, 2008; Blackmore, 2007; Lingard, 2009; Torres, 2009). Drawing from the works of Ball (2008), Jensen and Walker (2008), and Levin (1997), I developed a framework for the three primary narratives constructing the discourse of educational globalization: (a) *market/choice*, which promotes parents as savvy consumers able to choose the appropriate provider for their children’s education and thus, through the principles of competition, facilitate the dramatic improvement of school outcomes; (b) *management/surveillance*, which promotes local school authorities and parents as self-governing entities who, through state and federal monitoring, can better achieve the centralized objectives of increased standards; and (c) *performativity/accountability*, which promotes the reconfiguration of local school governance, the narrowing of pedagogical offerings in response to standardized testing, and the performance-driven regulation of students, teachers, and

local administrators. Subsequently, for the purposes of this study it is important to consider how the policy vocabularies structuring the Title I SIG program resemble aspects within each of the three educational globalization narratives and to examine how the purposeful promotion of specific story lines afforded the coalitional support necessary to sanction the turnaround agenda of the Obama/Duncan Administration.

Working from the definition of discourse as provided by Hajer (1995), through these three narratives the discourse of educational globalization has reconfigured the purposes of education by operationalizing a specific ensemble of discursive ideas that have produced, reproduced, and transformed through performative politics and thus have provided a particular meaning to those issues that define the school improvement/turnaround debate. Therefore, in an era where the decision-making authority of federal governments has been diminished and a plethora of new interests are seeking to define the significance of social issues, the purposeful structuring of meaning making around a specific ensemble of discursive ideas allows governments to work with and through differences to build coalitional support behind a specific policy agenda. It is with this political dynamic in mind that the chronic failure of public schools as an emblematic issue must be considered.

The Story Lines of the Title I SIG

Hajer (1995) considered story lines as the short narratives actors both promote and cling to when determining how their knowledge, experience, and areas of expertise may contribute to a specific policy debate. Story lines may include a number of discursive elements such as “metaphors; analogies; historical references;

clichés; appeals to collective fears or senses of guilt” (Hajer, 1995, p. 63). Once a story line receives credibility a discursive unity is established in the midst of competing interests, thus contributing to the development of discourse coalitions.

As an example, the story line promoting the enactment of the Title I SIG program as the best way to turn around persistently low-performing schools insinuates the existence of a shared understanding as to the future of school improvement reform. Yet, as has been detailed previously, the debate surrounding school improvement and turnaround reform strategies is complex and informed by a wide range of competing interests. However, once a story line gains credibility and is enacted in the policy vocabularies of guiding documents, these differences are masked. Consequently, the complexity of what it truly takes to turn around low-performing public schools is reduced, as policy actors form discourse coalitions around a specific range of policy solutions such as those found within the Title I SIG program.

Before discussing the discursive development of the use of *turnaround* as a construct in the Title I SIG program of 2009, it is important to review the context in which the term first appeared. Therefore, the following two sections provide a brief appraisal of the two most prominent turnaround story lines established during the Clinton/Riley and the Bush/Paige/Spellings administrations: Complacency and Global Competitiveness. Qualitative data are introduced during the examination of story lines that either emerged or were uniquely embellished during the

Obama/Duncan Administration. These data came from interviews and discourse analysis of speeches and other policy texts.

The Early Use of Turnaround as a Construct

Clinton/Riley and the Complacency story line. As noted in Chapter 4, upon election President Clinton encountered increasing tax rates, a manufacturing industry struggling due to the outsourcing of labor, a growing budget deficit, and an overall distrust of government solutions (Campbell & Rockman, 2000). Wary of the legislative paralysis caused by partisan bickering, Clinton developed a Third Way policy agenda that would address the nation's problems through public investment and the reduction of bureaucratic wastefulness. Hence, when crafting an education agenda based upon the ideals of the Third Way, Clinton's reform agenda had to acknowledge the previously established excellence movement, an educational reform environment in which the values of education had been effectively shifted from inputs to outputs. Reforms issued during this era operated under the assumption that high standards and accountability would push low-performing schools toward providing the education necessary for the global marketplace.

President Clinton's education reform agenda focused on issues of accountability and increased standards. In fact, establishing accountability for low-performing schools was a central theme of his administration's Improving America's School Act of 1994 (previously ESEA). The law pressured states to be more active in the turnaround of low-performing schools by overseeing the development of school improvement plans, monitoring adherence to state-specific content standards, and

measuring schools based upon state-created assessments. Yet, while Clinton and Secretary of Education Riley had always emphasized increasing accountability, the phrase *turn around* first began to emerge during Clinton's second term. In his State of Union address in 1999, President Clinton's rhetoric targeting consistently low-performing schools became much more pronounced:

First, all schools must *end social promotion*. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can't read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material. ...Second, all states and school districts must *turn around* their *worst performing schools* or *shut them down*. That's the policy established in North Carolina by Governor Jim Hunt. North Carolina made the biggest gains in test scores in the nation last year. Our budget includes \$200 million to help states turn around their own failing schools. (Clinton, 1999, para. 32, emphasis added)

Clinton's speech implicitly linked the justification for turning around schools with the complacency of local educators, suggesting teachers, leaders, and school communities were willing to socially promote their children through the ranks of public education without holding them accountable for learning. Having experienced moderate success during the initial revision of ESEA in 1994, Secretary of Education Riley reinforced the Complacency story line in 1999, as he and President Clinton attempted to revise ESEA once again:

We are not satisfied with the *status-quo* when it comes to the education of children living in poverty. ...Five years ago, in reauthorizing ESEA, we set out to end what I have called the "*tyranny of low expectations*," the deeply flawed *assumption that it was acceptable to provide children in poverty with a second and even a third-class education*. This Administration has never been willing to accept this assumption. No child should be left behind. No child should be *allowed to drift through school* unable to read. No child should have an *unqualified teacher*. And no child should *have to go to a failing school*. (Riley, 1999, para. 2-3, emphasis added)

Although Riley and Clinton failed in their efforts to revise ESEA, they were successful in connecting the need to turn around schools with the Complacency story line that attributed the failure of public schools to the existence of educators with low expectations. Also worth noting, while Clinton and Riley often connected quality education to success in the global economy, they never fully developed a Global Competitiveness story line that would support turnaround-specific education reforms.

Bush/Paige/Spellings and the Global Competitiveness story line. Bush II's presidency began during an era in which the United States was benefiting from success in the global marketplace. The relative health of the U.S. economy and a growing conservative movement were primary factors in Bush II's ability to build coalitional support behind a policy agenda informed by his Ownership Society narrative. Informed by the laissez-faire and promarket ideals of Milton Friedman and the active governance ideals promoted within the Washington Consensus, Bush II both decreased and increased the role of government depending on the problems being addressed. This dualistic vision of governance was made apparent in Bush II's educational agenda, as the passage of NCLB significantly increased the role of government in education in terms of accountability, while expanding the school improvement marketplace through policies such as school choice and vouchers for supplemental educational services.

Although President Bush II and Secretaries of Education Rod Paige and Margaret Spellings endorsed the Complacency story line issued by their predecessors, they placed more of an emphasis on connecting the need for substantial reform with

the struggle to keep America's economy globally competitive. Secretary Paige began to establish this connection during a House hearing on Bush II's *Blueprint for*

Education Reform:

If you doubt that the present approach is broken and needs fixing, just consider that nearly 70 percent of inner-city fourth-graders are unable to read at even a basic level on national reading tests. Or that our *high school seniors trail students in most industrialized nations on international math tests*. Or that nearly one-third of our college freshmen must take remedial courses before they can begin regular college-level coursework. It is uncomfortably clear that our system of elementary and secondary education is failing to do its job for far too many of our children—a *failure that threatens the future of our Nation*, and a failure that the American people will no longer tolerate. (Paige, 2001, para. 5, emphasis added)

Paige (2001) continued, introducing Bush II's initial agenda addressing the

turnaround of low-performing public schools:

The President's proposal also would provide separate funding for State and local efforts to *turn around low-performing schools*. If the school still has not improved after two years, it would be *identified for corrective action* and *subjected to more comprehensive measures*, such as implementation of a new curriculum, intensive professional development, or reconstitution as a public charter school. While such measures are underway, students would be given the *option of attending another public school* not identified for improvement or correction...would we use *Federal funds to help that student find a better education at a private school*. We are *proposing to permit the use of Title I funds to help students transfer to a higher performing public or private school*, or to obtain supplemental educational services from a public- or private-sector provider. The President also is *proposing a system of rewards for success and sanctions* for failure at both the State and local levels. (para. 14., emphasis added)

Again, the Bush/Paige proposal resembled a dualistic vision of governance promoting substantial governmental intervention while using federal funds to promote private market solutions.

Chosen to replace Paige, newly appointed Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings placed specific emphasis on the Global Competitiveness story line, ensuring the further linking of global economic needs with the need to pursue school turnaround reform. Less than a year after her initial appointment, Spellings outlined Bush II's agenda, which connected the need for education reform with the pressures to remain globally competitive:

This global challenge requires bold action and leadership. America has done it before. Following the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of Sputnik, the world's first satellite, Congress passed and President Eisenhower signed into law the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA). NDEA encouraged more college and university students to pursue degrees in engineering and it brought the public and private sectors together as partners to capture the interest, imagination and dedication of American students. ... Today, America faces challenges more difficult and complex than a single streaking satellite. The spread of freedom is spurring technological innovation and global competition at a pace never before seen. (Role of Education in Global Competitiveness, 2007, emphasis added)

Within this testimony, Spellings cited a report issued by the National Academy Press titled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*. The intention of the *Gathering Storm* report was to provide credibility for a policy agenda that could ensure prosperity for the United States in the global economy of the 21st century. Senator Lamar Alexander and Senator Jeff Bingaman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources commissioned the report, asking those responsible for the findings to answer the following questions:

What are the top 10 actions, in priority order, that federal policymakers could take to enhance the science and technology enterprise so that the *United States can successfully compete, prosper, and be secure in the global community of the 21st century*? What strategy, with several concrete steps, could be used to

implement each of those actions? (*Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, 2006, p. 2, emphasis added)

The report's first three findings focused on issues pertaining to science and mathematics instruction in kindergarten through Grade 12, and although none of the three recommendations focused directly on issues of low-performing schools, the joining of education reform with the preservation of the nation's strategic and economic security provided Secretary Spellings with the credibility necessary to further solidify support of the Global Competitiveness story line.

The dominance of this story line was made apparent during Spellings's March 2007 Senate testimony. Presenting President Bush II's 2008 budget request for education, Spellings directly connected issues of global competition with the need to support the turnaround specific reforms embedded within NCLB:

There is a broad consensus on the importance of education for America's future in our increasingly *competitive global economy*, a new *entrepreneurial spirit in our education system that is most evident in the growing numbers of charter schools*, and a strong commitment to ensuring that all students not only graduate from high school, but graduate with real skills that they can put to use either at college or in the workforce. (Spellings, 2007, para. 1, emphasis added)

She later added,

A major focus of our NCLB reauthorization proposal is *strengthening the school improvement process*. ...No Child Left Behind encourages a comprehensive, broad-based approach to school improvement, including technical assistance from States and school districts, the adoption of research-based improvement strategies, more effective teaching, and the provision of choice options for students and their parents. (Spellings, 2007, para. 19, emphasis added)

Linking school reform as essential to global competitiveness, each of the turnaround measures addressed by Spellings fell directly in line with Bush II's larger policy

agenda that supported policies increasing the role of government oversight, authorizing punitive measures for negligent government programs and encouraging market competition through the mechanism of school and provider choice.

The story lines of Complacency and Global Competitiveness established during the Clinton/Riley and Bush/Paige/Spellings era support the discourse of educational globalization. Clinton's education agenda falls primarily within the domain of the performativity/accountability narrative. Serving as a continuation of the ideals established in the excellence reform movement, Clinton's education policies pushed states to increase their regulatory oversight of low-performing schools, thus holding teachers and leaders accountable through the publicized measurement of common standards. Although the performativity/accountability narrative can be traced to ideas presented in Bush II's educational agenda, the passage of NCLB ushered in the additional narratives of market/choice and management/surveillance. As Ravitch (2010) suggested, coalitional support of Bush II's education agenda allowed the establishment of a school improvement movement based upon accountability, high-stakes testing, data-driven decision making, choice, charter schools, privatization, deregulation, merit pay, and competition.

Policy Vocabularies

This section interrupts the analysis of turnaround story lines to examine the policy vocabularies of the Title I SIG program of 2009 as they appear in the Obama/Duncan Administration's *Blueprint for Reform* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) and the Title I SIG guidance document (U.S. Department of

Education (2009b). This interruption is necessary due to unusual circumstances in the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG program. The reader requires certain information before moving forward in this analysis. Specifically, most education reform policies must travel through the deliberative channels of Congress, must be vetted extensively through public input, and are subject to the political pressures of the education reform community. However, the Obama/Duncan Administration's inclusion of the Title I SIG turnaround reforms in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 allowed SIG policies to circumvent deliberative negotiations.

Elected in January 2009, President Obama passed the ARRA legislation just a month into his presidency. Due to the financial crisis faced by the United States in 2009, Obama gathered enough votes to pass ARRA as a stimulus package meant to provide the domestic economy with the means necessary to avoid entering a deeper recession. Specific to education, the ARRA legislation included Race to the Top funds and \$3 billion in additional monies for the SIG program. Though the procurement of funds for federal programs in a time of need is not unusual in itself, the Obama/Duncan Administration used this opportunity to redefine the legislative intent of the Title I SIG program. Therefore, when the ARRA stimulus package was passed through Congress, the regulatory structures of the Title I SIG program were dramatically altered without significant input from those outside the Department of Education. In an interview, Diane Stark Rentner, former Congressional staffer and current director of National Programs for the Center on Education Policy, addressed

how the passage of ARRA and the revision of the Title I SIG program presented a unique moment in legislative history:

I think that it's unusual because Congress usually doesn't give such a large amount of money in a blank check to any administration. And so with the stimulus money, you know, that was the actual state grants or whatever that was, the parameters they put around that were outlined pretty well in the legislation but the other thing, like the Race to the Top money and all the other programs, they really got to shape those from the regulatory end. And the School Improvement Grants, there is some legislative language and there was some regulatory language on top of the legislative language once the program was funded, so they turned that on its head. In a way, and I'm not a legal scholar, it might have gone beyond what's authorized in law. (D. S. Rentner, personal communication, September, 27, 2010)

Rentner's comments suggest that whereas story lines typically are built and promoted during the sense-making stages of policy creation, most story lines supporting the Title I SIG program were developed and employed after its release. Therefore, the historically atypical unveiling of new legislation facilitated by the passage of ARRA allowed the Title I SIG program to bypass the traditional development of policy story lines. Thus, in the following section I examine the policy vocabularies written into the Title I SIG program and discuss how they relate to the discourse of educational globalization.

Hajer (2003) defined policy vocabularies as the "sets of concepts structuring a particular policy, consciously developed by policymakers" (p. 105). When these vocabularies are enacted in policy documents, they codetermine what consumers (readers of policy documents) can consider legitimate policy action. As opposed to story lines, policy vocabularies are concretized in writing within the pages of policy

documents, thus offering a perceived reality as to what the issues are, why issues exist, and what measures should be taken to resolve issues.

Although the dominant policy vocabularies used to structure the Title I SIG program were mentioned frequently throughout the interviews guiding this study, this section focuses on the operationalization of these vocabularies within Title I SIG documents. Two documents were used to guide this analysis: (a) *A Blueprint For Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) and (b) the final requirements for SIG authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). Authorities in the U.S. Department of Education chose the vocabularies structuring each of these Title I SIG policy documents. Three dominant policy vocabularies and six guiding themes emerged during the examination of Title I SIG policy documents. I organized the consideration of each guiding theme by the frequency in which they appeared in the policy documents (see Table 2), first detailing the ways in which they appeared in the *Blueprint for Reform*, then by their presence in the Title I SIG requirements. This order was chosen purposefully, as the language and ideas presented in the *Blueprint for Reform* outlined the policy priorities of the Obama/Duncan Administration and thus shaped the final requirements of the Title I SIG program.

Table 2

Policy Vocabularies and Guiding Themes Shaping the Title I School Improvement Grant Program

Educational globalization discourse	Policy vocabulary	Guiding themes
Performance/ accountability	Accountability	Heightening the monitoring of success Emphasizing teacher and principal performance
Management/surveillance	Innovation	Redistributing governance/authority
Market/choice	Competition	Incentivizing success Establishing competitive funding Expansion of the marketplace

Note. Vocabulary prioritized by frequency in policy documents.

Accountability and the Educational Globalization Discourse of

Performativity/Accountability

Accountability emerged as the most prevalent policy vocabulary written into Title I SIG documents. The policy solutions endorsed by the accountability vocabulary were found to prioritize a specific range of school improvement reforms. The argument I present in this section is that the policy vocabulary of accountability is drawn from the *performativity/accountability* narrative informed by the broader discourse of educational globalization. Specifically, the written portrayal of accountability in Title I SIG policies promotes the reconfiguration of local school governance; places emphasis on standardized measures; and regulates the increased monitoring of students, teachers, and local administrators.

The *Blueprint* and heightened monitoring of success. The U.S. Department of Education (2010a) issued the *Blueprint for Reform* in March 2010 to showcase the Obama/Duncan Administration’s suggested revisions for the reauthorization of ESEA. Introduced as a report that “builds on the significant reforms already made in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 3), the *Blueprint* addressed four key priorities: (a) college- and career-ready students, (b) great teachers and leaders in every school, (c) equity and opportunity for all students; and (d) an environment to raise the bar and reward excellence.

The general outline for the Title I SIG program is embedded within the first section of the report, titled College- and Career-Ready Students. As Mathis and Welner (2010) addressed in the National Education Policy Center’s examination of research used to support *Blueprint* initiatives, each of the report’s four reform priorities connects the improvement of schools with the development of more comprehensive evaluation measures. This connection is evident as each of the five guiding principles for reforms listed in the College- and Career-Ready Students section focuses on issues of accountability: (a) rigorous college- and career-ready standards; (b) rigorous and fair accountability and support at every level; (c) measuring and supporting schools, districts, and states; (d) building capacity for support at every level; and (e) fostering comparability and equity (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). It is worth mentioning that whereas four of the five titles of the guiding principles place an obvious value on “rigorous” accountability, even the

“building capacity” reform places heavy emphasis on the adoption of rigorous standards and the creation of high-quality assessments. The following wording pulled directly from the *Blueprint* highlights the purposeful linking of capacity building with the policy vocabulary of *accountability-heightened monitoring*:

We will support the development and use of a new generation of assessments that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards, to better determine whether students have acquired the skills they need for success. New assessment systems will better capture higher-order skills, provide more accurate measures of student growth, and better inform classroom instruction to respond to academic needs. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 3)

The *Blueprint* then connected monitoring directly to the turnaround policies of the Title I SIG program:

But in the lowest-performing schools that have not made progress over time, we will ask for dramatic change. To ensure that responsibility for improving student outcomes no longer falls solely at the door of schools, we will also promote accountability for states and districts that are not providing their schools, principals, and teachers with the support they need to succeed. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 5)

In the next section I examine the Title I SIG guidance document and explain the ways in which these vocabularies are concretized as regulatory mandates.

Title I SIG guidance and heightened monitoring of success. The Title I SIG guidance document (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b) was developed by the U.S. Department of Education to provide state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools with regulatory direction as to the implementation of final SIG requirements. State education agencies, local education agencies, and schools chosen to participate in the Title I SIG program must select one of the following four intervention models: (a) transformation, (b) turnaround, (c) restart, and (d) school

closure. In the following section I highlight the ways in which accountability-heightened monitoring vocabulary appears in two of the four intervention models.

Transformation. Local education agencies choosing to implement the transformation model must enact six separate intervention strategies for school reform. Of those six strategies, two are linked to the policy vocabulary of accountability-heightened monitoring:

[Strategy 2:] Use *rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals* that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as *multiple observation-based assessments of performance* and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 36, emphasis added)

[Strategy 3:] Identify and *reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement* and high school graduation rates and *identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 36, emphasis added)

Turnaround. Local education agencies choosing to implement the turnaround intervention model must enact nine separate intervention strategies for school reform. Of those nine strategies, three are drawn from the policy vocabulary of accountability-heightened monitoring. Strategy 2 requires “using *locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff* who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students, (A) Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and (B) Select new staff” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 27, emphasis added). Strategy 6 requires using “*data to identify and implement an instructional program* that is research-based and vertically aligned

from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 27, emphasis added). Strategy 7 is to “*promote the continuous use of student data* (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 27, emphasis added).

The *Blueprint* and teacher and principal performance The importance of highly effective teacher and principal leadership is a major theme throughout the *Blueprint for Reform* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). The five guiding priorities often address teacher and principal performance through the policy vocabulary of accountability-heightened monitoring.

The second priority, presented in a section titled Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School, connects the evaluation of teacher and principal performance with student growth on standardized assessments:

We will elevate the teaching profession to focus on recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence. We are calling on states and districts to *develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation* and support, and to *identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals on the basis of student growth and other factors*. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 4, emphasis added)

Next, specific to schools participating in the Title I SIG program, teacher and principal effectiveness is mentioned once again: “Our proposal will provide funds to states and districts to develop and support effective teachers and leaders, with a *focus on improving the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in high-need schools*” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 5, emphasis added). In addition, the *Blueprint*

emphasized increasing accountability for programs preparing teachers and leaders: “States will *monitor the effectiveness of their traditional and alternative preparation programs*, and we will *invest in programs* whose graduates are succeeding in the classroom, *based on student growth* and other factors” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 5, emphasis added).

The section of the *Blueprint* directly addressing the Title I SIG program also focuses on the increased monitoring of teachers and leaders by redrawing the connection between student performance and growth and the effectiveness of practitioners:

Improved assessments can be used to accurately measure student growth; to better measure how states, districts, schools, principals, and teachers are educating students; to help teachers adjust and focus their teaching; and to provide better information to students and their families. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 11, emphasis added)

Title I SIG guidance and teacher and principal performance. The SIG Guidance document draws a direct link to the regulatory oversight of teacher and principal performance. Over 20% of the intervention strategies as listed in the transformation and turnaround options focus on either removing teachers and the principal or incentivizing their success through competitive stipends.

Transformation. Two of the five intervention strategies that must be implemented by local education agencies in the transformation model speak to issues of teacher and principal performance. Strategy 1 is to “replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 36). Strategy 3 is the following:

Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 36)

Turnaround. One of the nine turnaround intervention strategies speaks to issues of teacher and principal performance. Strategy 1 is the following:

Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 27)

Ball's (2008, p. 42) conceptualization of a "language of reform strategies" explains how the accountability policy vocabularies written in the *Blueprint* and Title I SIG guidance documents situate the subjects as the appraisers; promote the disciplines of productivity and achievement comparison; and value the performative worth of teachers, leaders, and students.

Innovation and the Educational Globalization Discourse of Management/Surveillance

Innovation was the second most frequently cited policy vocabulary written into the Title I SIG documents. The policy concepts informed by the innovation vocabulary promote a particular series of school improvement reforms and are drawn from the management/surveillance ideals within the discourse of educational globalization. Specifically, the written portrayal of innovation in the Title I SIG program endorse policies drawn from the educational globalization discourse as they empower local school authorities and parents of turnaround campuses as the self-

governing entities who, through increased federal and state oversight, are expected to facilitate dramatic academic gains on their campuses as measured through centralized objectives.

The *Blueprint* and redistribution of governance/authority. The last of the five priorities listed within the *Blueprint for Reform* is the comprehensive redesign of schools. Calling attention to the responsibilities of all actors within a school community, the *Blueprint* offered the following:

Tackling persistent achievement gaps requires public agencies, community organizations, and families to *share responsibility* for improving outcomes for students. We will prioritize programs that include a *comprehensive redesign* of the school day, week, or year, that promote schools as the center of their communities, or that partner with community organizations. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 6, emphasis added)

Next, the *Blueprint* linked comprehensive redesign directly to the policy vocabulary of redistribution of governance/authority through the turnaround models that must be implemented by schools participating in the Title I SIG program:

At the other end of the spectrum will be Challenge states, districts, and schools. States will identify Challenge schools that are in need of specific assistance. The first category of Challenge schools will be the lowest-performing five percent of schools in each state, based on student academic achievement, student growth, and graduation rates, that are not making progress to improve. *In these schools, states and districts will be required to implement one of four school turnaround models, to support better outcomes for students.* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 10, emphasis added)

Additionally, the *Blueprint* suggested a range of strategies that may be imposed on districts failing to turn around low-performing schools:

Challenge districts whose schools, principals and teachers are not receiving the support they need to succeed may also *face significant governance or staffing changes*, including replacement of the superintendent. Both Challenge districts and states will face additional restrictions on the use of ESEA funds

and *may be required to work with an outside organization* to improve student academic achievement. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 10, emphasis added)

Many of the priorities and suggestions in the *Blueprint* are written in the policy vocabulary of redistribution of governance/authority, as they call for the comprehensive redesign of schools through turnaround reform strategies promoting the reconfiguration of governance structures within low-performing schools.

Title I SIG guidance and redistribution of governance/authority. Specific to the turnaround interventions, the strategies listed in each of the models directly promote the redistribution of governance and authority. Although local education agencies are provided with options for “new governance” and “flexibility,” both intervention strategies promote the removal of the principal as a key component in the implementation of new governance structures.

1. In transformation, local education agencies choosing to implement the transformation model must replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.
2. In turnaround, local education agencies must replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.

3. In restart, local education agencies must convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
4. In school closure, local education agencies must close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher performing schools in the district.

Again, Ball's (2008, p. 42) conceptualization of a "language of reform strategies" explains how the innovation policy vocabularies written in the *Blueprint* and Title I SIG guidance documents place specific pressures on subjects as either manager leaders or manager workforce teams, promote the disciplines of efficiency and corporate participation, and value what is deemed appropriate in regards to the reorganization of school authority.

Competition and the Educational Globalization Discourse of Market/Choice

The third dominant policy vocabulary found throughout the Title I SIG documents was that of *competition*. The policy concepts promoted through the competition vocabulary are informed by the market/choice discourse of educational globalization. Specifically, the written strategies of competition in Title I SIG policies promote parents as savvy consumers of external providers, thus ensuring the dramatic improvement of school outcomes by expanding the marketplace for school improvement reform through the principles of competition.

The *Blueprint* and incentivizing success. Much of the language within the *Blueprint* emphasizes "rewarding" best practices and "incentivizing" their

reoccurrence. The *Blueprint* references this connection in its fourth priority, titled

Raise the Bar and Reward Excellence:

Race to the Top has provided *incentives for excellence* by encouraging state and local leaders to work together on ambitious reforms, make tough choices, and develop comprehensive plans that change policies and practices to improve outcomes for students. We will continue Race to the Top's *incentives for systemic reforms* at the state level and expand the program to school districts that are willing to take on bold, comprehensive reforms. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 6, emphasis added)

In the section specific to Title I SIG turnaround reforms, the *Blueprint* previewed the “carrot and stick” levers within the Obama/Duncan education agenda: “We *must reward the success of schools that are making significant progress, ask for dramatic change in the lowest-performing schools*, and address persistent gaps in student academic achievement and graduation rates” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 7, emphasis added).

The remainder of the policy document refers to the expected role of the federal government as the monitors of districts and states as they seek to reach performance targets:

The schools, districts, and states that are successful in reaching performance targets, significantly increasing student performance for all students, closing achievement gaps, or turning around the lowest-performing schools (at the district and state level) *will be recognized as Reward schools, districts and states*. States will receive funds to design innovative programs to reward high-poverty Reward schools and Reward districts. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 9, emphasis added)

The frequency in which the rewarding of success occurs in these policy documents displays how the policy vocabulary of competition was written into the goals, priorities, and expected outcomes of the *Blueprint* and the Title I SIG program.

Title I SIG guidance and incentivizing success. Both the transformation and turnaround intervention models enact the competition vocabulary in the same manner, as they each call for the incentivizing of success through the same strategy (Strategy 5 of transformation and Strategy 3 of turnaround):

Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 36)

The *Blueprint* and establishing competitive funding. As will be discussed in the next section, the earmarking of federal funds as competitive was a key strategy in the Obama/Duncan Administration's attempt to initiate a specific range of education reforms. For states to be eligible for federal monies, they had to enact the reforms suggested by the U.S. Department of Education. This intent was made apparent within the fifth priority of the *Blueprint*, titled Promote Innovation and Continuous Improvement:

The program also will support *competitive grants to consortia of states*, and to other entities working in partnership with states, *for research on, or development and improvement of, additional high-quality assessments* to be used by multiple states in such areas as science, history, or foreign languages; high school course assessments in academic and career and technical subjects; universally designed assessments; and assessments for English Learners and students with disabilities. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 12, emphasis added)

Additionally, in the section outlining the Title I SIG program, the *Blueprint* joined competitive funding with the monies reserved for persistently low-performing public schools:

States will receive funds by formula and may reserve funds to build their capacity to improve low-performing schools, including developing and implementing effective school quality review teams to assist schools in identifying school needs and supporting school improvement. *States will award the remainder of funds competitively to districts or partnerships of districts and nonprofit organizations to implement one of the following intervention models*, to be selected locally, to ensure significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional program of a school. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 12, emphasis added)

Thus, although none of the four intervention models within the Title I SIG guidance document explicitly addressed the competitive policy vocabulary, the competitive issuance of turnaround reform monies implicitly joined competition to the turnaround reform agenda.

The *Blueprint* and expansion of the marketplace. The final theme within the policy vocabulary of competition is the *expansion of the marketplace*. The intentionality of the Obama/Duncan Administration to open the education reform market to external partners is evident throughout the *Blueprint for Reform* and is mentioned during the outlining of its priorities: “We will support the *expansion of high-performing public charter schools* and other autonomous public schools, and support local communities as *they expand public school choice options* for students within and across school districts” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 6, emphasis added). In reference to the Title I SIG program, the *Blueprint* offered the following: “For all Challenge schools, districts may implement strategies such as expanded learning time, *supplemental educational services, public school choice*, or other strategies to help students succeed” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, p. 10, emphasis added).

Title I SIG guidance and expansion of the marketplace. The second of five strategies in the transformation intervention model promotes the expansion of the marketplace. Strategy 2 is the following:

Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA [local education agency], the SEA [state education agency], *or a designated external lead partner organization* (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO [education management organization]). (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 36, emphasis added)

The expansion of the marketplace is also written into the definition of the restart model:

A restart model is one in which an LEA [local education agency] *converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO)* that has been selected through a rigorous review process. (A CMO is a non-profit organization that operates or manages charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. An EMO is a for-profit or non-profit organization that provides “whole-school operation” services to an LEA.) A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 31, emphasis added)

Perhaps the most obvious appearance of the competition policy vocabulary as written in the Title I SIG program occurs in the description of the how local education agencies can solicit the services of external partners:

The most specific way an *LEA can use an external provider is to contract with a charter school operator, a CMO, or an EMO* to implement the restart model in a Tier I or Tier II school. The LEA *might also contract with a turnaround organization* to assist it in implementing the turnaround model. The LEA *might also use external providers to provide technical expertise* in implementing a variety of components of the school intervention models, such as helping a school evaluate its data and determine what changes are needed based on those data; providing job-embedded professional development; designing an equitable teacher and principal evaluation system that relies on student achievement; and creating safe school environments that meet

students' social, emotional, and health needs. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b, p. 34, emphasis added)

Ball's (2008) conceptualization of a language of reform strategies once again offers insight as to how the competition policy vocabularies written in the *Blueprint* and Title I SIG guidance documents situate subjects as either consumers or entrepreneurs, promote the disciplines of survival and income maximization, and are based upon values specific to competition.

The three dominant policy vocabularies of *accountability*, *innovation*, and *competition* are the sets of concepts that provide written structure for the Title I SIG program of 2009 (see Table 2). Bypassing the traditional channels of deliberative politics due to its inclusion in ARRA, the Title I SIG program and the policy vocabularies that give it shape have effectively framed the who, what, where, and when of school turnaround reform. In the following section I once again take up the task of describing how specific story lines built coalitional support around the ideas and policy solutions presented in the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda.

Story Lines of Justification: Building Coalitional Support for the Title I SIG

The examinations of story lines most responsible for the early development of the turnaround construct and the policy vocabularies as outlined in the *Blueprint for Reform* and Title I SIG guidance documents were intended to serve as a complement to the historical analysis provided in Chapter 4. Cumulatively, these analyses offer the contextual backdrop necessary when investigating the story lines called upon during the revision of the Title I SIG of 2009. I have organized the descriptive analysis of the Obama/Duncan story lines in chronological order, focusing first on a story line's

appearance within federal texts (hearings, speeches, forums, etc.) and then addressing their emergence in actor interviews.

To detail the ways in which story lines appeared during the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG program I conducted a constant comparative search for *turnaround* meanings during the multiple surveys of primary and secondary documents pertaining to the Title I SIG program. I then further developed these meanings through my interactions with policy actors who offered their insights as to how the Title I SIG program first appeared in the federal policy-making community. During the continual back and forth between these two data sets, I focused on the emergence of the three most dominant themes enacted when justifying the Title I SIG program:

1. Global Competitiveness is the story line suggesting the need to address education reform as a way to ensure global economic competitiveness.
2. Unprecedented Opportunity suggests the need to act with urgency to capitalize on the “Obama Effect” (unprecedented economic and political opportunity).
3. Disrupt Complacency suggests a moral responsibility to disrupt the complacent bureaucracy of educational systems.

Each of these themes emerged as the dominant story lines promoted by policy actors during the deliberative revision of the Title I SIG program.

Story Lines of Justification: Global Competitiveness

Documentation of the Global Competitiveness story line. As was the case with the Bush II Administration, the threat of surrendering a position of dominance in

the global economic competition was a primary narrative in the Obama/Duncan Administration's efforts to gather support for a school improvement reform agenda. The need to consider the global competition for resources was made clear during Duncan's plenary speech at the 2009 Institute of Education Sciences convention:

We're *competing with children from around the globe* for jobs of the future. It's no longer the next state or the next region. It's India, China, South Korea and Finland. I was on Capitol Hill the other day and faced questions over how much recovery money was going to save jobs and how much was going to advance reform. I told them that *in the long run reform is all about jobs*. We have to *educate our way to a better economy*. (Duncan, 2009a, para. 32, emphasis added)

Later that month President Obama reinforced the Global Competitiveness story line as he unveiled the administration's Race to the Top fund for the first time to a national audience:

But even if we do all of those things, *America will not succeed* in the 21st century *unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters*, unless every child is performing the way Matthew is performing. *In an economy where knowledge is the most valuable commodity* a person and a country have to offer, *the best jobs will go to the best educated*—whether they live in the United States or India or China. In a world where *countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow*, the future belongs to the nation that best educates its people. Period. We know this. (Obama, 2009b, para. 5, emphasis added)

Thus, after almost two decades of repetition, the Global Competitiveness story line had been firmly established as a compelling narrative when seeking to build consensus behind education reform efforts. This was apparent in May 2010 as Democrat Congressman George Miller commenced the House hearing on school turnaround research by reinforcing the Global Competitiveness story line:

Our global competitiveness is relying on the actions we are taking today, and we don't get to do a redo tomorrow what we have done wrong today. It is *time*

to take our education system into the future. One of our biggest problems in the education system is the dropout crisis and our lowest-performing schools. Turning around our lowest-performing schools is critical to our economy, to our communities, and to our students, and a recent report shows that cutting the dropout rate in half would yield \$45 billion annually to new federal tax revenues or cost savings. (Hearing Before the House Committee on Education and Labor, 2010a, emphasis added)

Several months later, as a seeming response to interests concerned with the connection of Global Competitiveness to the Obama/Duncan education reform agenda, Duncan delivered a speech at the Council of Foreign Relations titled, “Education and International Competition: The Win-Win Game”:

I welcome the opportunity to talk about the relationship of education and international competition because it is a subject rife with misunderstanding. In a nutshell, my message is that policymakers and voters have treated international competitiveness for too long as a zero-sum game. The success of other nations at increasing educational attainment and economic competitiveness has been assumed to be America's loss. The belief that another country's gain in economic competitiveness is America's loss is a remnant of the Cold War mentality and a protectionist ethic. It stems from a worldview in which prosperity depends on a state's ability to preserve a finite amount of goods and human capital. I want to suggest to you today that enhancing educational achievement and economic viability overseas and at home is really more of a win-win game; it is an opportunity to grow the economic pie, instead of carve it up. On the whole, education and economic competition can produce enormous benefits for the world and for the United States. (Duncan, 2010a, para. 4-8, emphasis added)

Efforts to build coalitional support behind the Global Competitiveness story line would receive an enormous boost thanks to a report presented at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) release of the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. Titled “Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States,” the OECD report linked success in the global economy to school improvement efforts

focusing on the quality of service provision, equitable distribution of learning opportunities and incentives that would promote greater efficiency in schooling:

One of the ultimate goals of policy makers is to enable citizens to take advantage of a globalised world economy. This is leading them to focus on the improvement of education policies, ensuring the quality of service provision, a more equitable distribution of learning opportunities and stronger incentives for greater efficiency in schooling. Such policies hinge on reliable information on how well education systems prepare students for life. Most countries monitor students' learning and the performance of schools. But in a global economy, the yardstick for success is no longer improvement by national standards alone, but how education systems perform internationally. The OECD has taken up that challenge by developing PISA, the Programme for International Student Assessment, which evaluates the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems in some 70 countries that, together, make up nine-tenths of the world economy. (OECD, 2010, p. 3, emphasis added)

The findings of the OECD (2010) challenged countries to address “educational underperformance,” thus offering credibility to the Obama/Duncan school turnaround reform agenda:

This finding represents both a warning and an opportunity. It is a warning to advanced economies that they cannot take for granted that they will forever have “human capital” superior to that in other parts of the world. At a time of intensified global competition, they will need to work hard to maintain a knowledge and skill base that keeps up with changing demands. PISA underlines, in particular, the need for many advanced countries to tackle educational underperformance so that as many members of their future workforces as possible are equipped with at least the baseline competencies that enable them to participate in social and economic development. Otherwise, the high social and economic cost of poor educational performance in advanced economies risks becoming a significant drag on economic development. (p. 3, emphasis added)

Invited to speak at the OECD’s release of the PISA assessment, Duncan joined America’s poor performance on international assessments with the turnaround reform agenda, claiming that the United States would have to “urgently accelerate student learning” if it were to remain competitive in the global economy:

Here in the United States, we have looked forwardly eagerly to the 2009 PISA results. But the findings, I'm sorry to report, show that *the United States needs to urgently accelerate student learning to remain competitive in the knowledge economy of the 21st century*. The United States has a long way to go before it lives up to the American dream and the promise of education as the great equalizer. (Duncan, 2010d, para. 3-4, emphasis added)

Participant considerations of the Global Competitiveness story line. The interviews guiding this study confirmed the centrality of the Global Competitiveness story line in the attempts to build support for the turnaround reform agenda of the Obama/Duncan Administration. Cynthia Brown, vice-president for education policy at the Center for American Progress and former education advisor for President Jimmy Carter, explained why such a story line resonates within the education reform community:

We are more and more knowledgeable about the fact that this is a worldwide economy. That it's a competitive world and that the recession and loss of jobs if they go over seas it's very concerning and the discussion by the business community that we don't have enough people with the skills from the education system that they need. And so we have more and more data. We know what the demographically are for the future and we know that the workforce is going to become "brownier" and going to be made up of much larger proportion of student who we historically have not served well in this country and if we are going to have an American workforce that strong, competitive, innovative, able to do the most important jobs here at home then you are going to have to improve the quality of education. And that's a message that's been coming thru clearer and clearer. (C. Brown, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

Brown then added, "So between the international competitive situation the country finds itself in and massive amounts of data that is avail can be manipulated through to shine a light on what's going on brought education to the forefront" (C. Brown, personal communication, January 25, 2011).

An anonymous source from a major international policy think tank explained the usefulness of the Global Competitiveness story line when framing issues of education reform in a way that speaks to the middle class:

There's a danger here of this debate [school reform] also becoming a battle over scarce resources, and our thesis is that if you don't engage the middle class in some way, either by offering policy ideas that are geared toward them, and making a case that reform will benefit their schools as well, and not at their expense, you're going to end up with the same dynamic that you saw in health reform where it's a, there's some gain, but if it limited the pot of resources, they would fight for it. And disgruntlement and disillusionment on both sides results in eventual dissolution of public confidence in public education period. (Anonymous, personal communication, January 20, 2011)

Offering a unique insight as to how issues of school reform are being framed as necessary to establish the "preeminence" of the American economy, this person offered the following:

But this can't happen without broadening the debate beyond that and what's appealing to the community and what we've been telling them is that education has always been a sort of mommy issue, but taking it outside of the mommy context into one that is about maximizing the economic growth potential of today's students, turns it into a daddy issue. It's about American preeminence and competitiveness and gets it out of sort of the schools as nurturing mommyish places to ones where schools are the academies and laboratories of turning out tomorrows Bill Gates, etc. (Anonymous, personal communication, January 20, 2011)

Diane Stark Rentner addressed how the debate as described by the previous participant has evolved over a number of years due to a variety of factors, including increased attention being placed upon international assessments, the explosive growth in the amount of data now available on low-performing schools, and the continued threat of poor economic conditions. Thus, Rentner's commentary offered an

explanation for why the Global Competitiveness story line is able to build discursive consensus among competing interests:

Well I think you've got these international comparisons that get lots of media attention, you've got the National Assessment of Educational Progress in '94 started doing state-by-state stuff, then it got stronger with No Child Left Behind requiring the states to participate, so you have a lot more comparisons so people can read these reports and say, "My state was number 3?" So there are a lot more measures for people to become alarmed over. (D. S. Rentner, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

Rentner added,

So it is interesting times, and it may be partially economics, but I think that it's more that post-WWII everybody coasted along, we were in good shape relative to other countries. Now things are changing, our competitors are different, and people are concerned about that, one way or another, and you have an active federal government that has evolved, and so that gives it national attention when the President talks about it. (D. S. Rentner, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

Convergence around the story line of Global Competitiveness suggests that a discourse coalition was formed around the assumption that the economic security of the United States in a global economy could in fact be addressed through a specific range of school improvement strategies. As noted in the discussion above, coalitional support of this story line cannot be classified by ideological preference or party affiliation. Instead, the framing and acceptance of turnaround reforms as a credible solution in the struggle to secure economic prosperity allowed competing interests to join around a specific range of policy solutions.

Story Lines of Justification: The Obama Effect and Unprecedented Opportunity

Documentation of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line. Throughout his campaign for the Presidency, Senator Barack Obama mobilized large percentages

of the electorate by masterfully delivering speeches fashioned by the narratives of “hope” and “change.” Berry and Gottheimer (2010), who chronicled Obama’s speeches for over 6 years, captured his ability to energize a nation:

During his campaign, Obama’s words helped create a movement. Americans hung on his every word. They blogged about his speeches; they tuned in on their televisions and computer screens; they got involved in numbers never before seen in history. He drew not only young people but a cross-section of Americans of all ages and backgrounds from both political parties. (p. xxxiii)

Obama’s capacity to energize a “movement” is an important issue to consider, as the political capital he developed as a presidential candidate became a central theme in his administration’s crafting of an education reform agenda.

Senator Obama, in a 2007 campaign speech delivered at the National Education Association annual meeting in Philadelphia, began developing the Unprecedented Opportunity story line, which would be repeatedly called upon by many of the key players, both Republican and Democrat, participating in the revision of the Title I SIG program:

The status quo is still unacceptable for teachers and students. In the face of a global economy where too many children start behind and stay behind, this country doesn't need more blame or inaction or half measures on education. *What we need is a historic commitment to America's teachers, and that's the kind of commitment I intend to make as President.* (Obama, 2007, para. 22, emphasis added)

Although in this context, Obama’s use of “historic commitment” targeted the nation’s obligation to provide teachers with necessary resources, the essence of the “historic” theme was repeatedly called upon as policymakers cited the “unprecedented” and “once in a lifetime” opportunity to initiate reforms meant to facilitate the turnaround of America’s low-performing public schools.

Two years later newly elected President Obama would appoint Arne Duncan, chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools, as his Secretary of Education. During Duncan’s confirmation hearing, Senator Tom Harkin highlighted the reasons members of Congress viewed Duncan favorably, thus providing a preview of what would be expected of Duncan’s education reform agenda:

As a leader of Chicago Public Schools, Mr. Duncan has *earned a national reputation for turning around a large, diverse, urban public school system*. Mr. Duncan, there is no question that *schools across America can benefit from the same kind of fresh thinking that you have brought to the Chicago Public Schools*. As you know very well, perhaps our *greatest educational challenge is to improve the performance of urban and rural public schools serving high-poverty communities*. (*Confirmation of Arne Duncan*, 2009b, emphasis added)

Characterized as an innovator who had turned around “difficult” schools, Duncan used his testimony to connect the urgent need for turnaround reforms with the unprecedented opportunities made possible by the Obama Effect: “I have really enjoyed my conversations with all the Senators over the past few days. She talked about what she called the “Barack effect,” the “Obama effect” (*Confirmation of Arne Duncan*, 2009a, para. 4). Duncan would then assert,

Never before has being smart been so cool and working hard been so cool. I think we have a chance to build upon not just the substance of the education plan, but the symbolism of what the President-elect and his wife represent. (*Confirmation of Arne Duncan*, 2009a, para. 7, emphasis added)

Duncan then directly connected the Unprecedented Opportunity story line with his successful turnaround efforts in Chicago, thus offering a preview of what would be expected in the “bold” reform agenda being proposed by President Obama:

Chicago has been *one of the few districts that have held accountable chronically low-performing schools*—making the tough decision to close them down and reopen them with new leadership, new staff and new educational

approaches. For the most part, *the results of our school turnaround program have been dramatic—boosting test scores, attendance and school morale*. For all of our progress, however, I am fully aware that challenges remain—in Chicago and in schools across America. President-elect *Obama has proposed a bold agenda for meeting our educational challenges*. (Confirmation of Arne Duncan, 2009a, para. 11, emphasis added)

Though the political capital afforded by the Obama Effect was often called upon to build support for “bold” reforms such as the Title I SIG program, the most common joining of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line with turnaround reforms was realized in connection with Obama’s procurement of education reform monies delivered through the passage of the ARRA of 2009. Several months after Duncan’s confirmation as Secretary of Education, a participant at the Institute of Education Sciences national conference asked Duncan to explain why local practitioners would be expected to implement Obama’s “bold” reform agenda. In Duncan’s reply he fused the need for “dramatic” reform with the “historic” financial opportunities provided by ARRA:

We have \$5 billion in school-improvement grants. So think—we have north of \$10 billion in discretionary *money to invest in states and in districts and nonprofits willing to push the envelope and get dramatically better*. And that's not even talking about the IES’ increase in budget of over \$70 million. So not that we're ever going to have enough money, but again compared to Secretary Page's \$17 million, *we have never had this amount of discretionary money to really invest in those districts, in those nonprofits, in those states, that are willing to challenge the status quote and get dramatically better*. There's a huge, huge, huge chance going forward here. (Duncan, 2009a, emphasis added)

Perhaps the most apparent joining of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line with the turnaround agenda occurred when Duncan faced state-level policy makers as they expressed concerns about the regulatory implications of federal

intervention in education policy. At the 2009 Governors Education Symposium, Duncan delivered a speech titled, “States Will Lead the Way Toward Reform.”

Within this speech Duncan once again promoted the need to capitalize on the historic opportunities being presented:

Let me start by talking about the *unique, historic, and powerful opportunity we have to transform public education. We have a perfect storm for reform.* We have: The *Obama effect*; Leadership on the Hill and in the unions; Proven strategies for success; and The Recovery Act providing \$100 billion (Duncan, 2009c, para. 14, emphasis added).

As he concluded his speech, Duncan added,

There has never been this much money on the table and there may never be again. And there has never been a greater need. With 30 percent of our kids dropping out of high school and millions of those in college struggling to achieve, we are falling dangerously behind other countries. (Duncan, 2009c, para. 125-126, emphasis added)

The oft-repeated mantra of the “historic opportunity” to “transform” public education was a principal narrative in the Obama/Duncan administration’s attempt to build coalitional support for the Title I SIG program of 2009. The recurrent emergence of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line throughout the interviews conducted for this study provides a sense of how this rhetorical device helped build coalitional support for the turnaround reform agenda.

Participant considerations of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line.

The interviews guiding this study illustrated the emergence of the Unprecedented Opportunity story line during the Obama/Duncan campaign for education reform. The following commentaries provide insight as to the ways in which the Obama/Duncan Administration were able to secure the support necessary for the turnaround reform

agenda by capitalizing on the political capital of President Obama and the economic need to pass the ARRA (2009) stimulus package.

Congressional support. Addressing the tremendous amount of political latitude given to Obama and Duncan during the initial unveiling of their education reform agenda, a Congressional policy advisor for the Democrats offered the following:

It [the initial acceptance of the agenda] was just education needs money, people liked Arne, let's give it a try, we're gonna go on a first date. The other thing to just to be mindful of...is the speed at which it happened and the amount of pressure to get that money out the door was so immense, there was no ability to ask those questions [in regards to details of how the agenda would be operationalized]. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2010)

A peer staffer in the same interview added,

It was so fast. Keeping in mind, at the same time, before that in which we actually ended up...we were working on the 2009 appropriations bill simultaneously with the Recovery Act. ...And so the deliberative nature that probably should've been associated with this amount of money, it just wasn't possible at that time. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2010)

A Congressional staffer for the Republicans echoed the Democrats' sentiments:

By the time it [ARRA] was on the Senate floor, there were so many other big policy issues outside of should that or shouldn't that be an indicator of Race to the Top, for example. It wasn't called that. But getting member attention on those policies was impossible because these were just unprecedented. Some of the money and use of government funds, and so it was, I mean we had no involvement. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 21, 2010)

In addition, this staffer addressed why coalitional support gathered behind policies promoted by the Unprecedented Opportunity story line:

I think we really did give them a pass and I don't know, I think at the time, there were options, I mean we certainly could have been more vocal but we

looked at it also in the realm of “Huh, well that’s interesting, I wonder how all of that will work?” because it brought high schools into the equation for the first time in a lot of states, it did focus money where it hadn’t really been focused before so there were some elements we liked about the direction they were going. The models were thrown at us and we were like well, it’s something better than other things we were doing in NCLB so is this all bad? (Anonymous, personal communication, September 21, 2010)

As indicated in each of these interviews, the story line of Unprecedented Opportunity allowed Secretary Duncan and President Obama to build support in Congress for the Title I SIG program, even though its policies had not been vetted through the traditional regulatory and legislative channels.

Education reform community support. As was the case in Congress, the education reform community in Washington, DC, also spoke about issues pertaining to the Unprecedented Opportunity story line. Beth Antunez, assistant director in educational issues at the American Federation of Teachers, discussed how the “unprecedented” monies attached to Obama’s reform agenda influenced the education community:

Just for the recovery act, the whole package, we embraced it and celebrated it. It was \$800 billion; it was \$100 billion per school. It was unprecedented. It was a lifeline for school. Some of it was extra Title I money, it was the stabilization fund, it was money the states took to help schools. We had to embrace it and we did. It was necessary and important; it saved hundreds of thousands of our member’s jobs. Out of that \$100 billion, only \$3 billion was for SIG, and another half billion was for Race to the Top, and those got all the attention and they really did change schools and change the way education works in this country. Significant. (B. Antunez, personal communication, September 24, 2010)

Daria Hall, director of K-12 policy development at the Education Trust, echoed Antunez’s sentiments in regards to the enticing allure of monies:

There was resistance to some of the more aggressive turnaround models, there was also a concern that we don't have comprehensive research literature on everything that we would want to do. But I think that the primary driving force was that there is a desperate need, and an opportunity right now, with these ARRA funds, and we have to take that, we have to strike while the iron is hot and we have to do the best that we can, and then tweak along the way. (D. Hall, personal communication, January 26, 2011)

Sam Redding, director of the Center on Innovation and Improvement, spoke to why the Obama/Duncan Administration expended effort establishing the Unprecedented Opportunity story line theme:

They had the pressure of stimulus money had to get out the door so things had to happen in a hurry. So I think that's the reason that it seemed to come at us, you know, like an avalanche, but I think when you look at it now, well it's kind of like restructuring but now they're really serious about it. (S. Redding, personal communication, January 17, 2011)

State support. Rentner also offered insight as to how the Obama Administration was able to build support for the education policy agenda at the state level: “Well, I think all this is happening at a time in states where they are underfunded, there's budget crises or whatever, so hardly any state is going to say, ‘No, we don't want school improvement money’” (D.S. Rentner, personal communication, September 27, 2010). Each of these interviews touches upon two critical factors—money and speed—that were instrumental in the Obama/Duncan Administration's efforts to build bipartisan coalitional support behind an education reform agenda that included the turnaround reform strategies embedded within the Title I SIG program. In regards to money, the severity of the depressed economic climate and the promise of ARRA funds allowed the federal government to build tentative support around an education agenda, even though the details of what would

be expected were largely unknown. Specific to speed, Congressional members and the educational reform community were simply caught off guard by how quickly the administration's education agenda came together. The comments provided by the Congressional staffers express a sense of resentment, as the urgency of moving quickly allowed the educational agenda to escape legislative proceedings.

Story Lines of Justification: Disrupt Complacency

The following sections examine the emergence of the Complacency story lines employed when justifying the need for turnaround reforms and the Title I SIG program. As was the case in the Clinton/Riley Administration, the Obama/Duncan Administration often connected the need for school reform with the bureaucratic Complacency story line, taking a tough stance against the educators responsible for the decline of the nation's public schools.

Documentation of the Complacency story line. Duncan first began making this connection during his Senate confirmation hearing, where he spoke about his school reform accomplishments in Chicago and presented his efforts as the antithesis of Complacency: *“No other district in the country has been as aggressive about holding schools accountable for performance and willing to try new, innovative methods to improve schools. I think that is the spirit we need in the Department of Education”* (*Confirmation of Arne Duncan, 2009a, emphasis added*).

Several months later, when addressing the nation's governors, Duncan implicitly tied the perpetuation of poverty to the failure of complacent educators: *“When we fail to properly educate children, we, as educators, perpetuate poverty, and*

we perpetuate social failure. That is not something that I want to be a part of’
(*Confirmation of Arne Duncan, 2009a, para. 12, emphasis added*). In addition,
Duncan joined Complacency with state leaders’ unwillingness to monitor, assess, and
evaluate the teacher workforce:

A recent report by the New Teacher Project shows that 99 percent of teachers
are all rated the same, and most teacher rating systems don't factor in student
achievement. Some *states actually have laws creating a firewall between
teacher evaluation and student achievement.* This isn't fair to kids or to
teachers. Worse yet, it's not honest. (Duncan, 2009c, para. 30-31, emphasis
added)

Eight days after addressing the nation’s governors, Duncan unveiled the
general structure of the Title I SIG program at the National Alliance for Public
Charter Schools Conference. During this speech, Duncan joined the story line of
Complacency with the nation’s “legal” and “moral” imperative to “do the right thing”
for children having to attend low-performing public schools:

States and districts have a legal obligation to hold administrators and teachers
accountable, demand change and, where necessary, compel it. They have a
moral obligation to do the right thing for those children no matter how painful
and unpleasant. (Duncan, 2009d, para. 10)

The Complacency story line was a central theme during President Obama’s
unveiling of the Race to the Top fund competition. Implying that school reform
efforts in the past were driven more by rhetoric than action, Obama praised the
anticomplacent leadership of Secretary Duncan and Democrat Congressman George
Miller:

*We've talked these problems to death, year after year, decade after decade,
while doing all too little to solve them.* But thanks to Arne's leadership, thanks
to George Miller's leadership, thanks to all the dedicated Americans in

statehouses, and schoolhouses, communities across this country, that's beginning to change. (Obama, 2009b, para. 7, emphasis added)

Duncan would continue joining the Disrupt Complacency story line with the failure of public schools during a speech delivered at a public forum sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers: “*Adult dysfunction* in too many places—including quite frankly St. Louis historically—*adult dysfunction has gotten in the way of children learning*” (Duncan, 2009b, para. 8, emphasis added)

As an example of how competing interests converged in support of the Disrupt Complacency story line, Republican Congressman from Pennsylvania Glenn Thompson partially attributed the poor performance of public schools to the “lack of will on the part of administrators”:

I look forward to discussing in more detail the challenges schools continue to face, *including in some cases a lack of will on the part of administrators to take the dramatic action that may be necessary to improve the schools.* (Hearing Before the House Committee on Education and Labor, 2010b, para. 3, emphasis added)

Though for the most part the Disrupt Complacency story line was used to target teachers and school leaders, Duncan began placing political pressure on politicians and state leaders by implicating their inaction or unwillingness to pursue dramatic school reform with the failure of public schools. At an October 2010 speech given at the Innovate to Educate Symposium, Duncan (2010a) offered the following:

In response to No Child Left Behind, too many *states*—including my home state of Illinois—responded by *lowering their cut scores*. This makes politicians look good, but it is bad for children, bad for education, and ultimately bad for a state's economic vitality. *All state leaders need to look in the mirror and ask whether their state is expecting enough of our children.* We all need to set the bar higher. (para. 91-92, emphasis added)

Yet, while politicians and state leaders received partial blame for the poor performance of public schools, the story line of Complacency was typically employed in connection with education professionals at the local level. This connection was once again on display as Secretary Duncan (2010e) delivered a speech at the release of America's Promise Alliance Report:

For far too long, *we as adults, we as educators, we as leaders, passively observed this educational failure with a complacency that is deeply disturbing.* States and district officials have largely tinkered in these schools, instead of treating them as educational emergencies. (para. 12-13, emphasis added)

Participant considerations of the Complacency story line. The story line of Complacency often emerged when examining the narratives of those participating in this study. Regardless of whether or not a participant was supportive of the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda, most participants expressed frustration that prior reform efforts targeting low-performing schools had failed to produce better results.

Bringing awareness. The commentary provided by Dr. Gene Willhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, offered insight as to the success of the Obama/Duncan Administration in building support for the Complacency story line:

You've got to admit that right now, this whole issue of low-performing schools is something that people are riled up about, the general public. He's going on Oprah this afternoon and that is what he's going to talk about. ...Everywhere he goes he talks about lying to kids, not giving them an opportunity for the future—all those things, all that is bringing this to the attention. ...I don't think some of that stuff would have happened if the Secretary hadn't been out there talking about these atrocious conditions and shame on all of us for allowing them to exist all these years. (G. Willhoit, personal communication, September 24, 2010)

Dr. Andy Rotherham, former education policy advisor for President Clinton and cofounder and partner at Bellwether Education, described the recent momentum of Complacency as a story line. Rotherham offered a particular understanding as to why the Obama/Duncan Administration chose to draw on Complacency when promoting the turnaround reform agenda:

I think that complacency manifests itself in how people talk about the problem, the lack of ambition around many of the solutions. It comes across in a lot of different ways. So I think, relatively, is there more urgency now than there was a couple years ago, absolutely. (A. Rotherham, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

Worth considering is how coalitional support has been built around the Complacency story line. Isabel Oregon, education policy analyst at the Broad Foundation, described how the foundation community has joined forces with a number of other interests to educate the general population about issues often associated with Complacency:

I think everybody would agree that the system in one way or another is broken, but when you talk about fixes, especially to John Q on the street, they might say something like if we get newer textbooks, or smaller classes, that will fix it. I don't know if the onus is on people who are currently working in ed. reform to get the word out there, but we've been trying as a foundation to try and make the public more aware about the crisis in education, and we've been trying to do it through PSAs [public service announcements], but none of them have been very successful. I think by far the most successful have been the documentaries that have been coming out about education. But even then, not very many people are seeing those movies. (I. Oregon, personal communication, January 20, 2011)

Thus, not only has attention to the Complacency story line increased, a public campaign also has been launched to capitalize on its recent momentum. Offering a

suggestion as to why such efforts are taking place, Dr. Betty Malen, professor of education policy and leadership at the University of Maryland, offered the following:

So people can easily make the case that we have schools that by a number of standards have been performing low for some time. And they can easily make the case that shame on us for letting that situation to continue, because the children in those schools are the least advantaged children, there is no or little opportunity to allow them to compensate for those institutional deficiencies, they have been underserved and that carries lifelong damage. It's easy to make a case that says shame on you for allowing low-performing schools to be low performing for so long. It's easy to make that case. The case that's not easy to make is what action will address the chronic low performance of schools. (B. Malen, personal communication, January 29, 2011)

NCLB and education reform as failures. Another prominent theme emerging from interview participants in regards to the success of the Complacency story line was the failure of previous education reform efforts. Specifically, many of the persons interviewed suggested the perceived failure of NCLB and previous reform efforts contributed to bipartisan support of the turnaround reform agenda. Scott Sargrad, a program specialist in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development worked with the Obama/Duncan Administration during the crafting of the Title I SIG program. Sargrad provided a glimpse as to why Duncan and Obama joined the Complacency story line with previous education reform efforts:

NCLB didn't do anything with those [low-performing] schools. They, it had been sort of escalating sanctions, but then once you got to the most severe phase of restructuring you could choose the other option and almost over 35% of schools did that and they didn't actually have to do much of anything. Just the fact that these schools exist and nothing has happened to them for so long threw a big wakeup call for a lot of folks here. (S. Sargrad, personal communication, January 31, 2011)

Dr. Joe Johnson, former director of student achievement and school accountability at the U.S. Department of Education was once responsible for directing the federal Title I program. Johnson afforded his interpretation as to how the perceived failure of NCLB served as the impetus for the specific provisions listed within the Title I SIG program:

In the process of trying to figure out how do we influence substantial change, there was this notion of if these schools have not changed in all of these years, what would need to happen within this legislation that would make it such that change was likely. And so that's why I think you see the mix of provisions that are within this legislation. (J. Johnson, personal communication, February 2, 2011)

Confirming Johnson's understanding was Daria Hall, director of policy development at the Education Trust:

We have spent millions of dollars and countless consultant hours and coach hours and hours spent writing plans to very little effect, primarily because the interventions that were engaged were not strong enough. These schools are very, very sick places, and you can't treat that with bringing in a reading coach a few hours a week, or getting a better school improvement plan. You have to make fundamental changes in the culture and in the staff in order to drive fundamental changes in instruction and learning. But we do know that when those things happen, you can get great results. (D. Hall, personal communication, January 26, 2011)

Hall then explained how the Complacency story line has profited from the public awareness campaign targeting the reform of low-performing public schools:

One of the things that is out there in this narrative is a sense, that is bolstered by a report that the Fordham Foundation put out recently, is the idea that we've been trying this, and trying this, and these schools are kind of "immortal." (D. Hall, personal communication, January 26, 2011)

Targeting educators. The final theme that emerged throughout the interviews guiding this study was the connection of the Complacency story line with the failure

of educators. Dr. Bill Mathis, managing director of the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder offered a specific interpretation as to who has been responsible for promoting this connection:

I would say this...the business community has been [promoting the Complacency story line] and also the billionaire boys club, the K Street foundations have really done a good job of marginalizing the traditional education associations and doing a great deal of union bashing and betraying administrators as being part of the problem. (B. Mathis, personal communication, January 18, 2011)

Although not implicating business interests, an anonymous interview with a senior-level policy advisor at an international think tank supported Mathis's understanding of how traditional education interests have been framed as procomplacency and thus pro-status quo:

The irony here is that moderates, that we work with, are more entrenched in the social equality framework because, for them, it's reform versus status quo, how they see the debate, and the unions, etc., are all about defending, in their mind, public education, kind of as is, protecting teachers from the pack, and things like that. (Anonymous, personal communication, January 20, 2011).

Dr. Dan Duke, professor in the University of Virginia's Leadership, Foundations and Policy program, offered his interpretation of how the Department of Education has adopted the joining of complacent educators and low-performing public schools:

So their [Department of Education] argument is that the reason that we're falling behind, or the main reason, is because we have a decentralized education system run by amateurs, school board members, and maybe what we need is to professionalize it by centralizing. (D. Duke, personal communication, January 20, 2011)

The comments provided by participants in this section highlighted the effectiveness of story lines to which Hajer (1995) referred. Specifically, the story line of Complacency effectively reduced the complex issues surrounding the persistence

of low-performing public schools. Subsequently, support of the Complacency story line created possibilities for policy solutions that promised closure to an issue that the nation has never been able to effectively address. Hence, an often-bipartisan discourse coalition was formed around the notion that if the nation can muster the courage necessary to rid local schools of complacent educators, then schools can provide children with the learning opportunities they deserve.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the Title I SIG program of 2009 became the chosen solution for chronically low-performing schools. The examination of qualitative data in Chapter 5 served two purposes. The first purpose was to examine the discourses, vocabularies, and story lines structuring the Title I SIG program as a way to uncover the discursive meanings of *turnaround* endorsed by actors during the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG of 2009. The second purpose was to describe the development of discourse coalitions, which facilitated the cooperation of competing interests in support of the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda.

I began this chapter by describing the intricacies associated with the debate on education reform and school improvement and explained why the binary classifications of political interests and ideologies are no longer useful when investigating the formation of policy solutions in what Debray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) labeled as the “new politics of education.” I then cited Hajer’s (2006b) concept of multisignification as way to explain how the debate surrounding school

improvement reform is inhabited by a wide array of competing interests, each attempting to make sense of low-performing schools, and each entering the education reform debate operating from a separate understanding of what is important. This discussion provided the contextual backdrop necessary to explain the challenge for today's policy makers who must develop a consensual understanding of important issues in their efforts to build the coalitional support necessary to authorize a political agenda.

I also described how the growing interconnectedness of global economies and the perpetual threat of economic instability shape the ways in which policy authorities consider the economic and social problems presented during this specific moment in U.S. history. Consequently, I was able to present the ways in which the three narratives informing the broader discourse of educational globalization—performance/accountability, management/surveillance, an market/choice—have structured the meanings of *turnaround*, thus determining what should be done, by whom, and under what circumstances when addressing the persistence of chronically low-performing public schools. In addition, I illustrated how these three narratives were inscribed within the Title I SIG documents as the policy vocabularies of accountability, innovation, and competition.

Next, I explained the use of *turnaround* as a construct in the politics of education and described the development and promotion of turnaround story lines, which, upon gaining credibility, established a discursive unity in the school turnaround reform debate. I then presented the argument that the story lines of Global

Competitiveness, Unprecedented Opportunity, and Disrupt Complacency established a discursive unity that facilitated the development of discourse coalitions and joined competing interests in support of the Obama/Duncan turnaround. In the following chapter I examine the performance dimension of deliberative politics. Specifically, I expose the ways in which performative practices—scripting, staging, setting, and performance—were used in coordination with the discourses examined in this chapter to promote the Title I SIG program of 2009.

Chapter 6: The Performative Construction of the 2009 Title I SIG Program

The “new politics of education” (Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009) and the debates surrounding school improvement and turnaround reform efforts, as explained in Chapter 5, are taking place in an era of “institutional ambiguity” (Hajer, 2006b, p. 43) and multisignification. Within periods of institutional ambiguity, solutions for the pressing problems of education cannot be found exclusively within the traditional constitutional authority of the federal government. Furthermore, this new politics of education is characterized by the phenomenon of multisignification, wherein a wide array of interests attempt to define the significance of what it means to turn around low-performing public schools, each operating from a biased system of signification.

The term *turnaround* itself can be confusing, as it might suggest that an entire community, its schools, students, teachers, and administrators initially lack a sense of worth and thus must be turned into something that is healthy and productive. As the debate on turnaround reforms grew in stature, a variety of interests grappled with the lack of clarity and multiple interpretations of turnaround and subsequently had to consider what significance these contested meanings would have for the future of school improvement. The Obama/Duncan Administration entered office in the midst of this angst and also faced the pressure of needing to garner approval for ARRA stimulus monies. The administration acted quickly to develop a consensual understanding as to what the relevant low-performing and turnaround signifiers were

as they attempted to solidify the coalitional support necessary to authorize a school improvement agenda.

The present chapter builds on the discourse analysis of the “new politics” of education presented in Chapter 5. Whereas the previous chapter critically examined the discursive complexities of the new politics of education through investigating the discourses, policy vocabularies, and story lines structuring the Title I SIG program and turnaround reform movement, this chapter looks beyond the analysis of political discourse to the performance of politics. In speaking to the importance of looking beyond the analysis of language alone, Hajer (2006b) cited the Wittgensteinian idea that language does not simply “float” but is related to practices as operational routines. Therefore, Hajer (2006b) explained that whereas language (e.g., discourses, story lines, policy vocabularies) is certainly a powerful element in the politics of deliberative policy making, it is performances that convey particular meanings. More importantly, these performance-based meanings are constantly reproduced and re-enacted in a particular setting (Hajer, 2005a). Given the purposes of this study, it is essential to consider how the enactment of deliberative politics during the Obama/Duncan Administration conveyed particular meanings essential to the turnaround reform agenda that were then reproduced and reenacted in particular settings.

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to describe how two specific political performances of the Obama/Duncan Administration acted in coordination with the meanings produced by the discourses analyzed in Chapter 5 to codetermine which

definition of school improvement would become the official and accepted version. Hajer's (2005a) four dramaturgical elements of political play are used to realize this purpose. Deliberative politics from Hajer's (2005a) dramaturgical perspective consist of the following sequence of staged performances in which deliberative actors collaboratively determine the rules of policymaking:

1. *Scripting* represents efforts to create a setting by determining the characters in the play and to provide cues for appropriate behavior.
2. *Staging* involves the deliberative organization of an interaction, drawing on existing symbols and the invention of new ones, as well as to the distinction between active players and (presumably passive) audiences.
3. *Setting* is the physical situation in which the interaction takes place, including the artifacts that are brought to the situation.
4. *Performance* is the way in which the contextualized interaction itself produces social realities like understandings of the problem at hand, knowledge, and new power relations.

Although one could argue that each time national leaders speak publicly about education their actions would count as a performance, some performances are more significant than others. In this chapter, I include and analyze two of the most prominent political and education specific performances of the Obama/Duncan Administration, the Listening and Learning (L&L) Tour and educational stakeholders meetings. These two performances allowed for the performative and symbolic politics necessary to build consensus amongst the plurality of differences that sought to define

the meanings that informed the school reform debate. The deliberative performances of the Obama/Duncan Administration were purposefully constructed to bring stability to a political environment characterized by Hajer's (2006b) concept of multisignification. As a result, the L&L Tour and Education Stakeholders Forums helped build the initial support necessary for the launching of a bold reform agenda targeting the nation's chronically low-performing schools.

For each performance, I describe the players associated (both government and nongovernment), details about the settings, and specific texts pertaining to the coverage of each event. In order to illustrate how the story lines previously discussed emerged throughout the performances of the Obama/Duncan Administration, I coded for words/phrases drawn from each of the three dominant story lines previously identified: Global Competitiveness, Unprecedented Opportunity, and Disrupt Complacency. After examining each of the performances I highlight the rolling out of the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda, then conclude with a discussion of how the scripts, staging, setting, and performative aspects of the events analyzed further solidified the Title I SIG of 2009 as a credible policy solution for the nation's 5,000 schools labeled as chronically low performing.

The L&L Tour: Setting 1

The L&L Tour was the most publicized and time-consuming political performance authorized by the Obama/Duncan Administration, as the tour visited a dozen different states and lasted 8 months. The intent of the tour was embedded within the title as presented in the U.S. Department of Education (2009a) press

release: “Education Secretary Launches National Discussion on School Reform: ‘Listening and Learning Tour’ Seeks Grassroots Input on Improving America's Schools.” The L&L Tour was promoted as a deliberative vehicle that would allow the Obama/Duncan Administration to meaningfully engage with “parents, teachers, and administrators,” from both “rural” and “urban” communities.⁹ Offering insight as to the primary purposes of the L&L Tour, the U.S. Department of Education (2009a) released the following statement, quoting Duncan:

The primary purpose of the Listening and Learning tour is to, “Have a national dialogue about how to best deliver a *complete and competitive education to all children* [Global Competitiveness]—from cradle through career. We want to hear directly from people in the classroom about how the federal government can support educators, school districts and states to drive education reform. Before crafting education law in Washington, we want to hear from people across America—parents, teachers and administrators—about the everyday issues and challenges in our schools that need our national attention and support.” (para. 4)

Scott Sargrad, a U.S. Department of Education employee working with the Duncan team during the L&L Tour, suggested the tour’s purpose had been realized:

I think that is what really shaped a lot of his ideas on reform and really what things need to happen across the country. And he went to most of the 50 states. Someone from the senior staff or the Secretary went to all 50 states and talked to education stakeholders, state leaders, teachers, families. All sorts of folks everywhere and really got a sense of what’s happening on the ground in lots of different areas and how federal policy can impact different areas in different ways. (S. Sargrad, personal communication, January 31, 2011)

Yet, it is important to note that the L&L Tour was launched just a month prior to Secretary Duncan’s unveiling of the Title I SIG program at the National Alliance

⁹ Secretary Duncan made reference to “rural” tour stops in Alaska, Wyoming, West Virginia, Vermont, Arizona, and Montana and their “urban counterparts” in a speech given at the American Association of School Administrators conference (Duncan, 2010e; February 12).

for Public Charter Schools Conference. Of the 13 scheduled L&L Tour stops, only 5 had taken place (West Virginia, rural; Detroit, urban; Vermont, rural; Montana, rural; and New Jersey, urban) before Secretary Duncan officially revealed the Department of Education's revision of the Title I SIG program of 2009. Thus, Duncan's claim that "before crafting education law in Washington" the L&L Tour would provide "parents, teachers, and administrators" of the nation's schools with a deliberative role in policy formation appears problematic.

In the following subsection, I provide the performative details of the first five stops. Within each section I offer a brief description of the settings and participants involved at each L&L Tour event, suggested reasons for choosing particular tour events, and the Department of Education's synopses of what participants shared at specific sites.¹⁰

Tour Stop 1: West Virginia, rural, May 5, 2009. The Duncan team launched the L&L Tour in West Virginia as the first of several visits targeting rural constituencies. The West Virginia stop included visits to three schools chosen by Duncan's team after receiving recommendations from West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin (McVey, 2009) and State Superintendent of Schools Steven Paine (Kesner, 2009). West Virginia's first lady Gayle Manchin, State Superintendent of Schools Steven Paine, and Berkeley County Schools Superintendent Manny Arvon accompanied Secretary Duncan during each of the three tour stops. The first two events were held at Berkeley County schools, Bunker Hill Elementary and Eagle

¹⁰ Synopsis of participant input written by various employees within the U.S. Department of Education.

School Intermediate. Avron, speaking to the quality of schools selected by Duncan's team, claimed the administration chose "two outstanding schools, one of which [Eagle School] has received national recognition because they have been able to overcome challenges that face schools across the country with excellent results" (Kesner, 2009, para. 13).

The Bunker Hill tour event was labeled as a "private discussion with teachers, administrative personnel and parents" (McVey, 2009, para. 8). The 2008-2009 NCLB Report Card classified Bunker Hill as successful on AYP measures, scoring above the district and state average in both reading and math assessments, and identified the school's student population as 43.5% meeting the qualifications for free and reduced-price lunch, 93.9% White (*2008-2009 NCLB Report Card: Bunker Hill Elementary School*, 2009).

The second stop in West Virginia, labeled as a "roundtable discussion" (Winters, 2009), took place at Eagle Intermediate School. At Eagle Intermediate, Duncan conversed with staff members about "what works and what doesn't work in the school system" (Kesner, 2009, para. 5). The 2008-2009 NCLB Report Card classified Eagle Intermediate as successful on AYP measures, scoring above the district and state average in both reading and math assessments, and identified the school's student population as 57.3% meeting the qualifications for free and reduced-price lunch, 66.8% White (*2008-2009 NCLB Report Card: Eagle Intermediate School*, 2009).

The highlight of the final L&L Tour event in West Virginia was a panel discussion located at Blue Ridge Community and Technical College located in Martinsburg. Conducted by Secretary Duncan and moderated by Peter Checkovich (President of Blue Ridge Community and Technical College), the town-hall style meeting allowed Duncan and fellow dignitaries to interact with students, instructors, administrators, and local employers. Blue Ridge Community and Technical College (2011) is a state-supported institution within the West Virginia Community and Technical College System and offers education in the areas of liberal arts, business administration, and a variety of health fields.

“Heard on the Tour”: *U.S. Department of Education synopsis of participant input.* Secretary Duncan’s chief of staff, Margot Rogers, summarized the West Virginia L&L Tour participants’ contributions:

One of the most important things we can do as policymakers is stay connected with the people who will be affected by the decisions we make. Our first listening tour stop was a powerful reminder of the value of listening to teachers, parents, and students. The elementary school teachers and parents reminded us of three things:

- Leadership matters. In both schools, teachers told us that they stayed because their principals allowed them to perfect their craft, *removed barriers* [Disrupt Complacency], effectively brokered resources, and supported them. Parents felt welcomed by the principals and recognized that great principals attract and retain great teachers.
- The use of formative assessments – and the resulting data – can be transformative. In both schools, teachers used formative assessments frequently to gauge student progress, shuffle student groupings, determine who needed extra support (including Response to Intervention) and extra challenge, and to otherwise drive their instruction. They painted an incredibly clear before picture (“we told parents that their children couldn’t read, but that was all”) and after picture (“we can tell parents that their child can’t read because he has a specific challenge decoding a short

‘a’ sound”) and spoke passionately about how their use of data made them better at their jobs. Parents commented on how this specific information was much more helpful to them.

- *Preparation matters. Teachers generally agreed that their education had not prepared them to be highly effective in the classroom [Disrupt Complacency]. Many teachers commented that they felt like they got an education that taught them how to teach 25 years ago, and not one that prepared them for teaching in the 21st century. (Rogers, 2009, emphasis added)*

Taking the tour online, May 11, 2009. A week after the L&L Tour event began in West Virginia, the Obama/Duncan Administration introduced a new website meant to offer all school communities with an opportunity to provide input on a specific range of questions about “what’s working, and what’s not” in public schools. Secretary Duncan introduced the website through the release of the following statement:

Last week I went to Berkeley County, West Virginia, to begin an open, honest conversation about education reform. I wanted to hear ideas about how we can accomplish President Obama’s goal of providing every child in America a complete and *competitive education* [Global Competitiveness], from cradle through career. As we prepare for the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, I want to hear from classroom teachers and other educators, parents and students, business people and citizens. What’s working, and what’s not? What do we need to do that we’re not doing, and what do we need to stop doing—or do differently? I will be going to 15 other places across the country to continue this conversation. There is one more place I will be going to listen and learn. Here. In the coming weeks, I will ask questions here. *Topics will include raising standards, strengthening teacher quality, using data to improve learning, and turning around low-performing schools.* I will be reading what you say. So will others here at the U.S. Department of Education. Today, I want to start with a simple set of questions: Many states in America are independently considering adopting internationally benchmarked, college and career-ready standards. Is raising standards a good idea? How should we go about it? Let the conversation begin! (Winters, 2009, para. 1-9, emphasis added)

Tour Stop 2: Detroit, urban, May 13, 2009. The second leg of Secretary Duncan's L&L Tour was in Detroit, Michigan, and was the first of tour stops to target urban school communities. The choice to hold an event in Detroit was strategic in nature, as the "poor quality of education" offered by Detroit's public schools had become a "huge focus" (Mrozowski & Wilkinson, 2009) during Duncan's promotion of mayoral takeovers in low-performing districts and the broader turnaround reform agenda. This support was voiced a month prior to the L&L Tour events in Detroit when Duncan addressed the nation's mayors at the Mayors' National Forum on Education: "At the end of my tenure, if only seven mayors are in control [of big-city school districts] I think I will have failed" (as cited in Quaid, 2009, para. 5).

The Detroit L&L Tour began with a series of meetings during which Secretary Duncan visited with Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm, Detroit Federation of Teachers President Keith Johnson, community leaders, and Detroit officials to "discuss challenges facing Detroit public schools and possible solutions to the problems, including mayoral control and strategies for turning around underperforming schools" (Duncan, 2009b, para. 2).

The second event was a student forum held at Cody High School, where the Duncan team and dignitaries such as Mayor Dave Bing and State Superintendent Mike Flanagan allowed high school seniors to voice their concerns about education. Though the "Heard on the Tour" blog claimed that Duncan and his team listened to the "heart wrenching stories" (Ali, 2009, para. 2) of policy makers, community leaders, educators, parents and students, the official press release (U.S. Department of

Education, 2009f) did not explicitly mention any such interactions with educators or parents, as the events described only detail communications with policy makers, community leaders, and students. At the time of Duncan’s visit, Cody High School had been under intense scrutiny by district and city officials due to its consistent failure to meet federal AYP standards. As of the 2007-2008 school year, approximately 97% of Cody High School’s juniors were below proficiency on state math tests and 80% on the English assessment (Glod, 2009). Although the student demographics for Cody High School during Duncan’s visit are unclear, the school has since been reconstituted as five separate school academies where, on average, 98.4% of the student population is labeled as Black or African American (Detroit Public Schools, 2009).

Duncan concluded the L&L Tour in Detroit with a keynote speech at the United Way Leaders Conference, addressing over 1,500 chief executive officers of United Way organizations from across the United States. Reinforcing the need for dramatic school reforms targeting the nation’s lowest performing schools, Duncan told leaders to “ensure that all children get the education they need and deserve, we must demand fundamental change across the education system and push a strong reform agenda” (Duncan, 2009a).

“Heard on the Tour”: *U.S. Department of Education synopsis of participant input.* Russlynn Ali, Assistant Secretary of Education in the Office for Civil Rights summarized the contributions of Detroit L&L tour participants:

This week we went to “ground zero¹¹” for our second stop on the listening and learning tour. We listened to a community hobbled by the decline of an industry that was once the engine of the city’s economy, a housing market bust as bad as it gets, recent political strife the likes of which one couldn’t make up in a Hollywood screenplay, and a school system suffering beyond compare. Today we listened to Detroit.

We heard heart wrenching stories about unfulfilled dreams from policy-makers, community leaders, educators, parents, and student themselves. We heard from teachers struggling to teach with few needed supports. Teaching, for example, rigorous high school science using a laboratory that is devoid of even the basics, like running water. We listened as high schools seniors told us that more than half of their peers starting with them in the 9th grade were either dead or in jail by the 12th grade. *We heard from community activists and elected officials begging for national attention and support in their moment of urgent crisis* [Unprecedented Opportunity].

But today, we also witnessed hope, responsibility and courage. Hope that finally the forces were aligning for positive change and sustainable reform. *Hope in a new Mayor with the will to do whatever it takes to fix an utterly broken school system* [Disrupt Complacency]. Hope in a Governor with the passion and commitment to help an ailing people. We witnessed courage by everyone to confront the challenges head on; steely determination by students to thrive, no matter what; parents taking ultimate responsibility for their children’s future; and teachers finding creative ways to restructure their schools to meet their students’ needs. More than anything, we saw an entire community united with the spirit of survival.

Today we listened to a city ready to transform its schools from a national disgrace to a national model [Disrupt Complacency]. And, albeit with a heavy heart, we were inspired. (Ali, 2009, emphasis added)

Tour Stop 3: Vermont, rural, May 14, 2009. The Duncan team once again sought to involve rural communities, selecting Vermont as the third stop on the L&L Tour. The first event in Vermont took place at St. Michael’s College in Colchester, where Secretary Duncan delivered the commencement speech to members of the

¹¹ Secretary Duncan told reporters after visiting Detroit, “I think Detroit is ground zero.” He would then add, “Detroit is New Orleans two years ago without Hurricane Katrina, and I feel a tremendous sense of both urgency and outrage” (Detroit School ‘Ground Zero’, 2009, para. 3).

graduating class, Governor of Vermont Jim Douglas, St. Michael's President John Neuhauser, the St. Michaels Board of Trustees, and members of the faculty (U.S. Department of Education, 2009d). St. Michaels College is a small liberal arts college offering 29 majors and serving 2,000 undergraduate and 500 graduate students (St. Michaels College, 2011). The U.S. Department of Education (2009d) released the following statement regarding Duncan's address at St. Michaels:

Duncan called education the civil rights issue of our time and said, "All of the anti-poverty programs in the world will never do as much as an education to make people successful." He commended St Michael's graduating class for its commitment to service and challenged them to choose the classroom to continue their service, noting that more than a million teachers from the baby-boom generation are expected to retire in the next five years." I believe that access to a high-quality education is the difference between a life lived on the margins and a life lived in fulfillment of the American dream," Duncan said. (para. 3-4)

After the commencement ceremonies, the Duncan team visited Lawrence Barnes Elementary School in Burlington. Secretary Duncan first ate lunch with Senator Patrick Leahy, Burlington Mayor Bob Kiss, and Vermont's Education Commissioner Armando Vilaseca ("Secretary Arne Duncan Takes Listening Tour," 2009) and then visited with teachers, parents, and students about the particular educational challenges facing rural communities. In 2008 the Burlington School Board designated Barnes Elementary as one of the nation's first K-5 magnet schools to endorse a sustainability¹² theme (Cirillo, 2010). Before its conversion to a magnet school, Barnes Elementary did not have enough Asian, Hispanic, or Black students to

¹² Barnes Elementary defined sustainability as "the shared responsibility for improving the quality of life for all—socially, economically, environmentally—now and for future generations" (Cirillo, 2010).

register on the state assessment report; however, after its conversion to a magnet school, 25% of students were categorized as Black (Burlington School District, 2011).

The third stop of the Vermont tour took place at the Muddy Waters Café in Burlington, where Secretary Duncan participated in an open-ended conversation with 10 elementary and high school teachers. Tim Tuten (2009), Duncan's director of events, summarized the content of the "teachers coffee":

Teachers talked about everything from their personal reasons for becoming teachers, to experiences with their students, dealing with discipline, pressure to "teach to the test," national standards, media perceptions of teachers, parents who are intimidated by teachers and schools, cooking for their families after working all day, class sizes, what to wear to school, music, support for teachers who want to be principals, "loan forgiveness" and more. The conversation kept running for a couple hours, even after the Secretary had to leave for his next appointment. (para. 3)

The Duncan team's final stop in Vermont was at Westford Elementary School in Westford. David Wells, principal of Westford Elementary, blogged about the federal government's staging of the "big day":

I got a call the next day that it was definite, Arne Duncan would be visiting my school. Tim [Duncan's advance man] came out again that Thursday morning to go over how he would enter the building, who he would meet with, which rooms he would use and how they would be set up. I assured Tim that everything would be fine and we were all ready for the visit. As the time drew near, we had more visitors—a security detail, a photographer, and a videographer. Tim came back to double check our room arrangements and put up banners from the Department of Education. Finally, Arne Duncan came, my students greeted him at the door and escorted him to his meetings. (Wells, 2009a, para. 3)

Duncan's time at Westford would be split into two 30-minute meetings, one with a group of school stakeholders (school board, district administrators, and

parents), the other with Principal Wells and his immediate staff. Wells (2009) offered commentary on the content of his staff's conversation with Duncan:

I found that Arne Duncan is interested in keeping the best and brightest in the teaching field and told my young music teacher with many school loans to pay back that his administration was looking into loan forgiveness for educators. When the topic of NCLB came up, *Arne Duncan said that he favored the idea of a global achievement measures over the patchwork of standards and assessments that schools wrestle with today* [Global Competitiveness, Disrupt Complacency]. I was also glad to hear that Arne Duncan spoke about the importance of measuring academic growth rather than penalizing students who have seen real gains but haven't yet met the high bar of state standards. I had heard in the news that President Obama and Secretary Duncan favor the idea of incentive pay for teachers. One of my teachers who had lived with such a system spoke of her concern that teacher by teacher incentive pay had resulted in divisions among educators. Arne Duncan acknowledged that and spoke about his desire to provide incentives to schools where teachers have worked as a team to raise student achievement. (para. 2)

“*Heard on the Tour*”: U.S. Department of Education synopsis of **participant input.** The only “*Heard on the Tour*” synopsis of Vermont participant input was that of the conversations taking place at the Muddy Waters Café. Tuten (2009) summarized the contributions of participants:

Two weeks ago In West Virginia, our first listening tour stop, teachers told me they would have liked to have met Secretary Duncan after school for coffee. They said the conversation he'd started at their school could have gone on for hours. They'd have time for that after school, when they could relax and just let the conversation roll.

We took that advice to heart. Before arriving in Vermont last week, we contacted a teacher at Colchester High School and asked where her teacher friends hang out. She mentioned a café in nearby Burlington, a few blocks from the university.

That's where 10 elementary and high school teachers stopped in right after school got out, grabbed a coffee, and sat down for an hour with Secretary Duncan for an open-ended conversation. Support for teachers who want to be principals, “loan forgiveness” and more. The conversation kept running for a couple hours, even after the Secretary had to leave for his next appointment.

Something that kept coming up again and again throughout the conversation was the realization that teachers laugh and cry a lot. We cry mostly in the first few years, then we learn to laugh more, and as we get older we cry with joy when our students succeed and graduate. Maybe the teachers in Vermont are just highly emotional, but I don't think so. The teachers in West Virginia told us similar stories, with similar emotional reactions. It seems that if you're going to have a free-wheeling conversation with teachers, you better bring some Kleenex, or if you're in a café, stock up on the napkins. You're going to laugh until you cry, and you're not leaving until everybody hugs each other. This "meeting" really set the tone for the next day's school visits.

Tour Stop 4: Montana, rural, May 27, 2009. Montana was chosen by the Duncan team as the fourth stop of the L&L Tour, providing Secretary Duncan with a third opportunity to interact with constituents about the issues confronting rural education. The first event was held at Lame Deer High School in Billings, where Duncan, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan, Senator Jon Tester, and Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer visited with 20 education and school officials, students, parents, and Larry Medicine Bull (Lame Deer's American Indian Culture and Government teacher). In a profile written about Secretary Duncan, the *Christian Science Monitor* described his interactions with the Lame Deer community:

Sitting in a circle with students and teachers and, in the native American tradition, passing a feather to the person who had the floor, Duncan listened to the usual litany of requests for computers and fancy equipment. But an air of defeatism pervaded the place: In the past six years, only eight students have gone on to four-year colleges. Duncan was incredulous. (Paulson & Teicher Khadaroo, 2010, para. 3)

The article then described Duncan's reaction to the state of poverty witnessed during his visit:

Duncan says he was hit by how mentally crushing it is to grow up surrounded by poverty—70 percent of the reservation's adults are unemployed—and a

sense that even school, the one place that might afford the opportunity to climb out of it, was letting kids down. (Paulson & Teicher Khadaroo, 2010, para. 5)

The 2008-2009 NCLB Report Card classified Lame Deer High School as failing to meet both reading (81% of students failing to meet proficiency) and math standards (95% of students failing to meet proficiency) on federal AYP measures, and 100% of the school's students were labeled as American Indian or Native American (Web Report Card: Lame Deer High School, 2009).¹³

The second event in Montana took place at the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council, where Duncan, Donovan, and Schweitzer participated in a "Friendship Ceremony" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). It appears the primary purpose of this visit was for U.S. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan to speak with tribal leaders about governmental aide and the persistence of poverty under HUD policies. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Housing Authority (2010) released the following statement in regards to the visit:

In May, the new U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Shaun Donovan, made a "first-ever" visit to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation along with the Education Secretary, Arne Duncan. This visit was historic as Secretary Donovan was able to see first-hand the issues that have plagued reservations since the inception of HUD funding. Secretary Donovan vowed that he would do all he could to help Native Americans address issues related to Housing. The Tribe had a very nice welcoming for these dignitaries and a Friendship Ceremony was performed by one of our very own Societies. (para. 4)

¹³ The principal of Lame Deer High School and the superintendent of the district have since been replaced, and Lame Deer High School was reopened as one of Montana's "Schools of Promise." As described by the Montana office of public instruction, "the Montana Schools of Promise – School Improvement Grants Initiative is a partnership between schools, communities and the Office of Public Instruction to improve Montana's most struggling schools" (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2011).

The final two events on the L&L Tour in Montana included a visit to Broadwater Elementary School and a joint press conference for Secretary Duncan, HUD Secretary Donovan, Senator Jon Tester, and Governor Brian Schweitzer. The Broadwater¹⁴ visit was primarily ceremonial, as Montana Senator Jon Tester's press release and local media coverage suggested the primary purposes of Duncan's visit were to honor Broadwater's 100th birthday celebration (*Tester Hosts Housing, Education Secretaries in Montana*, 2009) and to take photos with students (Shay, 2009). Although a short promotional video was provided, there was no "Heard on the Tour" synopsis provided for the L&L Tour events in Montana.

Tour Stop 5: New Jersey, urban, June 5, 2009. The fifth overall L&L Tour stop took place in New Jersey. As the second visit targeting urban school communities, Senator Frank Lautenberg, Senator Robert Menendez, Representative Rush Holt, Representative Donald Payne, and New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine joined Duncan during his visit to North Star Academy-Clinton Hill charter school. North Star Academy was chosen because of its success with students in Newark (U.S. Department of Education, 2009f), thus supporting an Obama/Duncan reform agenda that promotes the expansion of charter schools as an integral solution for the nation's consistently low-performing urban school districts. Duncan offered the following response when asked during his visit to New Jersey about those opposed to the

¹⁴ Demographic and other school characteristics of Broadwater Elementary were not provided due to the ceremonial nature of this particular event.

expansion of the charter school network as a solution to low-achievement in urban school districts:

The data on charters is very clear. The highest-performing charters are a huge part of the solution. There are some in the middle, and there are some that are part of the problem. The key for Newark is to bring in more of the high-performing charters. There are some amazing players out there who can help. And at the end of the day, it's a false argument against charters. These are public schools, public dollars, public school children and should be part of any reform. (*A Q&A With...Arne Duncan*, 2011)

In anticipation of Duncan's visit, Paul Bambrick-Santoya, managing director of North Star Academy, said he hoped to "share with Duncan their methodology" as a way to contribute to the "massive movement to force change in urban education" (Nutt, 2009, para. 5).

During Duncan's stay at North Star, he and fellow dignitaries visited English and math classes, attended a school-wide celebration of academic achievement, and participated in a forum with students and parents (U.S. Department of Education, 2009e). At the time of the Duncan team's visit, North Star Academy met the administration's criterion as a high-performance charter school, as it continuously posted achievement scores higher than schools in the same community and based upon the 2008 NCLB data was considered to be the second highest performing urban school in New Jersey (Epstein, 2009).

"Heard on the Tour": U.S. Department of Education synopsis of participant input. Todd May, senior director in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, provided a brief reflection of the previous L&L Tour stops and summarized the contributions of New Jersey participants:

Everywhere Secretary Duncan has visited on his listening tour—a Montana Indian reservation, a high school in Detroit, a middle school in West Virginia—students are saying, “*Challenge me, push me, make me work, and I will do it*” [Disrupt Complacency].

He heard the same message in Newark, N.J., one of America’s poorest cities. Many families there face so many challenges: rising unemployment, foreclosures, an overburdened social services system. One in three children lives in poverty. No more than half of the 8th grade students pass state tests. A quarter of high school seniors do not graduate.

Yet parents and students find hope in the form of a promise of a better life through education. In Newark, nowhere does that hope shine brighter than at North Star Academy. Children enter this public charter school at the 5th grade often significantly behind their state peers. Less than 35 percent of entering students are proficient in literacy and 15 percent are proficient in math. Yet over 95 percent of 7th graders—who have been in the school less than 2 full years—scored proficient or advanced in language arts literacy and math. Based on these results, North Star is the highest performing school in Newark and 2nd highest among all urban schools in New Jersey.

The secretary and those of us travelling with him observed classes, participated in the all-school “community circle,” and heard students and parents testify to the passion and commitment of the teachers and administrators at North Star. We heard how educators take the time to really know their students, and students and parents really know teachers and staff. We saw how teachers challenge students not to just learn but to make good choices—the right choices—and thereby develop their character and an ethos of service. Students talked about their teachers as their second parents—available to them at all hours, on weekends, and whenever they really need them. The passion and commitment of the North Star community has students believing that failure is not an option.

The youth of North Star understand that despite the unwavering efforts of dedicated teachers and supportive staff, the responsibility for learning, achieving and growing ultimately depends on them. These young scholars commit to a schedule that has them attending class or involved in enrichment and remediation activities far after the regular school day ends for other students in the city. And, to avoid the summer slide in academic skills, North Star students have a longer school year and a shorter summer break, with students in class for 200 days a year. Students said this helps build confidence and character and an understanding of the expectations that lie ahead: college. For the North Star student, college is not a “dream, an aspiration or a goal; it is their destiny.”

Parents in the North Star community believe fervently in their role as advocates for their children and the children of Newark. *They believe in being more accountable and responsible for their children's academic success* [Disrupt Complacency]. They embrace it and feel passionately about it. As one parent said, “the happiest day of my life was when I knew my son would be enrolled in North Star and he would have an opportunity to receive a great education.” They believe that charter schools like North Star are beacons of hope for parents and students. As one parent said “build on what works, expand it to benefit the entire public education system, and, in turn, renew and revitalize Newark.” (May, 2009)

The “primary purpose” of Secretary Duncan’s L&L tour was to engage the nation’s “parents, teachers and administrators” in a discussion about the ways in which the federal government should support educators in their efforts to “deliver a *complete and competitive education to all children* [Global Competitiveness]—from cradle through career” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, para. 4, emphasis added). Moreover, the publicized intentions of the L&L Tour were to engage these constituents in a direct manner “before crafting education law in Washington” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, para. 4). Thus, when evaluating the stated intentions of the L&L Tour, it is important to examine the political performances enacted to realize the written and spoken purposes of the tour.

Of the five L&L Tour events staged before the Obama/Duncan Administration introduced the Title I SIG program of 2009, only eight public school communities were visited. Of these eight schools, four were classified as elementary schools, two as intermediate or middle schools, and two as high schools. Additionally, of the campuses selected, only two schools were considered to be low performing (Cody High School and Lane Deer High School) at the time of Duncan’s visit. Consequently, Sargrad’s earlier claim that the L&L Tour “shaped a lot of his

[Duncan's] ideas on reform" appears problematic. Certainly, even without considering the qualitative depth of conversational dialogue during the first five tour stops, the simple quantity of "deliberative" interactions Duncan and his team shared with dignitaries and school stakeholders fail to serve as an adequate representation of the nation's parents, teachers and administrators that would soon be directly affected by the Title I SIG program.

The Education Stakeholders Forums: Setting 2

The second set of significant political and education-specific performances enacted by the Obama/Duncan Administration were the Education Stakeholders Forums held at the U.S. Department of Education headquarters. The forums were established as a series of monthly public meetings where, upon registering, educational stakeholders would be allowed to interact with senior-level administration at the department. Structured to last approximately 90 minutes, the forums allowed participants to approach a microphone and ask questions once the U.S. Department of Education had covered its agenda.

Of the 11 Education Stakeholders Forums that had taken place as of February 2011, only one (June 18, 2009) was conducted before Secretary Duncan announced the department's outline of the revised Title I SIG program, an education reform package and prescribed set of school improvement strategies targeting the turnaround of the nation's persistently low-performing public schools. The June forum was held in the Barnard Auditorium at the U.S. Department of Education headquarters. Department officials presiding over the forum included moderator Massie Ritsch,

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Chief of Staff Margot Rogers, Senior Officer in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Joe Conaty, Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Carmel Martin, and Deputy Undersecretary Robert Shireman.¹⁵ Non-U.S. Department of Education participants in attendance included Robert Grant (citizen from Washington, DC), Stephanie Smith-Lee (National Down Syndrome Society), Soumary Vongrassamy (Southwest Asia Resource Action Center), Robert Lippincott (PBS), Kimberly Jones (Council for Opportunity in Education), Steve DeWitt (Association for Career and Technical Education), Mr. Brannum, Kerry Venegas (National Indian Education Association), Patrick Burnett (National Association of State Student and Aid Programs), Marty Blank (Institute for Educational Leadership and the Coalition for Community Schools), Bob Harris (Career College Association), and Jim Kohlmoos (Knowledge Alliance).

The following items constituted the agenda for the June forum (*Education Stakeholders Forum*, 2009):

1. Welcome, Massie Ritsch;
2. Opening Remarks, Arne Duncan;
3. Introduction of Senior Staff, Margot Rogers;
4. ARRA Update, Joseph Conaty; ESEA and Listening Tour, Massie Ritsch and Carmel Martin;
5. Budget and Appropriation Issues, Carmel Martin;

¹⁵ There were 23 additional U.S. Department of Education employees in attendance.

6. Higher Ed Update, Robert Shireman; and

7. Wrap-up Q/A and Future Agenda Items, Massie Ritsch.

Secretary Duncan addressed those in attendance, reinforcing his hopes for what would take place during the forums:

We have an extraordinarily talented career staff that sort of continues to amaze folks out in the field, *how quickly we're turning around the stimulus applications. And lots of people say this is not how the federal bureaucracy is supposed to work. You're moving too quick. And that's the kind of things you like to hear* [Unprecedented Opportunity]. And then we're just trying to build around that team and bring in great folks around the country from many, many different walks of life. (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 6, emphasis added*)

Duncan later added,

I really see the interaction of you of trying to build a real partnership and *I want you to hold us accountable and push us and when you see us make a mistake and doing something that doesn't make sense, absolutely challenge us. That's your role. I also see us trying to work together. We're going to likewise push you* [Disrupt Complacency]. I see us working very, very hard to drive this reform agenda. *I think we're all here because we know how far we have to go and knowing we're good enough as a country where the status quo is good enough and we can just sort of maintain* [Disrupt Complacency]. And so at every level, every child, K to 12, higher ed., we're trying to get a lot better. We're trying to get a lot better fast. We all hope for eight years. We sort of have to think in blocks of four. You can't bank on eight, so can we fundamentally change things in this next four years and change things in the next four decades. That's really how we're thinking. (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 6, emphasis added*)

Duncan then foreshadowed the speed at which the reform agenda would be unveiled:

It's interesting that the role that we can potentially play using our resources, using the bully pulpit to try and drive change [Unprecedented Opportunity]. I think that's what we're all here to do.

There is obviously a tremendous amount of activity going on trying to get the Stimulus money very, very fast and again, our career team has done an unbelievable job of that trying to make sure that we're using that money wisely, starting to think through where we go with NCLB reauthorization. ...

Obviously, we have Race to the Top funding coming out. We have the Innovation and What Works funding coming out. *So the next couple of months are going to be pretty exciting here. And I just want to work with you to try and get the kind of dramatic fundamental change* [Unprecedented Opportunity]. All this stuff for me, it's really not about the money—it's a lot of money. We're thrilled to have it. But this money is going to come and go. Can we leverage these resources to get the kind of fundamental change we need that will last long after the last, when these dollars are spent? And so the more we can partner, the more you can push us, but I'll also push you to really be working with the states, with the districts, to be thinking about how we use this money creatively and wisely and how we don't just invest in the status quo. (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, pp. 9-10, emphasis added*)

As with the L&L Tour, when evaluating the stated intentions of the Education Stakeholders Forums, it is necessary to examine the performative politics enacted to realize their written and spoken purposes. While the primary purpose of the L&L Tour was to engage the nation's "parents, teachers and administrators" before "crafting education law in Washington" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, para. 4), Secretary Duncan alluded to a different purpose for the series of Education Stakeholders Forums facilitated by the U.S. Department of Education. Duncan promoted the forums as a way to build critical partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, allowing the U.S. Department of Education to garner feedback on suggested policy solutions while the Obama/Duncan Administration continued to "drive" the education reform agenda (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 6*). Although the stated intention of the monthly forums was to seek the deliberative input of stakeholders asked to "challenge" the revising of education reform and "hold the government accountable" when "making mistakes" (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 6*), only one such forum was held before the unveiling of Title I SIG program revisions. In fact, the first forum took place merely five days before Secretary Duncan

announced the administration's turnaround reform agenda at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference. Thus, once again, regardless of the quality of feedback offered during this staged and scripted event, the promotion of the forums as a substantive vehicle for the deliberative shaping of federal education policy must be called into question.

The Roll Out: Defining the Official Meaning of Turnaround

On June 22, 2009, after only five L&L Tour stops and one Education Stakeholders Forum, Secretary of Education Duncan unveiled the outline of the Title I SIG program of 2009 at a speech he delivered at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference. During this speech, Duncan offered particulars about the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda, speaking to attendees about the "courage" needed to turn around the nation's lowest performing schools:

I came to Washington because I believe in education. I know that change is possible. I know we have the talent and the ideas to succeed. *The only question is whether we have the courage to do what's right for kids* [Disrupt Complacency]. We've seen what happens when caution trumps courage. Nothing changes and kids lose. *But we've also seen the opposite where bold leaders have fought the status quo* [Disrupt Complacency]. ...

We've seen traditional public schools where creative and dedicated educators built strong teams, boosted parental involvement, and raised student achievement. We've seen it in charter schools where gutsy entrepreneurs abandoned lucrative careers, staked a claim in struggling communities, and now are producing miracles.

There is no shortage of courage in this room. You wouldn't be here if you weren't risk-takers. So I'm asking you once again to put your reputations on the line and take on this challenge. I'm asking for your help because I believe in you. I'm asking because I am hopeful. I'm asking, above all, because our children need you and America needs you.

We may never have an opportunity like this again this president, this Congress, \$100 billion, and a broad and growing consensus around the importance of education [Unprecedented Opportunity]. So this is our time and this is our moment. This is our chance to transform the one thing in society with the power to transform lives. (Duncan, 2009d, para. 62–67, emphasis added)

Duncan’s speech served as the official introduction of the Obama/Duncan blueprint for education reform, reinforced the story lines of Unprecedented Opportunity and Disrupt Complacency, and sent an implicit message about the administration’s desire to implement charter school expansion as a major component in the turnaround reform effort by first introducing the Title I SIG revisions at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference.

The written and spoken narratives of the federal government during the L&L Tour, the Education Stakeholders Forum and the roll out of the Title I SIG program reinforced each of the three dominant story lines used to promote the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda: Global Competitiveness, Unprecedented Opportunity, and Disrupt Complacency. Additionally, it is important to recognize the particular dominance of the Disrupt Complacency story line, which emerged as the most frequently reiterated story line throughout the “deliberative” crafting of the Title I SIG program. While individually, each of the three story lines has been supported and condemned by a variety of different interests, together they have furnished the Obama/Duncan Administration with a flexible triumvirate of narratives to draw from as they set out across the nation to simultaneously listen to the needs of school communities and promote what appears to have been an already solidified agenda for school turnaround reform.

Scripting, Staging, Setting, and Performance: L&L Tour

This section of the chapter focuses on the performance dimension of Hajer's (2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b) policy analysis, thus enriching the examination of discourse provided in Chapter 5 by illustrating how the performative politics of the Obama/Duncan Administration worked in coordination with the previously discussed discourses to give shape to the school turnaround agenda. This type of analysis focuses on particular aspects of physical and symbolic practices in which policy discourses are constantly being produced and reproduced: scripting, staging, setting, and performance. This focus brings to light the persuasive ways deliberative actors can be "acted upon" and thus convinced to sponsor certain policy solutions over others (Hajer, 2006b, p. 49).

Scripting. Those who were asked to provide grassroots input on improving America's schools during the L&L Tour were given "cues for appropriate behavior" (Hajer, 2005a, p. 449). While the stated intent of the tour was to meaningfully interact with parents, teachers, and administrators, the public vetting of the Obama/Duncan *Blueprint for Reform* followed a specific script as to how the tour's participants would be able to perform. While the Duncan team always encouraged participants to speak freely, the events themselves were often brief and were sometimes ceremonial or celebratory in nature.

Additionally, as noted in the U.S. Department of Education summaries of participant input, the comments of tour participants seemed to reinforce the administration's education reform agenda as outlined in the *Blueprint for Reform*

(U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). As an example, the West Virginia summation of participant comments made it appear that teachers, parents, and administrators all placed importance on the “removal of barriers” (innovation policy vocabulary), the use of formative assessments (accountability policy vocabulary), and increased accountability being placed on teacher preparation programs (accountability vocabulary). Yet, because the general public was never provided with complete and full access to all of the statements made by tour participants, some of the dissenting voices might have been de-scripted.

Another aspect of scripting during the L&L Tour was the identification of educational stakeholders at each of the tour stops. Local actors were forced to operate from “fixed statutory based modes of participation” (Hajer, 2005b, p. 642), as they were typically in the presence of media and dignitaries from city, state, and federal government. Specifically, the lack of dissent in the transcribed comments suggests that local actors took cues from the script. Thus, while they were encouraged to share their honest opinions about the policies that should guide public schools, their voices might have been partially muted by the presence of primary players. As an example, while giving parents and students an opportunity to voice their opinions during the event taking place in New Jersey, those listening to the parents included major dignitaries such as Governor Jon Corzine, Senator Frank Lautenberg, Senator Robert Menendez, Representative Rush Holt, and Representative Donald Payne. Therefore, the federally crafted synopsis of participants included comments such as, “They believe in being more accountable and responsible for their children’s academic

success” (Disrupt Complacency), which might have been indicative of the environment shaped by holding the event at a successful school celebrating its achievements and by the presence of numerous dignitaries. Consequently, as the primary tour stop chosen to highlight the voice of charter school parents, such an environment appears to have failed in facilitating a robust conversation about the benefits and potential challenges of charter schools as a policy solution.

Setting and staging. The staging of the L&L Tour was realized in the “deliberative organization of interaction” (Hajer, 2005a, p. 449) that took place in purposefully public settings (auditoriums, cafeterias, classrooms, coffee shops, etc.). While the federal team intentionally traveled into the domain of education professionals and sometimes met behind closed doors, the dynamic created by a federal entourage entering a local setting implicitly staged the U.S. Department of Education visitors as the traveling experts and the receiving public as the passive participants.

The script as provided by department officials stated, “We want to hear directly from people in the classroom about how the federal government can support educators, school districts and states to drive education reform” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009e, para. 4). However, as is the case in most heavily publicized events, the staging of local, state, and federal bureaucrats altered the spoken intent of a script. When more intimate and less structured moments did present themselves, such as the coffee Secretary Duncan had with teachers in West Virginia, the comments of educators were captured in the following manner:

Teachers talked about everything from their personal reasons for becoming teachers, to experiences with their students, dealing with discipline, pressure to “teach to the test,” national standards, media perceptions of teachers, parents who are intimidated by teachers and schools, cooking for their families after working all day, class sizes, what to wear to school, music, support for teachers who want to be principals, “loan forgiveness” and more. (Tuten, 2009)

In the same synopsis, the ideas emanating from teachers were portrayed as “highly” emotional:

Something that kept coming up again and again throughout the conversation was the realization that teachers laugh and cry a lot. We cry mostly in the first few years, then we learn to laugh more, and as we get older we cry with joy when our students succeed and graduate. Maybe the teachers in Vermont are just highly emotional, but I don’t think so. The teachers in West Virginia told us similar stories, with similar emotional reactions. It seems that if you’re going to have a free-wheeling conversation with teachers, you better bring some Kleenex, or if you’re in a café, stock up on the napkins. (Tuten, 2009)

Thus, whereas the technical role of U.S. Department of Education employees was to gather the type of input that would supposedly be woven into the very fabric of a reauthorized ESEA and Title I SIG, often the input being collected from local educators provided little in regards to how such policies should be considered, or what resources and support are required to implement the strategies necessary to turn around low-performing schools.

Performances. Hajer (2005a) envisioned performances as the way in which contextualized interactions produce social realities. The perceived social realities that tour participants shared in regards to schooling were shaped by the selective choice of contexts, often upon recommendation of state-level bureaucrats, and were interpreted from the scripts drafted by federal employees responsible for blogging the tour events. Consequently, the U.S. Department of Education framed West Virginian educators as

concerned about leaders who were not being provided with the resources needed to succeed, as educators who believed in the power of formative assessments, and as educators who had little faith in their teacher preparation programs. From the Detroit tour stop, the U.S. Department of Education asserted that as “ground zero” (Ali, 2009) Detroit’s public schools were in the midst of a hobbled and declining city, where all educators lacked the supports they needed but as a community of education stakeholders were ready to transform its schools from disgrace to model. In Vermont, besides explaining that teachers “cry a lot,” the U.S. Department of Education claimed teachers were concerned about a range of the personal and professional struggles they encounter on a daily basis (Tuten, 2009). Finally, in New Jersey, the U.S. Department of Education declared that parents living in abject poverty were championing charter school opportunities such as the North Star Academy as the primary “beacons of hope” for their children (May, 2009).

These selective vignettes and the individual voices collected were then used to represent the broader voice of all education stakeholders across the nation, as the Obama/Duncan Administration attributed the shaping of the turnaround reform agenda policy to those experiences provided by the L&L Tour (as noted in Sargrad’s previous comments). Additionally, as will be discussed further in the conclusion, Secretary Duncan repeatedly referred to specific elements of the scripts structuring the L&L Tour, often recollecting the “heart wrenching stories about unfulfilled dreams” (comments such as these from Detroit) when justifying the turnaround reform agenda as written in the Title I SIG program.

Scripting, Staging, Setting, and Performance: Education Stakeholders Forums

Scripting. Those attending the Education Stakeholders Forum at the U.S. Department of Education headquarters were expected to help push Secretary Duncan and his team toward making sure the department spent the newly released ARRA monies in “innovative” ways, as opposed to investing in the “status quo.” Duncan made this sentiment clear:

So the next couple of months are going to be pretty exciting here. And *I just want to work with you to try and get the kind of dramatic fundamental change.* All this stuff for me, it's really not about the money—it's a lot of money. We're thrilled to have it. But this money is going to come and go. *Can we leverage these resources to get the kind of fundamental change we need that will last long after the last, when these dollars are spent.* And so the more we can partner, the more you can push us, but I'll also push you to really be working with the states, with the districts, to be *thinking about how we use this money creatively and wisely and how we don't just invest in the status quo.* And yes, we want to save hundreds of thousands of teachers' jobs, *but if that's all we do, we miss this sort of historic, historic opportunity* [Unprecedented Opportunity]. (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 10, emphasis added*)

Though the script presented by Secretary Duncan seemed to position participants as privileged collaborators, two aspects must be considered. First, the forum took place only 3 days before Secretary Duncan released the details of the Title I SIG program at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference. Second, during Massie Ritsch’s introduction of the forum’s proceedings, she implicitly set the cues for behavior by offering the following:

And, also available at the resource table at the back is the Administration’s education agenda summarized and President Obama’s cornerstone speech on education as well as Secretary Duncan’s recent speeches on the importance of data and common standards and what he’s doing to support initiatives in those areas. (*Education Stakeholders Forum, 2009, p. 4*)

Thus, as a publically posted meeting, the cues for appropriate behavior (Hajer, 2005a) were initially established during Massie Ritsch's introductory statements. Ritsch, a U.S. Department of Education employee, commenced the event by setting the parameters of what would be discussed, as she informed participants of the need to work through a "very full" agenda. She then established the rules for deliberative interaction by informing participants how they would be expected to engage with department officials during the 20-25 minutes allotted to questions specific to those issues listed on the forum's agenda. Additionally, Ritsch implicitly privileged the values that would be recognized during the forum by asking participants to use printouts of the Obama/Duncan *Blueprint* and a series of Duncan's speeches addressing the "importance of data and common standards" as guiding resources (*Education Stakeholders Forum*, 2009, p. 4).

Staging and setting. The staging of the stakeholder forums included the invitation of 29 U.S. Department of Education employees and at least 13 nondepartmental employees. Though this was an open invite meeting, the overwhelming presence of Department of Education employees certainly shaped the tenor of the script. Additionally, the forum's proceedings were guided by a table of contents focused on a narrow range of topics: (a) introduction of the senior staff; (b) ARRA update, (c) ESEA and L&L Tour information; (d) budget and appropriation issues; (e) higher education update; and (f) wrap-up questions and answers.

Performances. In contrast to the listening and learning tour, the Education Stakeholders Forum was structured by two identifiable performances. First, the

bureaucratic performance sought to reinforce and highlight the reform efforts that had been launched as a result of the of ARRA monies. Additionally, U.S. Department of Education employees recapped specific aspects of the L&L Tour—those that further praised the Obama/Duncan agenda for its “innovative” and “bold” reform efforts. The nondepartmental employees offered a second performance, which served two purposes. First, actors asked unique questions based upon the interests they represented. However, the cumulative questioning of all actors served as a second performance providing a script of a general public growing concerned about the details of what seemed to be a rapidly developing overhaul of education policy.

Conclusion

Two primary issues arose during the examination of political performances that helped structure the final revision of the Title I SIG program. First, and most glaring, is the obvious disconnect between the government’s stated desire to seek deliberative input on the shaping of education reform and the abbreviated timeline upon which deliberative performances were scheduled. Secretary Duncan promoted the L&L Tour and the Educational Stakeholders Forums as two of the deliberative vehicles that would allow the Obama/Duncan Administration to meaningfully engage with parents, teachers, and administrators when gathering valuable input on the policies targeting the improvement of America’s lowest performing public schools.

Explicitly outlining the purposes of the tour, Duncan offered that the purpose was to:

have a national dialogue about how to best deliver a complete and competitive education to all children from cradle through career. We want to hear directly from people in the classroom about how the federal government can support educators, school districts and states to drive education reform. *Before*

crafting education law in Washington, we want to hear from people across America parents, teachers and administrators about the everyday issues and challenges in our schools that need our national attention and support. (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, para. 4, emphasis added)

Certainly, if Secretary Duncan were referring only to the future reauthorization of ESEA, this timeline might have been conducive for gathering such input. However, Duncan joined the deliberative activities of the tour and forum with the shaping of the Title I SIG program, even though only 5 of the 13 tour stops had been conducted and only 1 of the 9 forums had taken place. This disjunction in the timeline confirms the commentaries offered by interviewees in the previous chapter. Specifically, the Obama/Duncan Administration failed to sufficiently vet the revision of the Title I SIG program with persons in the education reform community, members and staffers of Congress, those participating in the L&L Tour, or those invited to participate in the series of Education Stakeholders Forums.

Second, consideration of the L&L Tour and Education Stakeholders Forum performances must be viewed within the context of an administration that considers the nation as mired in an economic and education crisis. This was an important point for Hajer and Uitermark (2007), who maintained that, during crises, standard classifications are inadequate, as authoritative systems are ill equipped to differentiate among competing claims. In this view, the performative acts of education policy makers reflect that they must recognize and maneuver between the multitudes of interests seeking to impose a specific view as to what works in low-performing public schools. The examination of data in this chapter suggests the Obama/Duncan Administration defined the performance specific rules of deliberation and were thus

able to determine which turnaround meanings gained credibility during the performative enactment of politics. Therefore, turnaround meanings were directly shaped by the Obama/Duncan Administration's ability to develop the support of discourse coalitions that endorsed a specific way of considering the crisis of low-performing schools, thus neutralizing critics who might question the intricacies of implementing the policies embedded within the turnaround reform agenda.

Roger Ebert (1998) described Barry Levinson's political satire "Wag the Dog" as a cinematic portrayal of how easy it is for the federal government to "whip up a patriotic frenzy," thus warning viewers of the sometimes "dubious" intentions of authority. Note that *dubious* means questionable or [suspect](#) as to the true nature or quality. Addressing the "absurd" yet "convincing" themes broached in the script adapted from the Larry Beinhart book, *American Hero*, Ebert offered the following:

Levinson, working from a smart, talky script by David Mamet and Hilary Henkin, based on the book "American Hero" by Larry Beinhart, deconstructs the media blitz that accompanies any modern international crisis. Even when a conflict is real and necessary (the Gulf War, for example), the packaging of them is invariably shallow and unquestioning; like sportswriters, war correspondents abandon any pretense of objectivity and detachment, and cheerfully root for our side.

The purpose of this study was not to question the personal motives of President Barack Obama or Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, yet the findings in this chapter seem to resemble the themes brought forward in Ebert's commentary on the issues addressed in "Wag the Dog." Ebert framed "Wag the Dog" as a theatrical illustration of the effectiveness of a government manufactured media blitz when attempting to package crises or conflicts. Ebert's comments seem to suggest that,

while shallow, the effectiveness of such “packaging” is that it creates a seductive layer of spin, detaching individuals tasked with covering such crises or conflicts from the deep scrutiny deserved by the general public. The examination of political performances in this chapter illustrates the effectiveness of the federal government’s manufactured “deliberative” blitz and the ways in which scripted and staged performances packaged what could be “heard” from parents, teachers, administrators and educational stakeholders. The seductive premise that the government would “listen and learn” to those closest to the issue of low-performing public schools before crafting federal policy provides the pretense that the Title I SIG program and other policies are founded directly upon the ideals that were revealed through deliberative and democratic engagement.

Yet, the findings in this chapter suggests that the federal government’s shallow and dubious enactment of deliberative politics and constant reiteration of strategic story lines determined the discursive meanings of the issues and challenges used to justify the policy vocabularies and policy solutions embedded within the Title I SIG program. Consequently, such performative politics shaped the meanings of the issues that informed the frenzy surrounding the perceived crisis of persistently low-performing public schools, allowing the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda to initially evade deeper scrutiny as to the potential impact of policy solutions on local communities and the lack of empirical research supporting the turnaround strategies being promoted.

Chapter 7: Implications for Policy: Deliberative Possibilities

Initial Points of Consideration

Throughout Chapters 1–6, I have repeatedly illustrated how the omnipresent threat of an economic crisis has been a primary influence in the politics of federal governance since the global economic collapse of the 1970s. In addition, I examined the federal government’s historical response to such conditions, thus demonstrating how over the course of the last four decades the United States has consistently reduced its commitment to the public sector, choosing instead to promote economic policies informed by the ideals of market-based liberalism. Hence, during this time period, issues such as trade, energy, environment, labor, health care, welfare, taxation, and education had to be framed and accepted as credible responses to the procurement of economic growth and stability in order to receive recognition on the political agendas of federal policy makers. I made the argument that among these issues, education, specifically the chronic failure of public schools, appears to have emerged as a primary emblematic issue, now serving as an effective metaphor for the nation’s economic crisis (as noted in Chapter 5).

Consequently, federal policies such as Title I that have historically targeted issues of equity and the reduction of poverty are being reconfigured to resemble the values woven throughout the discourses of globalization (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010). Although the values of democracy and equity that founded the original passage of ESEA and Title I continue to be written into the purposes of educational policies,

they are often overshadowed by dominant discourses that promote strategies privileging efficiency, accountability, and privatization. Thus, over the course of the last two decades, the purposes of reforms targeting the improvement of chronically low-performing schools often have been replaced by the policy discourses of global modernization and competitiveness and thus have resulted in a “global convergence in reform strategies” (Ball, 2008, p. 42).

It is within this context that the debates surrounding the Title I SIG program of 2009 and the turnaround reform agenda must be considered. Such debates involve a diverse range of interests, each seeking to determine how the crisis of low-performing schools is addressed. However, this debate can no longer be categorized as a political contest between liberal and conservative interests, or public and private interests; educational policy scholars such as DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) have called attention to the fact that the once recognizable political and ideological boundaries dividing such contestations have dissolved over the past 10 years, further complicating the political landscape of education policy.

When the Title I SIG program of 2009 was introduced, approximately 5,000 schools in the United States—5% of the nation’s total—qualified as potential Title I SIG program recipients due to their status as chronically low-performing schools (Duncan, 2009e). Worth noting is Mintrop’s (2003) suggestion that such schools are often clustered in districts that “traditionally serve poor and disadvantaged minority populations” (p. 2). Therefore, perhaps the term *turnaround* itself might be interpreted by communities as suggesting that their schools, students, teachers, and

administrators lack a sense of worth and thus must be turned into that which is considered to be healthy and productive.

Cumulatively, these initial points of consideration raise a number of critical questions. If the “chronic failure” of public schools has indeed become the metaphor for the nation’s economic crisis, how should education policy scholars consider President Obama’s turnaround reform agenda targeting the nation’s 5,000 lowest performing public schools? If as a response to the continual threat of an economic crisis the United States has chosen to promote economic policies informed by the ideals of market-based liberalism, how should education policy scholars consider the \$3.5 billion appropriated to the Obama/Duncan turnaround reform agenda? Additionally, if the debate shaping the final revision of the Title I SIG program of 2009 was informed by the scaling back of central authority, the establishment of a more inclusive policy-making environment, and the subsequent expansion of interest-group activity in the education policy-making arena (Opfer et al., 2008), how should education policy scholars consider the deliberative possibilities of education policy making? Acknowledging the presence of such questions suggests that as the debate on turnaround reforms continues to grow it is imperative to understand the variety of meanings attributed to turnaround and to consider what significance these meanings will have for the future of school improvement reforms.

Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this final concluding chapter is to discuss how the critical interpretive analysis of discourses and practices contributes to the field of education

policy studies by providing insight as to how a particular range of policy solutions are made available to a policy-making community within a specific moment in history. The primary historical thesis of this dissertation targets educational globalization as the dominant policy discourse currently guiding the field of education reform.

This final chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section offers an overview of the central research elements and major findings. The second section reexamines the findings reported in Chapters 4 through 6 and highlights how these findings contribute to the fields of education policy studies and deliberative theoretical studies. I conclude this chapter by explaining how the recognition of the discourse and performance-related dimensions of deliberative politics may offer radical democratic opportunities for public policy making, opportunities that may begin to transform the citizenry's potential to (re)imagine the democratic dimensions of deliberative politics.

Synopsis of The Study

This section provides a synopsis of the central research elements of this study. Specifically, the purpose of this review is to provide readers with a brief synopsis of the objectives and rationales, questions, theoretical framework and review of the literature, methodological considerations, and preliminary findings before offering normative suggestions for the field of education policy studies.

Objectives and rationales. The objective of *(Re)Framing the Politics of Educational Discourse: An Investigation of the Title I School Improvement Grant of 2009* was to provide a better understanding of how, within this historical moment, the

Title I SIG program became the chosen solution for chronically low-performing schools. Specifically, I sought to determine how the dominant discourse of education globalization and the performative aspects of policy making worked collaboratively to define the range of policy solutions made available to those who participated in the revision of the Title I SIG program. The second principal objective was to provide the field of educational policy studies with a critical, alternative approach to traditional, interest-based analyses. Thus, in order to achieve each of these objectives, I developed three research questions that guided my analytical efforts:

1. What are the meanings of *turnaround* found within the policy discourses of actors at the federal level?
2. What are the particular discourse coalitions that formed around the school-turnaround story lines used to support the Title I SIG program of 2009?
3. What are the performative practices that provided the Title I SIG program with credibility and attention?

When examining the narrative crafted to answer each of these questions, it should be noted that this study's findings are based upon the subjective weaving together of textual analyses and the interpretations of the voices of those choosing to participate. Furthermore, the select range of voices informing this study's findings cannot possibly represent the entire spectrum of opinions and ideas of those who participated in the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG program. Yet, the analysis offered within this study should provide a critical understanding of the discourses and

political practices that are being employed to shape education policy during this specific moment in history.

Rationale 1: Deliberative policy analysis. There were three equally compelling rationales for why I chose this particular topic. First, my readings of the politics of education literature revealed that there are far too few analyses focused on the interest-based formation of policy solutions (Opfer et al., 2008). Thus, recognizing the politics of education post-NCLB has undergone a radical transformation; I found it was no longer useful to employ traditional frameworks that categorized interests by partisan or ideological labels (Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009). Additionally, I was drawn to Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2006b) analytical framework, which questions the concretized and a priori understanding of interests. Based upon the critical interpretative assumption that language and context are socially constructed within the moment, Hajer's analytical approach promises to reveal a new empirical knowledge as to how performative practices and historically dominant discourses work together to define policy solutions in a policy environment that is heavily contested and always in a state of flux.

Rationale 2: Globalization. Second, scholars who suggest education policy studies should more purposefully consider the influences of globalization have increasingly shaped my research interests. Of specific significance is Lingard's (2009) warning that while policy analysts understand policies as products of historically specific cultural and political contexts, they should also acknowledge the economic, political, and cultural reconfigurations that have taken place during this era

of globalization. Additionally, Blackmore's (2007) suggestion that varied discourses of globalization have shaped the creation of education policy during the last decade are alarming when considering the neoliberal and Third Way rationalities that inform its theoretical foundations.

Rationale 3: The debate surrounding turnaround reforms. Third, I found myself growing progressively intrigued by the issues and reform solutions being brought forward in the school turnaround debate. As a principal who had worked to turn around a low-performing school and as a state employee who had been asked to play a role in the turnaround efforts of many low-performing campuses, I felt a personal connection to the variety of reform methods being discussed. Additionally, the recent framing of the school reform debate has increasingly drawn my ire, as those who believe public schools can in fact improve through traditional routes (perhaps well-planned and appropriately funded comprehensive school reform measures) are often being castigated as pro status quo, whereas those campaigning for the closure of schools or the rapid expansion of charter alternatives and private educational providers are often championed as the only educators who have the "courage" to truly make a difference.

Theoretical framework and review of the literature. I divided the theoretical framework and review of literature into three primary sections: (a) a review of traditional and critical interpretive policy studies; (b) an examination of the role that values, interests, and their deliberative recognition historically have played in the shaping of policies; and (c) an overview of literature pertaining to the Title I

SIG program of 2009. In the first section I presented a critique of traditional policy studies and examined the ways in which critical interpretive theory offered a response to traditional frameworks. I then described the makeup and important contributions of discourse and argumentative analysis in policy studies. I concluded this section by outlining Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2006b) argumentative framework for discourse analysis, which provided the necessary groundwork for the discourse and performative dimensions of analysis used to guide this study. The review of literature in this section highlighted how the interpretive analysis of policy practices addresses a number of limitations inherent to positivistic policy studies by reframing the sanitized observation of political decision making and acknowledging the existence of the subjective beliefs and values structuring policy analysis. Moreover, this section promoted argumentative analysis as a particular variant within critical interpretive studies that provides the field of education policy with an analytical model useful for the analysis of the discourses and practices involved during the formation of policy.

In the second section, I focused on the role that values and interests historically have played in the shaping of educational policies in the United States. I then described the deliberative turn in democratic theory and outlined both the promises and perils realized in the deliberative recognition of values and interests. I concluded this section by describing the recent investigations of interests in education reform studies, their limitations, and the dominant discourses of globalization that have shaped the modern era of education reform. The examination of literature within this section illustrated how the reorganization of modern governance structures—

through decentralization, devolvement, and diffusion of bureaucratic decision making—has reconfigured the politics of policy making and has provided a new range of interests with access to deliberative decision making at the federal level. I also reemphasized how the traditional values of education are currently being overshadowed by the dominant discourses of globalization. Furthermore, the review of literature critical of the traditional frameworks used to guide many of the current research efforts focused on the importance of interests in political decision making served as a justification for this study’s methodological approach, which fully considered the dynamic interaction between deliberative practices and dominant discourses.

In the third section, I reviewed literature and official documents concerning the historical construction of the Title I of ESEA and examined the history of Section 1003(g) of the ESEA and NCLB (2002), known as the Title I SIG program. Next, I described the intricacies of the SIG program, including its goals, objectives, and the scope of schools impacted by Title I SIG policies. I concluded this section with a review of the burgeoning body of school-turnaround literature and research used to support the most recent iteration of the Title I SIG program. This section called attention to how the foundational assumptions used to structure the Title I SIG program and the narratives associated with the crisis of low-performing schools have shaped the range of policy solutions made available to the education reform community. Furthermore, this section illustrated that while the field of education has witnessed the rapid expansion of comprehensive turnaround reforms (Murphy &

Meyers, 2008), such efforts are based upon a lack of empirically based studies and are often guided by positivistic frameworks.

Methodology. The research methods used to guide this study were informed by the assumptions of social constructivism and critical interpretive policy analysis. In order to provide a qualitative and critically interpretive understanding of how the Title I SIG program came into being, I employed an instrumental case study design and used an adapted version of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2006b) three-dimensional analytical framework. Qualitative research was conducted, including an investigation of texts—documents and written and spoken statements—and the political performances from which these texts arrived. Three explicit groupings of actors served as the analytical focus of this study: (a) federal government actors, those employed, appointed, or elected to positions within the federal government; (b) special-interest and advocacy actors, nonprofit or for-profit employees invited to participate in the dialogues that helped shape the Title I SIG program or who had an agenda specifically addressing the policy; and (c) university actors, or those professors asked to participate in the formation of the Title I SIG program or those who have specifically targeted turnaround research as a scholarly focus.

Overview of Findings

This section offers a brief overview of the following: (a) how the current school reform environment and the push to embrace turnaround strategies are informed by the institutionalization of economic policies intended to secure the health of the United States economy; (b) the three dominant policy vocabularies and six

guiding themes that emerged during the examination of Title I SIG program documents; (c) the three dominant story lines most evident during the deliberative revision of the Title I SIG program; and (d) the four dramaturgical elements of political play. Together, I describe how the interaction of each of these elements codetermined how a particular range of solutions within the school improvement debate would be received as credible.

Reconfiguring economic policies and laying the narrative foundations for the Title I SIG. The purpose of Chapter 4 was to explain how the current school reform environment and the push to embrace turnaround strategies are informed by two historically related elements: the continual threat of economic instability that began in the 1970s as the interconnectedness of the global economic marketplace became apparent and the subsequent institutionalization of economic policies intended to secure the health of the economy and establish the United States as a dominant force in the global capitalist marketplace. To achieve such a purpose I examined the liberal reconfiguration of economic policies that began in the early 1980s and described the key events and issues contributing to the global economic crisis. Additionally, I presented an overview of the ideas presented in Milton Friedman's (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom* as one of the most influential texts offering credibility to the story lines used to support the substantial reform of economic policy.

After introducing Friedman's (1962) ideas, I described the evolution of economic policy during the post-Cold War era (1989–2009), highlighting how U.S.

efforts to maintain a position of dominance in the global marketplace further emboldened the liberalization of economic policies. Additionally, I reviewed the ideals contained within the Washington Consensus (Bush I), the Third Way (Clinton), and the Ownership Society (Bush II). I described how each set of ideals shaped the narratives of presidential administrations and offered credibility to a distinct range of economic policy solutions.

Chapter 4 concluded with a focus on education reform within the post-Cold War era (1989–2009), as I drew linkages between the ideas and story lines used to support the reconfiguration of economic and education policies during this era. The review of ideas within Chapter 4 provided the historical context necessary to understand how the discourses and policy enactments of the last three decades of economic reform laid the rhetorical and regulatory foundations for the discourse of educational globalization.

Influenced by Hajer (2005a, 2005b), I offered Chapter 4 as the contextual precursor necessary for the final three chapters of qualitative analysis, as I consider it inappropriate to understand the meanings of the educational crisis without reflecting on the historical regulation of the economic crisis induced by the domestic and international factors associated with globalization. Additionally, influenced by Fairclough (2000), Chapter 4 explains how the regulation of economic and education policy was forged, and thus through such forging how regulatory ideals constantly evolve and play out through policy narratives.

The discursive construction of the 2009 Title I SIG program. This study examined two specific components—policy vocabularies and story lines—within Hajer’s (2003, p. 104) “layers of policy discourse” and addressed his conceptual understanding of discourse coalitions. Initially, I investigated the emergence of Title I SIG program vocabularies as the “sets of concepts structuring a particular policy, consciously developed by policymakers” (Hajer, 2003, p. 105). Policy vocabularies, once written into policy documents, codetermine what can be considered by the readers of the document as legitimate policy actions.

Three dominant policy vocabularies and six guiding themes emerged during the examination of Title I SIG program documents (refer to Table 2 in Chapter 5). Accountability and two subthemes, heightening the monitoring of success and emphasizing teacher and principal performance, were the most prevalent policy vocabularies written into Title I SIG documents. The policy solutions endorsed by the accountability vocabulary were found to prioritize a specific range of school improvement reforms drawn from the performativity/accountability narrative within the discourse of educational globalization. Specifically, the written portrayal of accountability in Title I SIG policies promoted the reconfiguration of local school governance; placed an emphasis on standardized measures; and stressed heightened regulation through the increased monitoring of students, teachers, and local administrators within targeted schools.

Innovation and its subtheme, redistributing governance/authority, was the second most frequent policy vocabulary that emerged during the analysis of Title I

SIG documents. The policy concepts informed by the innovation vocabulary promoted a particular series of school improvement reforms drawn from the management/surveillance ideals within the discourse of educational globalization. The inscription of the innovation vocabulary in the Title I SIG program endorses policies that situate local school authorities, authorities of public charter and private providers, and parents of turnaround campuses as self-governing entities who, through increased federal and state oversight, are expected to facilitate the turnaround of their campuses as measured through centralized objectives.

The third dominant policy vocabulary found throughout the Title I SIG documents was that of competition and its three subthemes of incentivizing success, establishing competitive funding, and expansion of the marketplace. The policy vocabulary of competition was informed by the market/choice narrative embedded within the broader discourse of educational globalization. Specifically, the written strategies of competition in Title I SIG policies promote parents as savvy consumers of their children's education, thus ensuring the dramatic turnaround of school outcomes by expanding the marketplace for school improvement reform through the principles of competition.

The next layer of policy discourse examined in this research was the emergence of story lines. Hajer (1995) considered story lines as the short narratives actors promote and cling to when considering how their knowledge, experience, and areas of expertise contribute to a specific policy debate. Story lines include a number of discursive elements such as "metaphors; analogies; historical references; clichés;

appeals to collective fears or senses of guilt” (Hajer, 1995, p. 63). As a story line receives credibility, a discursive unity is established in the midst of competing interests, thus contributing to the development of discourse coalitions.

Three dominant story lines emerged during the deliberative politics that led to the revision of the Title I SIG of 2009. I organized the descriptive analysis of the Obama/Duncan story lines in chronological order, focusing first on a story line’s appearance within federal texts (hearings, speeches, forums, etc.) and then illustrating how each story line appeared during interviews with the study’s participants. During the continual back and forth between data sets, I focused on the emergence of the three most dominant themes enacted when justifying the Title I SIG program:

1. Global Competitiveness: Leaders must address education reform as a way to ensure global economic competitiveness.
2. Unprecedented Opportunity: Stakeholders must act with urgency to capitalize on the “Obama Effect” (unprecedented economic and political opportunity).
3. Disrupt Complacency: Citizens have a moral responsibility to disrupt the complacent bureaucracy of educational systems.

Each of these themes materialized as the dominant story lines most often reiterated by policy actors during the deliberative revision of the Title I SIG program.

The next focus of this study was the emergence of discourse coalitions. Hajer (1995) defined discourse coalitions as political interests that somehow come together to sustain a particular discourse, a particular way of talking and thinking about

politics, and thus gain political power by converging around specific story lines. To describe the political development of a discourse coalition, I explained the emergence of turnaround as a construct in the politics of education and described the development and promotion of turnaround story lines, which, upon gaining credibility, established a discursive unity in the school turnaround reform debate. I then presented the argument that the story lines of Global Competitiveness, Unprecedented Opportunity, and Disrupt Complacency further established a discursive unity and facilitated the development of a dominant discourse coalition, providing the Obama/Duncan Administration with the support needed to authorize the Title I SIG program of 2009.

As an example, a story line that promotes the Title I SIG program as the agreed-upon solution to turning around persistently low-performing schools implies a shared understanding as to the future of school improvement reform. The debates surrounding school improvement and turnaround reform strategies are quite complex and involve a wide range of competing interests. Yet, once a story line began to receive credibility and was written into the policy documents as policy vocabularies, competing differences were masked. Consequently, the difficult tasks entailed when turning around low-performing public schools were dismissed as policy actors formed discourse coalitions around the specific range of policy solutions found within the Title I SIG program.

The findings in this chapter illustrate how the Obama/Duncan Administration's purposeful reiteration of compelling story lines and shallow

enactments of deliberative politics built upon the already present historical narrative of how governance should be enacted in a competitive global economy and the globalized discourses in the education reform community, thus provided credibility to the strategies embedded within the Title I SIG program of 2009 as the commonsense solution for the nation's lowest performing public schools. The following sections revisit what is known and not known in regards to the policy concerns that have emerged throughout this study, including the influence of economic conditions, the presence of dominant narratives and discourses, the research on school turnaround reform efforts, the coconstructive power of discourses and deliberative politics, and the possibilities of deliberative theory.

What We Know and Do Not Know

Both the looming threat and actual presence of economic crises have defined the ways in which U.S. policy makers have considered economic and education reform since 1970. As I have described in the previous chapters and summarized above, three primary narratives construct the broader discourse of educational globalization: market/choice, management/surveillance, and performativity/accountability. These narratives have been enacted, supported, and championed by Democrats and Republicans alike. Subsequently, working from the definition of discourse provided by Hajer (1995), the relative and perhaps too passive acceptance of these three narratives allowed the discourse of educational globalization to further reconfigure the purposes and values of education. Therefore, by operationalizing a specific ensemble of discursive ideas, the discourse of

educational globalization has produced, reproduced, and transformed through performative politics, providing a particular meaning to those issues that define the school improvement and turnaround debate.

Though President Obama and Secretary Duncan often emphasize the nation's "moral obligation" to provide all children with a quality education, what is at issue here is the means by which the Obama/Duncan Administration intends to realize this moral obligation, particularly given the fact that their key policy strategy, school turnaround, is not supported by empirical research in the field of education. Therefore, the purpose of the final section is to explain how discourses and political performances structured the deliberative crafting of the Title I SIG of 2009 and thus ensured that a particular range of policy solutions were made available to those who participated in its construction. Specifically, the following section provides the field of education policy with an understanding of the discursive and performative details and complexities that were brought forward during a critical public debate about the future of the nation's effort to address the persistence of low-performing schools.

What we know: Research. Chapter 1 revealed a surprising lack of empirically based research on turnaround efforts. Within this area of research, we know the majority of projects are case studies founded upon rationalistic assumptions. We also know the research currently guiding the field of turnaround studies often attempts to isolate the causal factors allowing schools with high percentages of low-income and racial- or ethnic-minority students to outperform their peers (Orr et al., 2008). We have even been told by Herman et al. (2008) at the Institute of Educational

Sciences that such case study efforts are “particularly weak in determining causal validity for several reasons, including the fact that there is no way to be confident that the features common to successful turnaround schools are not also common to schools that fail” (p. 6). Ravitch and Mathis (2010) revealed an even more disturbing pattern:

Of the 62 references cited [in the Turnaround section of the *Blueprint for Reform*], 23 are from think tanks, most with explicit policy agendas. In the “school turn-around grants” section, 14 of the 27 references are from think tanks, often with an agenda. Such heavy reliance on sources dominated by vested interest groups and lacking in independent peer-reviewed quality control is inappropriate for an important government research summary. Likewise, the inclusion of citations from contractors with a direct financial interest in the adoption of the recommended policy is troubling. . . . Overall, only about 15% of the references appear to have come from peer-reviewed, independent sources. (p. 13)

The willingness of the Obama/Duncan Administration to develop and promote far-reaching policies without a strong base of empirical research is problematic; however, the fact that just over half of the currently available studies are mired in interest-group politics is unacceptable.

Does rigorous and reliable research matter when it comes to children’s education? The messages conveyed by U.S. leaders are somewhat ambiguous on this issue. Secretary Duncan provided the following commentary on this matter during a plenary speech he delivered at a national Institute of Educational Sciences conference:

President Truman once lamented the fact that every economist he spoke to would always say, “On the one hand things might get better, and on the other hand, things might not.” Truman finally concluded that if he wanted to find definitive advice on the economy, he was going to have to start finding some one-handed economists. (Laughter.)

To some extent, the education community suffers from that same dynamic. *For every study showing the benefits of the policy, there's another one with a different conclusion. Quite often people draw different conclusions from the same study, and that's where we need to separate ideology from analysis.*

I recently spoke to education writers about the search for truth in education. I challenged them to go beyond the ideological statements and the surface conclusions and find out what is really happening for our children in our classrooms. (Duncan, 2009a, para. 40-42, emphasis added)

Statements like the above appear to identify research as important to understanding educational problems and promising practices; however, at the same time it belittles the interpretive process, particularly the importance of considering findings from a variety of perspectives. Moreover, given the administration's inability to cite research when promoting the policy solutions embedded within the Title I SIG program and the predominant use of think tank research as the basis for such initiatives, the naming and blaming of ideologically based research appears to be pure political rhetoric (Ravitch & Mathis, 2010).

What we know: The power of story lines and discourse coalitions. Three powerful story lines emerged during my analysis of text and interview data: (a) support turnaround reforms as a lever to ensure Global Competitiveness, (b) support turnaround reforms in order to capitalize on the Unprecedented Opportunity (political and fiscal), and (c) support turnaround reform as a way to Disrupt Complacency of bureaucracies. Hajer's (1995) insight on the power of story lines in deliberative politics is worth repeating at this point:

- (a) story-lines have the functional role of facilitating the reduction of the discursive complexity of a problem and creating possibilities for problem closure;

- (b) as they are accepted and more and more actors start to use the story-line, they get a ritual character and give a certain permanence to the debate. They become “tropes” or figures of speech that rationalize a specific approach to what seems to be a coherent problem; and
- (c) story-lines allow different actors to expand their own understanding and discursive competence of the phenomenon beyond their own discourse or expertise or experience. (p. 63)

Consequently, despite all of the unknowns regarding what reform strategies should to be employed when attempting to turn around low-performing public schools, and despite the many partisan contestations over the federal government’s role in education, a convergence of interests offered initial support for the new Title I SIG regulations embedded within the ARRA (2009) stimulus package. Thus, a discourse coalition had formed, one that had accepted that dramatic change in schools was needed to remain globally competitive, had accepted that such large amounts of monies for school reform might never be issued again, and had accepted that indeed many dysfunctional bureaucracies might benefit from the pressures applied through the federal oversight of school improvement.

What we do not know yet yearn for: Deliberative aspirations. The above section charted what is known about turnaround research and the power of the story lines and discourse coalitions that aligned in support of the Obama/Duncan turnaround agenda. However, it is equally important to point out what we do not know. First, in regards to deliberative politics, we do know there is a lengthy list of ideal outcomes that may be realized through deliberative engagement, such as the autonomy of citizens who are able to consider policies and their broader political questions (Chambers, 2003; Gutman & Thompson, 2004; Sanders, 1997) and the

establishment of an atmosphere where solutions can be reached, even when taking on the complex issues within large and pluralistic societies (Morris, 2001). We also know that champions of deliberative theory, such as Gutmann and Thompson (2004), often claim the efficacy of deliberative politics should be measured through the quality of deliberative interactions shaping the formation of collective will, not by the final policy outcomes intended to represent collective desires.

Yet, as the findings of this study illustrate, although the theoretical benefits of deliberative policy making offer promise, the quality realized in the enactment of deliberative procedures is often unknown and should be further examined. The necessity of such examinations are supported by Dean (2009): “Democracy is a matter of the proper procedures. Political theorists don’t install these procedures and get them to work. They establish what the proper procedures should be if democracy is to hold” (p. 82). As a primary example of this argument, Dean cited the Gutmann and Thompson (2004) claim that the deliberative enactment of politics by the Bush II Administration during the days leading to the declaration of war on Iraq represented the “fundamental characteristic of deliberative democracy—the requirement to give reason” (Dean, 2009, p. 83). Dean continued, claiming that although Bush II circumvented a number of democratic channels and failed to exhaust all nonmilitary options before launching an attack, Gutmann and Thompson celebrated his administration’s deliberative efforts to procure the public’s consensus as to the justifications necessary to declare war on Iraq.

Dean's (2009) scholarship draws attention to the separation between deliberative theoretical promises and the democratic enactment of deliberative procedures and thus further elucidates what the findings of this study unveil in regards to the quality of deliberative politics that were enacted by the Obama/Duncan Administration during the revision of the Title I SIG program. The political performances of the Obama/Duncan Administration meet the "fundamental characteristic of deliberative democracy" as described by Gutmann and Thompson (Dean, 2009, p. 83). Yet, the findings clearly reveal that many of the study's participants—Congressional staffers (both Democrat and Republican), educational interest and advocacy actors, university scholars—were unquestionably critical about the democratic enactment of the deliberative procedures used throughout the revision of the Title I SIG program. What the data from this study do not reveal is exactly how those who were involved in the L&L Tour and Educational Stakeholders Forums would characterize the meaningfulness and quality of their deliberative participation. That is left for assumption.

Secretary Duncan promoted the deliberative ideals of democratic decision making when he claimed, "Before crafting education law in Washington, we want to hear from people across America—parents, teachers and administrators—about the everyday issues and challenges in our schools that need our national attention and support" (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, para. 4). However, the findings of this study reinforce the angst of those scholars who question the efficacy of deliberative participation.

Regardless, the challenge is set. If the federal government continues to actively promote the deliberative crafting of education policy solutions and to expect the general populous to realize their potential as savvy deliberative participants, then those participants must be able to better recognize the intricacies and nuances of how discourses and practices structure the enactment of deliberative politics.

Contributions to the Field

The research and findings of this study unveil the ways in which the historical threat of economic crises and the expansion of a competitive global marketplace have shaped how U.S. policy makers consider economic and education reform; the lack of empirical support for the turnaround reform strategies operationalized by the Title I SIG program; the development of coalitional support for the Title I SIG through the continual promotion of dominant narratives and story lines; the shallow enactment of deliberative performances used to garner the input of the nation's students, teachers, and administrators; and the written policy vocabularies of the Title I SIG program that are founded upon the discourse of educational globalization. In addition to these important unveilings, this dissertation also addresses each of the three challenges Hajer (2003) issued to today's policy scholars, as introduced in Chapter 2 of this study. Hajer's (2003) first challenge for policy scholars is to "renew" their "methods so as to be able to understand the complex ways in which meaning is hidden in policymaking discourse and thus be able to anticipate political controversies" (p. 110). Thus, the historical analyses of economic and educational trends; the discourse analyses of policy texts, story lines, and vocabularies; and the analyses of

performative politics were motivated by the recognition that while education scholars have sought to expand the study of interests in deliberative policy making, these studies have often failed to recognize the social construction of learning that takes place when participants interact with both the discourses and performances operationalized within deliberative politics.

Consequently, by employing an adaptation of Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) three-dimensional analytical model, this study offers the field of education policy with a unique approach to the analysis of interests and deliberative policy making. This study offers the field a critical, methodological understanding of how dominant discourses (such as educational globalization), the convergence around compelling story lines (such as Global Competitiveness, Unprecedented Opportunity, and Disrupt Complacency), and political performances (such as the L&L Tour and the Educational Stakeholders Forums) have coconstructed what has been thinkable in regards to policy solutions for chronically low-performing schools at this moment in history.

As a result, the findings of this study help make sense of a political environment characterized by Hajer's (2006b) policy-making phenomena of multisignification and institutional ambiguity. The findings of this study unquestionably provide policy scholars with a general understanding as to how the "new politics in education" (Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009) at this specific moment is inhabited by a wide array of interests, and yet the findings illustrate how such interests seemingly converged around a particular range of policy solutions, thus

determining how the federal government would address the continued persistence of low-performing public schools. Consequently, the findings emphatically illustrate the efforts of the Obama/Duncan Administration to establish a consensual discursive understanding of what was needed to turn around low-performing schools in order to solidify the coalitional support necessary to authorize a particular agenda for turnaround reforms.

Hajer's (2003) second challenge for policy scholars was to "consider the variety of experiments with collaborative planning, interactive policymaking and consensus dialogues" (p. 110). Thus, acknowledging the promises and perils of participatory governance, this study provides education policy scholars with an understanding of how the performances of deliberative politics are being enacted at the federal level. By employing an analytical framework focused on Hajer's (2003, 2005a, 2006b) four aspects of political performance—scripting, staging, setting, and performance—the findings presented enrich policy studies dependent solely on the methodologies available in discourse analysis. Therefore, by examining the political performances of the L&L Tour and Educational Stakeholders Forums, this study benefits the field of education policy by illustrating how the enactment of deliberative politics influences the ways in which policy experts, and ultimately school communities, choose to address social issues such as the persistence of low-performing public schools.

The third challenge Hajer (2003) issued to policy scholars was to "renew its effort to deliver on Lasswell's call for a policy science of democracy by showing how

these new interactive practices might actually fulfill a role in renewing democratic governance in a new modernity” (p. 110). Thus, the critically interpretive findings of this study were put forward under the assumption that the discourse and performative dimensions of Hajer’s analytical model provide education policy scholars with a framework helpful when examining the social and discursive construction of educational policy solutions. Whereas the findings of discourse theorists have expanded the field of education policy studies, the findings in this study offer an understanding of why the examination of political discourse alone is insufficient. Therefore, the findings presented suggest education policy scholars should acknowledge the ways in which institutional contexts at the federal level and the performances of federal government have determined which policy strategies were presented as credible solutions for the nation’s lowest performing schools.

Importantly, the findings of this study acknowledge that the Obama/Duncan Administration promoted a shallow enactment of deliberative politics through the selective staging and scripting of performances, such as educational forums, roundtable discussions, and town hall meetings, and thus were able to claim that communities had been provided with a meaningful opportunity to engage with the federal government by providing input as to the needs that should be considered for future school reform efforts. However, the findings of the study suggest that the deliberative recognition of interests during the revision of the Title I SIG program serve as an example of why education policy scholars should question the inclusionary enactment of democracy; expand traditional understandings of

democratic governance; and reframe the ways in which competing interests are, and can be, involved during the participatory formation of policy solutions.

The previous discussion addresses a number of issues that should be acknowledged by scholars in the field of education policy. In addition, the findings of this study have direct implications for the students, teachers, administrators, and school communities who have been, and will continue to be, asked to participate in the deliberative construction of education policy. First, the deliberative engagement of local stakeholders in education policy making is a form of representative democracy, which by nature only engages a small proportion of the public (Luskin, 1990). Thus, as discussed in Chapter 6, the delegation of representative democracy through deliberative politics becomes even more problematic when considering the limited number of engagements and overall dearth of communities called upon to inform the revision of the Title I SIG program. Though quantifying the required number of communities that should be engaged before such processes can be considered as legitimate is beyond the scope of this study, surely the scarcity of deliberative opportunities offered through 5 of the 13 tour stops and 1 of the 9 forums would qualify as insufficient. Therefore, when, in the future, the federal government seeks to engage the nation in the shaping of educational solutions, local practitioners and communities must demand that a greater number of engagements are held before the federal government is allowed to advertise the benefits of deliberative policy making.

Second, the promises of deliberative democratic decision making are based upon the assumption that if local school communities are sufficiently informed, then deliberative engagements, such as the L&L Tour and Education Stakeholders Forum, are able to facilitate the construction of “more reflective political judgments” and thus lead local stakeholders and the greater policy making community toward “better public policy decisions” (Gastil & Dilliard, 1999, p. 3). Yet, the findings of this study illustrate how the construction of story lines and the dominance of the educational globalization discourse defined the emblematic issues being considered in the debates surrounding school turnaround reform. Therefore, while the reflective judgments of informed communities appears to have resulted in democratically decided-upon policy vocabularies that lack empirical support and privilege the discourse of globalized discourses, the critical interpretive analysis provided by this study highlights the ways in which the reasoned possibilities of deliberative participants can be manipulated or limited by discursive and performative politics. Consequently, before entering deliberative engagements with federal policy makers, local practitioners and communities must call for and examine the research being used to justify federally constructed policy solutions, must deconstruct and discuss the story lines used by the federal government to promote such policy solutions, and must hold the federal government accountable for the policy solutions that are supposedly derived from deliberative policy making.

Mouffe (1998) suggested that consensus-driven efforts, such as those launched to garner support for the Title I SIG program of 2009, are detrimental to the

“very possibility of democracy” (p. 86). Other scholars have been troubled by such consensus-driven deliberative performances due to the marginalization of certain populations (Sanders, 1997), the unobtainable call for universality (I. M. Young, 1989, 1990), and the reinforcing of inequalities (Gutman & Thompson, 2004; Karpowitz & Mansbridge, 2005; Taylor, 1992). How should such concerns be interpreted by the field of education policy studies?

First, scholars must conduct studies that continue to call attention to the ways in which the democratic foundations of education are being reconfigured by the discourses of educational globalization. Educators who are “racing to the top” while attempting to “leave no child behind” are being forced to embrace and implement policy vocabularies that privilege: *accountability*, as the heightened monitoring of success and the increased scrutiny on teacher and leader outputs as measured by standardized assessments; *innovation*, as the redistribution of governance and authority that favors the displacing of teachers and leaders over other ideas for comprehensive school reform; and *competition*, as the incentivizing of success, the establishment of competitive government funding, and the expansion of the education marketplace to private business interests.

Second, the field of education policy should support research endeavors that promote multiple ways to describe the political shaping of policy formation. Such endeavors should not envision the deliberative enactment of democracy as a final destination but should seek to actively respond to the politics of education and all of its uncertainties and anxieties (Gottweis, 2003). Subsequently, through the promotion

of such efforts, the field of education policy will reduce the mining of deliberative politics for data's sake alone and instead promote research projects that leave behind new deliberative spaces within political communities, which are able to recognize and respond to the ways in which discourses and practices coconstruct policy solutions.

Finally, as education policy scholars we should always aspire to enliven the debate about the goals of deliberative crafting of education policy solutions.

Education policy analysts should seek to engage in deliberative politics (forums, town halls, state and federal legislatures, etc.) and seek to establish a new deliberative politics where savvy participants can enter the performances of deliberative enactments aware of the discourses that often structure what can and should be considered as the credible solutions for school reform.

Appendix: Participants' Roles

Participant	Description
<i>Advocacy/interest actors</i>	
Beth Antunez	Beth Antunez is the assistant director in educational issues at the American Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO that represents preK-12 teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state, and local government employees; and nurses and other healthcare professionals.
Justin Cohen ^a	Justin Cohen is the President of the School Turnaround Group at Mass Insight Education and the former director of the Office of Portfolio Management and senior advisor to Chancellor Michelle Rhee at the District of Columbia Public Schools. The Mass Insight Turnaround Group is a nonprofit organization that partners with school districts and state education agencies to redesign the ways they support low-performing schools.
Daria Hall	Daria Hall is the director of K-12 policy development at the Education Trust, where she focuses on issues pertaining to accountability; high school graduation; standards; and the identification of high-poverty, high-minority, high-performing schools. The Education Trust is a policy organization that focuses on issues pertaining to academic achievement for all students.
William Mathis	William Mathis is the managing director of the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the former superintendent of schools for the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union in Brandon, Vermont. The National Education Policy Center employs scholars and policy analysts who produce and disseminate peer-reviewed research on a variety of educational issues.
Vicki Phillips ^a	Vicki Phillips is director of the Education, College Ready in the United States Program at the Gates Foundation and a former education specialist at the U.S. Office of Education in Washington, DC. The Gates Foundation funds a variety of initiatives that focus on the preparation of college- and career-ready students and the attainment of postsecondary education.

Participant	Description
Sam Redding	Sam Redding is the director at the Center on Innovation and Improvement. The center supports regional centers in their work with states to provide districts, school, and families with information about federal and state reform efforts, such as extended time and supplemental educational services, and supports efforts pertaining to charter schools, school and district improvement, and restructuring and turnaround.
Advocacy/interest & federal actors	
Cynthia Brown	Cynthia G. Brown is vice-president for education policy at the Center for American Progress, a former director of the Resource Center on Educational Equity of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the former assistant secretary for civil rights in the U.S. Department of Education (appointed by President Carter). The Center for American Progress is a policy advocacy organization supportive of the “progressive movement.” Brown’s work focuses on issues pertaining to the education of low-income and minority students, standards-based education, federal education programs, state education agency operations, state education policy, federal civil rights enforcement in education, and preschool education.
Diane Stark Rentner	Diane Stark Rentner is the director of national programs for the Center on Education Policy and a former legislative associate for the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Education and Labor. The Center on Education Policy is an independent advocacy organization that focuses on issues pertaining to the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools.
Andy Rotherham	Andy Rotherham is a cofounder and partner at Bellwether Education and a former White House Special Assistant to President Clinton for Domestic Policy. Bellwether Education Partners is a national nonprofit organization that focuses on issues pertaining to the achievement of low-income students.
University actors	
Daniel Duke	Daniel Duke is a professor at the University of Virginia, where he is recognized as a nationally recognized expert on educational change and reform, school leadership and accountability policy, and issues pertaining to the turnaround of low-performing schools.

Participant	Description
Betty Malen	Betty Malen is a professor at the University of Maryland, where she is recognized for her work in education politics, policy, and leadership and issues pertaining to reconstitution reform efforts targeting low-performing schools.
Joseph Murphy ^a	Joseph Murphy is the chair of education and associate dean at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, where he focuses on issues pertaining to school improvement, turnaround reform, leadership, and policy.
University & federal actors	
Joe Johnson	Dr. Joseph Johnson is the executive director of the National Center for Urban School Transformation and the former director of student achievement and school accountability at the U.S. Department of Education, where he was responsible for directing the federal Title I program and several related programs.
Diane Ravitch ^a	Diane Ravitch is a professor at New York University, where she focuses on the history of education and education reform. She was Assistant Secretary of Education during the presidency of George H. W. Bush.

Note. Several participants' names are excluded based upon their requests to remain anonymous.

^aActors whose ideas shaped both the formative and summative stages of sense making, but whose direct comments did not appear in the study.

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Vita

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This dissertation was typed by the author.