

Florida's A++ Plan: An Expansion and Expression of Neoliberal and Neoconservative Tenets in State Educational Policy

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FLORIDA'S A++ PLAN

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FLORIDA'S A++ PLAN: AN EXPANSION AND EXPRESSION OF NEOLIBERAL AND
NEOCONSERVATIVE TENETS IN STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Dissertation

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy May, 2015

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ABSTRACT

FLORIDA'S A++ PLAN: AN EXPANSION AND EXPRESSION OF NEOLIBERAL AND
NEOCONSERVATIVE TENETS IN STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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Doctor of Philosophy

Boston College, May 2015

Dissertation Committee Chair: Dr. Curt Dudley-Marling

This critical policy analysis, informed by a qualitative content analysis, examines the ideological orientation of Florida's A++ Plan (2006), and its incumbent impact upon social reproduction in the state. Utilizing a theoretical framework that fuses together critical theory (Horkheimer, 1937; Marcuse, 1964; Marshall, 1997), Bernstein's (1971, 1977) three message systems of education and dual concepts of *classification* and *frame*, and Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) notion of the Credential Society, the study examines the ideological underpinnings of the A++ Plan's statutory requirements, and their effects on various school constituencies, including students, teachers, and the schools themselves.

The study's findings show that neoliberal and neoconservative ideological tenets buttress much of the A++ legislation, advancing four particular ideological imperatives: an allegiance to workforce readiness, a burgeoning system of standardization and accountability, the elevation of traditional values and nationalism, and the championing of individual responsibility. Through the control of Bernstein's three message systems of education, these ideological imperatives deeply impact public education in Florida, and

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in particular have a disproportionately negative impact upon schools serving high-poverty, high-minority student populations.

New initiatives such as the Major Areas of Interest mandate and the Ready-to-Work Program, both of which are heavily influenced by corporate interests, elevate an ethic of economy that commodifies students. At the same time, the legislation ushers in unprecedented levels of curricular and pedagogical standardization that makes comparisons between students and teachers a reality, while commensurately creating a more competitive climate between schools as a means of promoting school choice throughout the state. Further, the legislation advances a vision of society that is strikingly conservative in tenor through the deliberate manipulation of the state's History and Health curricula, while simultaneously creating programs such as the Character Development Program that espouse a narrowly construed vision of character. Finally, each of the legislative moves described above are undergirded by an increasing reliance not upon the state, but upon the individual who comes to see her or his choices as the sole arbiters of her or his success or failure, absent any possible mitigating, external factor(s).

The study concludes with recommendations for further research addressing the manifest effects of neoliberal and neoconservative axioms in education, and a call to action targeted at progressive educators to confront these types of "reforms." It further recommends that policymakers acknowledge that handing the governance of schools and the curriculum therein over to neoliberal and neoconservative ideologues will result in schools that both overtly value instrumental, corporatist outcomes, and purposefully advance a myopic vision of our nation's collective memory and system of governing

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values. The marriage of neoliberalism and neoconservatism is positioned as antithetical to progressive education, and stands to turn back the clock on issues of equity, social justice, and social mobility.

Acknowledgements

This project spans ten years, five geographic moves across three states, the birth of my three beautiful children, two tragic passings, and hours upon hours of work. Without certain people in my life, this labor of love would not have been possible, starting with my wife, Jessica, whose patience, pressure, passion, and pushing always kept me moving in the right direction. Words don't express my thanks and gratitude! In addition, my children - Brecken, Cooper, and Finley - supported me throughout the working weekends and late nights, always encouraging me and propelling me forward. And of course my parents, without whom none of this would have been possible. Thank you all for always believing in me, and for always being the rock I needed when I didn't think I could see it through to the end.

I must also graciously thank my advisor, Dr. Curt Dudley-Marling, whose unwavering commitment to the project, and to me - even in the midst of his retirement - helped make all this possible. Thank you for sticking with me, Curt, I wouldn't have finished without your kind words, thoughtful feedback, and generous encouragement. I also want to thank Dr. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Dr. Leigh Patel who, like Curt, were always there to support me, even when this project limped along at times. Your wisdom, support, and ever-astute commentary were essential elements of my success.

A few other institutions and people deserve my thanks, praise, and admiration as well. First, many thanks to the generosity of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, The Hillside School, and Saint Andrew's School whose respective commitments to my professional growth helped bring this project to its fruition. And last, I want to thank my Ph.D. cohort,

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especially Kara, Randall, Swati, and Viktoria who, while not realizing their impact, have always shone like lighthouses for me in this process.

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Chapter One: Research Problem

The framing of educational policies through the ideological stances of neoliberalism and neoconservatism has been intensely investigated at the federal level vis-à-vis the focus on NCLB (Apple, 2006a, 2007; Hursh, 2007; Kantor & Lowe, 2006; Torres, 2008) and, more recently, the Race to the Top program (Hursh, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Schniedewind & Sapon-Shevin, 2012). These studies, as well as others explored in Chapter Two, indicate that neoliberalism and neoconservatism undermine equity and democracy, leading academics, teachers, and researchers to question whether or not these ideological positions, policies, and reforms are in the best interest of our children and democratic society. While this focus on federal legislation has been revealing, scant research has been conducted that looks specifically at the impact of state-level policies framed through the ideological lenses of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and no studies have explicitly addressed the policy focus of this dissertation: Florida's A++ Plan. Herein lies the significance of this study: exposing or making explicit the inherent flaws in neoliberal and neoconservative thought and policy action as it pertains to Florida and, more broadly, those impacted by educational reforms therein.

Florida is seen by many as a model for educational reform, with states such as West Virginia, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Arizona, Louisiana, and Utah, amongst others, all adopting policies modeled after Florida's reforms of the past 15 years (Bonner, 2012; Burke, 2011; Cournoyer, 2012; Hu, 2007; Joecks, 2011). To that end, and in light of Florida's pivotal role in national elections and consequent highlighting in the national

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media, it is essential that studies focused on the ideological positions expressed in and through Florida's educational policies be conducted prior to those policies being more widely adopted. The implications of more far-reaching expressions of neoliberalism and neoconservatism in educational policymaking are manifold, and must be contested and resisted. This study aims to better inform key decision-makers in the field, and should hold significance for educators, researchers, parents, students, policymakers, and curriculum specialists charged with influencing and making decisions about the future of education. Exposing the ideological flaws and sociological shortcomings of neoliberalism and neoconservatism will enable educational decision-makers at the classroom, school, district, and state level in Florida to make more informed decisions about the ideological imprimatur of the methods used and curriculum taught in the state's schools.

The problem this study addresses is how the presence of neoliberal and neoconservative ideological influences in the Florida A++ Plan and artifacts related to its public positioning stand to influence Florida students. To that end, the primary research question of this dissertation asks: What are the implications of the A++ Plan's ideological orientation for schooling and the reproduction of inequality in Florida?

This dissertation takes the form of a critical policy analysis focusing explicitly on how the complementary ideologies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism have permeated much of the A++ legislation. The nature and process of critical policy analysis are taken up more fully in Chapter Three. The objectives of my investigation are to articulate the overt and covert instantiations of these ideologies in the A++ Plan, and to discuss the implications thereof relative to social reproduction.

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The work of Bernstein (1971) and Collins (1979), as well as critical theory, all discussed at length in Chapter Three, provide the theoretical framework from which my critical analysis proceeds. Their work, couched in critical perspectives of society that purposefully consider the historical, social, political, and economic conditions in which legislation is ordained and positioned, is a departure from traditional, functionalist policy analyses that gauge only whether a policy has had an effect on academic performance, oftentimes construed through the narrow lens of high-stakes testing. Proponents of critical policy analysis are interested not only in academic performance, but also in whose knowledge is privileged or marginalized within a policy, whose values and voices are communicated or silenced therein, and who stands to benefit from the outcomes - intended and unintended - of the legislation and affected curriculum, pedagogic practices, and assessment tools and techniques. It is essential, then, that attention be paid to the way in which a policy is both framed legislatively and positioned publicly in order to offer an informed analysis. Unpacking the issues surrounding the A++ Plan so as to frame them through the lenses Bernstein, Collins, and critical theory provide requires a familiarity with the context of this study.

A Brief Historical Account of Florida and Florida Educational Reform

Jeb Bush's ascendancy to the Florida Governor's office in 1999 ushered in a spate of educational reforms, including the increased use of standardized testing, a massive expansion of charter schools, the use of a letter-grading system for the public reporting of the "quality" of individual public schools, the proliferation of virtual education, teacher merit pay, and attempts to siphon taxpayer dollars to private and religious education. These reforms, however, emerged from decades of social and

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educational policy reforms in Florida that paved the way for Bush to facilitate their implementation. A brief demographic overview of Florida, followed by an historical accounting of the educational reforms of the past 50 years, summarized in Appendix E, will help to bring contextual topology to the ground from which the A++ Plan sprang.

Demographics. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Florida's population of 18,801,310 ranks fourth largest in the country, due in no small part to the 23.5% growth it underwent between 1990 and 2000, and the 17.6% growth it underwent in the ensuing decade. The state is quite diverse comparatively, wherein 53.7% of the population is White (non-Hispanic/Latino), 16.0% African American, 22.5% Hispanic or Latino, 2.4% Asian, and 5.4% other (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). A closer look at the geographic distribution of these groups using data from the Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research (2010) reveals that most live in ethnic and economic enclaves, sharply divided by race and income levels wherein poor whites tend to reside in central and northern Florida, whereas wealthy whites and minorities live overwhelmingly in the south, especially Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Nearly a quarter of all residents speak a first language other than English. Close to 80% of residents are high school graduates, and another nearly 25% hold bachelors degrees. Florida is also home to the largest population of retirees in the country, numbering 18.2% of its total population in 2010.

Politically, Florida is considered a toss-up state today in national elections despite its historically Democratic leanings, while state offices, including the Governor's office, are held predominantly by Republican officials. The population growth in recent years has largely been fueled by net migration to the state as a result of a housing

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boom in the late 1990's and early 2000's, a growing military presence in the state, business-minded entrepreneurs from the south seeking a tax-friendly corporate environs, and anti-Castro Cubans (Smith & Cody, 2012). Republican's have wrested control of the Governor's office from the Democrats in recent elections in a widening manner, with Jeb Bush winning the Governor's office by 2.9 million votes in 2000, and an even more decisive 3.9 million in 2004. His successor, Republican Charlie Crist, swept into office in 2006 riding a margin of victory of some 2 million votes. Florida's current Governor, Rick Scott, came into office in 2011 with a margin of victory of 70K votes over his Democratic opponent - a decidedly smaller margin of victory than his predecessors, but one that was anticipated in light of Scott's more conservative positions on major issues, including mandatory drug testing for welfare recipients (Barile, 2012).

At the national level, Florida voted overwhelmingly for G.H.W. Bush in 1988 and less convincingly in 1992, and then turned Democratic in 1996, supporting the Clinton campaign. In the historic election of 2000 Florida flipped again, shifting back to the Republican win column when the U.S. Supreme Court intervened in a disputed result, thus determining the outcome of the Presidency on a 4-3 vote. Florida again voted Republican in the 2004 election, but has since voted Democrat in the 2008 and 2012 elections, though Obama's margin of victory was narrowed in the 2012 results.

Despite the frequent shifting back and forth in national elections, both the Florida state Senate and House of Representatives remain decisively controlled by the GOP. Consequently, educational policies have largely been driven by a decidedly right-leaning political structure whose history reveals how and why Governor Bush was able to enact

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educational reforms such as the A++ Plan during his tenure. A brief description and historical trajectory of Florida's major educational policies since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is necessary as a means of framing the ideological premises behind and encapsulated within the A++ Plan.

Brown, PAL, and Brown II. Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* SCOTUS decision in 1954 that desegregated schools, Florida's then Governor, LeRoy Collins, and a strong majority of the legislature, opposed desegregation, largely as a reflection of the voting population of his white constituency throughout the state (Cobb-Roberts & Shircliffe, 2007). After the *Brown II* decision was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, delegating the task of desegregating schools to district courts and localities with the order to proceed "with all deliberate speed," the Florida legislature moved to stall desegregation. The Pupil Assignment Law (PAL), passed in 1956 and strengthened through subsequent legislation, according to Cobb-Roberts and Shircliffe (2007), gave school boards the authority to place students in schools based on, "sociological, psychological, and like intangible socio-scientific factors" (p. 27) that purposefully empowered local officials to keep schools segregated, and gave them the "legal" means to do so. It was argued that the PALs being used in Florida and other southern states constituted "good faith" efforts towards satisfactorily providing an administrative means of desegregation, which was mandated by *Brown II*. For several years, PALs were successful at keeping Florida's schools segregated. In 1959, however, a successful challenge was brought to the Florida courts, and PALs were henceforth disallowed, opening the door for integration. Indeed, 1959, a full five years after the *Brown* decision,

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marked the first time an African-American student was admitted to previously all-white public schools in Florida.

The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act also significantly impacted Florida schools, wherein Title VI money dispersed by the federal government could be withheld from institutions practicing segregation in their student admissions and faculty hiring processes. Just a year later, following the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), that dollar figure lingered in the neighborhood of \$800 million throughout the entirety of the south, giving ample financial incentive to school districts throughout Florida to integrate. Despite this fiscal encouragement, resistance to integration in Florida persisted through the 1970's and 1980's, as many white parents and legislators voiced considerable opposition to integrative policies (Cobb-Roberts & Shircliffe, 2007). This resistance slowed integration, but racial diversity in schools was still rising, and the tide of integration would eventually swell to a tipping point in Florida, resulting in widespread desegregation in the 1980's. Over the better part of the next two decades, Florida schools became considerably more integrated than they had been in the decade following the *Brown II* decision. However, the late 1990's and turn of the century brought a spate of resegregation, especially in urban areas, that has threatened to undo the progress made following the landmark SCOTUS decisions (Orfield, 2001; Kozol, 2005; Putnam, 2015). At the same time as these issues of integration were playing out, a series of legislative moves, influenced in part by desegregation, were carried out in the Florida legislature, laying the groundwork for what eventually became Governor Jeb Bush's educational platform.

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The FEAA and RAISE. In 1971, under the leadership of Governor Reubin Askew and decades before No Child Left Behind (NCLB) came into existence, Florida passed the Florida Educational Accountability Act (FEAA) establishing a system of educational accountability introducing statewide academic objectives for grades 2 and 4. As was later the case with NCLB, the focus of the FEAA was on reading and math objectives, which were collaboratively written by content specialists and teachers (FCAT Handbook, 2005). These objectives were subsequently vetted and approved by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), and put into effect shortly thereafter for all public school students in the state.

Despite the relatively easy passage of the bill in the Florida legislature, Askew's accountability reforms of the early 1970's faced several legal challenges, and while they did survive these trials, the delays took their toll, limiting the FEAA's impact. In 1976, however, the FEAA was updated to include a criterion-based high school graduation exam which served as the forerunner of the 1979 State Student Assessment Test (SSAT), the 1994 High School Competency Test (HSCT), the 1997 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and the recently implemented FCAT 2.0 which is presently in use as a graduation requirement for all public and charter school students in the state.

After state senator Bob Graham was elected to succeed Askew as Governor in 1979, he introduced the Raise Achievement in Secondary Education (RAISE) program, which tightened high school course requirements, further increased testing requirements for graduation, and bolstered funding for education. Feeling that Florida's schools were falling short of expectations relative to graduating a competitive workforce,

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Graham (1983) partnered with business executives in an effort to paint the purposes of education as decidedly economic in nature, stating unequivocally that, “education means better business, both today and in the future, for Florida. Better schools mean better jobs, a better future, and a richer economy for all of us” (p. 42). Graham’s business-centered view of education fit neatly with the view espoused by The National Commission on Educational Excellence (1983) in its treatise, *A Nation at Risk*, wherein the nation’s global economic leadership was positioned as being under threat, and could only be maintained through purposeful and directed action in our schools.

Graham also implemented a system of teacher merit pay in 1983, based largely on credentials and the achievement of a a satisfactory score on a national teacher’s test in their subject area. In place for 4 years, the system would be dropped by newly elected Governor Bob Martinez, who also abandoned Graham’s RAISE program. Martinez would have little substantive effect on Florida educational policy aside from steering away from Graham’s initiatives (Michael & Dorn, 2007), and was swept out of office in the next gubernatorial election by Lawton Chiles.

The SIAA and Sunshine State Standards. When Chiles became Governor in 1991, Graham’s reforms were largely returned to, though framed by both the Bush administration’s *America 2000* strategy, as well as the Clinton administration’s *Goals 2000* plan. Both the Bush and Clinton approaches stressed accountability and high standards as salves to the country’s economic concerns. These approaches were embraced by the Chiles administration, as evidenced in the School Improvement and Accountability Act (SIAA) which largely mirrored the national agenda, save for a more directed focus on early childhood education, local control, and the preparation of a

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ready and able workforce (Michael & Dorn, 2007). In addition, the Chiles administration continued the existing policy of rewarding high performing schools and levying penalties against those not making adequate progress, foreshadowing *The No Child Left Behind Act*. The SIAA did not achieve its goals in full, as both lingering budget problems limited the implementation of the SIAA, and the NAACP and other local and national organizations levied challenges against various statutes of the legislation on the grounds that they did not adequately enable students of color to succeed on state assessments, largely due to less intensive curricula in non-white majority schools (Michael & Dorn, 2007).

In 1996, towards the end of the Chiles administration, the Florida legislature and FLDOE approved the Florida Sunshine State Standards in seven content areas (language arts, math, science, social studies, health and physical education, foreign languages, and the arts) for students in grades pre-K to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 to 12. These reforms received mixed reviews from teachers (Heritage Foundation, 2007), but were heartily supported by the state's business sector, including the state chamber of commerce, Associated Industries of Florida, the National Federation of Independent Business, Citizens for a Sound Economy, and the Florida Farm Bureau (The Heartland Institute, 1999). Interestingly, legislation creating charter schools in Florida also passed in 1996, leading to the creation of what are now more than 580 charter schools throughout the state, a number eclipsed only by California's more than 1000 charter schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013).

Bush's A+ Plan. The many reforms of the 1970's, 1980's, and early 1990's paved the way for Chiles' gubernatorial successor, Republican Jeb Bush, who quickly

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put his A+ Plan into action in 1999, his first year in office. It is important to note that the powers of the Governor relative to education were greatly expanded at the time of Bush's election, as Florida voters simultaneously approved measures on the same electoral ballot to re-shape the state school board and make the Commissioner of Education a Governor-appointed official rather than an elected one. This enabled educational reforms such as the A+ Plan to be readily implemented by the Governor's office.

The A+ Plan was a comprehensive system of educational accountability that had myriad and broad-ranging effects, including the following:

1. Mandated standardized testing vis-à-vis the HSCT for all students in grades 3-10 (recall that the HSCT was replaced in 2002 by the FCAT with similar testing requirements for all). Greene, Winters, and Forster (2003) subsequently concluded that Florida had the most aggressive high stakes public school testing in the country;
2. Every public school in the state would be provided a grade from A to F based on student performance on the HSCT, and subsequently the FCAT and FCAT 2.0 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005);
3. Poor performing schools were subject to sanctions, penalties, and mandated changes, including the withholding of monetary rewards for the schools, the reallocation of educational and human resources, school reorganization under a new administration, the dismissal of teachers, the installation of state-approved improvement plans to heighten performance, and the provision of vouchers and

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Opportunity Scholarships for school choice, the lattermost of which is detailed in point 4;

4. Through the provision of Opportunity Scholarships, students attending schools receiving an “F” label for two out of four years could either receive a private school voucher (FS 1002.39), wherein public money could be used to attend private or parochial schools, or exercise school choice (FS 1002.38), enabling them to transfer to another school in the county rated a “C” or higher. Despite several court challenges to the constitutionality of this statute, which at one point resulted in it being struck down by the Florida Supreme Court in 2006, the Florida legislature has successfully created voucher and school choice plans that align with the state Constitution;
5. Created the STAR Program, linking teacher merit pay plans to student "learning gains" made on standardized assessments, and growth in the same “learning gains” as a condition for receiving certain categories of state aid;
6. Formally created the state administered School Recognition Program, under which schools with the highest academic achievement and improvement would receive monetary awards.

The A+ Plan was met with mixed reviews by Floridians (Camilli & Bulkley, 2001; Dittmer, 2004; Greene, 2001; Inman, 2001), but its statutory requirements have remained essentially unchanged, due in large part to the legislative majorities the GOP have long held in the statehouse.

Subsequent to the passage and implementation of the A+ Plan, Governor Bush set out to expand the Opportunity Scholarships program into a more robust system of

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vouchers whereby taxpayer dollars could be used to seek private education in the marketplace, including at religious institutions. In 2005, Governor Bush signed legislation creating not only a voluntary pre-K (VPK) program, but also a universal pre-kindergarten voucher system for 4-year-olds worth \$2500 per child. The burgeoning legislative emphasis on creating markets for schools, enabling choice, and promoting educational competition between schools stands as a hallmark of this period in Florida educational policy history.

An important deviation from this ideological trajectory took place in 2002 when, amidst vociferous opposition from Governor Bush, Bush-appointed state Board of Education members, and Republican legislators, Florida voters approved Amendment 9 to the state Constitution (Barone & Cohen, 2005). Amendment 9 requires the institution of class size limitations throughout K-12 core classes, setting the numbers at 18 per teacher in kindergarten to grade 3, 22 through grade 8, and 25 at the high school level. These Constitutional requirements have come under tremendous fire since their approval in 2002, most recently with the successful legislative effort to redefine what qualifies as a “core class” so as to eliminate several hundred classes from the size limitation requirement (Rockwell, 2011). In effect, the Republican-dominated legislature has sought to neuter the voter-approved Constitutional Amendment by redefining the qualifying terms of the Amendment itself so as to make it inapplicable.

Later in 2005, and with the imprimatur of Governor Bush, the Florida legislature opened discussions to extend and augment the A+ Plan through a complementary piece of legislation. Over the ensuing year, an omnibus bill, framed legislatively as the *A++ Plan*, was crafted, debated, revised, and eventually passed into law in 2006. The plan's

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scope is broad-reaching, addressing issues as diverse as new reading initiatives and collective bargaining contracts, all the way to team teaching and paperwork reduction. Imbued in the legislation, as is the case with all policies (Apple, 1990, 2006a), is an ideological orientation that informed and shaped its legislative framing, and which is exuded through the particular policy choices made within it. In the case of the A++ Plan, it exudes a pair of ideologies - neoliberalism and neoconservatism - yet because the policy has been in effect for a relatively brief period of time, not a single study has been conducted investigating its ideological premises, influences, and effects, both expected and unexpected. In light of both Florida's standing as a lighthouse for other states contemplating educational reforms, and the decidedly neoliberal and neoconservative tenor of the legislation which champion and seek to replicate particular world views in lieu of others, it is essential that an analysis of the A++ Plan proceed as a means of articulating potential encumbrances and outcomes that could have broader implications across the nation. To that end, certain terms merit discussion at the outset in order to provide and maintain clarity through this dissertation.

Contested Terms, Contested Terrain

The nuanced and sometimes contested nature of certain terminology used in this dissertation demands that a purposeful, thoughtful definition be provided for concepts critical to my arguments. When considering the definition of terms critical to my research, it was essential that I draw upon a multitude of disciplinary perspectives from a diverse range of fields to ensure an appropriate and reliable conceptual understanding of the ideas (Miller & Boix Mansilla, 2004; see also Gibbons et al., 1994). Miller and Boiz Mansilla (2004) capture this point expertly, stating "In a world where most of the

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important dilemmas refuse to fit neatly into disciplinary boxes, fostering the capacity to synthesize knowledge from multiple perspectives, to capitalize on distributed expertise, and adapt to changing disciplinary and professional landscapes becomes an essential aim” (p. 14). The following definitions are framed by the conceptual thinking of scholars across a wide variety of disciplines, including Education, Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science/Theory so as to firmly ground the terms in an interdisciplinary field of understanding.

Ideology. Ideology, according to Watt (1994), is “a mode of thinking that generates a representation of the world as seen from the point of view of a particular section of a society, generally a ruling class,” and that “it is in the interest of that dominant class that the world should be perceived and thought about in those terms” (p. 118). Watt’s thinking parallels that of Althusser (1970), who states that, “in a class society ideology is the relay whereby, and the element in which, the relation between men and their conditions of existence is settled to the profit of the ruling class” (p. 235-236). Expanding on the thinking of Watt and Althusser, van Dijk (2008), postulates that ideology refers to “group or class consciousness, whether or not explicitly elaborated in an ideological system, which underlies the socioeconomic, political, and cultural practices of group members in such a way that their (group or class) interests are realized” (p. 34). Ideology can thus be understood as both the manifest and latent ways in which members of a particular social group associate around and bring to fruition a set of beliefs.

As a form of social cognition, according to van Dijk (2008), ideology deeply shapes, and is a reflection of, not only our beliefs and attitudes, but also our knowledge

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and opinions, all in ways that, “favour perception, interpretation, and action in social practices that are in the overall interest of the [dominant] group” (p. 34). Any ideology is thus a temporal and situated manifestation of how the world is understood and experienced within a complex cognitive framework imposed by one group or class of society upon other groups or classes, oftentimes made possible through the control of essential social institutions such as the school.

The educational policymaking process today, as it has always been, is deeply infused with ideology (Apple, 1990, 2006a). Throughout the history of public schooling, ideology, for better or worse, has played a prominent role in shaping local, state, and federal educational policy in ways reflective of the dominant powers of the era, from Dewey’s Progressivism (1897) to Frederick Taylor’s scientific management (1911), and from Freire’s conscientization (1970) to the neoconservative leanings of Chester Finn (1993) and Frederick Hess (2004).

Indeed, as Althusser (1971) contends, “the ideological state apparatus which has been installed in the *dominant* position in mature capitalist social formations...is the *educational ideological apparatus*” (p. 153), thus emphasizing the role of schools in perpetuating an ideological premise vis-à-vis educational institutions. To that end, schools work overtly and covertly to facilitate cultural and social reproduction, instilling in all of us an understanding of how the world operates, and what our role(s) in it will be - something that Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a, 1977b, Bourdieu, 1973, 1979, 1990) identify as *habitus*.

Habitus. French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977a, 1977b; Bourdieu, 1973, 1979, 1990) could be considered the fathers of cultural

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reproduction theory (CRT). Their work is deeply indebted to the writings of Marx and Althusser, and grew alongside Bernstein's (1971, 1977) treatises on educational knowledge and social control, Apple's (1979) exploration of the hidden curriculum, and Bowles and Gintis' study of correspondence theory (1976). While influenced by these beliefs, Bourdieu and Passeron conceptualized CRT as moving beyond the simple correspondence theories that they perceived to be overly rigid and deterministic. Rather, they perceived culture to be a mediating, (re)productive link between the interests of the ruling class and the realities of everyday life. Bourdieu (1973) is worth quoting at length on this point:

An educational system which puts into practice an implicit pedagogic action, requiring familiarity with the dominant culture, and which proceeds by imperceptible familiarization, offers information and training which can be received and acquired only by subjects endowed with the system of predispositions that is the condition for the success of the transmission and of the inculcation of the culture. (p. 75)

Schooling was thus seen as an institution that systematically promoted cultural reproduction. Bourdieu, though, was careful to avoid arguing that schools were merely a mirror of the dominant culture; rather, he argues, according to Stanley (1992), that schools are relatively autonomous institutions that are directly and indirectly influenced by powerful institutions. Though, arguably, said institutions are typically tied ideologically to the dominant groups of a society who veil their ideological positions as commonsense as a means of normalizing the status quo.

Schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity vis-à-vis the appearance of content and methodological impartiality. The identity of schools

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as such, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a), enables them to, “conceal the social function [they] serve,” thereby (re)producing the dominant culture, including its norms, values, and belief systems. In this way, the dominant culture’s ideological vision of society becomes the populace’s common sense understanding of the social and cultural order of things. Bourdieu (1990) refers to this as *habitus* or, “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...as principles which generate and organize practices and representations” (in Lemert, 2004, p. 436). The habitus, Bourdieu (1990) further explains, is a product of history, producing

individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their temporal constancy. (in Lemert, 2004, p. 437-8)

Thus, the habitus is the actualization, or embodiment, of ritualized practices that over time become so sedimented into our daily lives that they come to be regarded as common sense, shaping our actions, discourse, and decision-making patterns. More specifically, and relative to education, Fruchter (2007) argues that the habitus is part of the very structure of schooling:

Schooling culture reflects the hegemonic societal culture in its ordering values, such as its time sequences and organizational structures; the views of history and language embedded in its curriculum; assumptions about behavior, intellect, and achievement implied in its pedagogy; and the beliefs about differential student ability and career destiny built into its aspirational structure. (p. 28)

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Consequently, the thoughts and actions of individuals reproduce the very structures of the dominant culture that led to their legitimization in the first place. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977a, 1977b) explanations of "cultural capital" are also central to these arguments.

Individuals are born possessing what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a, 1977b) term "cultural capital," or the cultural competencies that one inherits as a function of the class-specific boundaries of their family and community. Giroux (1983) further explicates the meaning of cultural capital, describing it as the, "sets of meanings, qualities of style, modes of thinking, and types of dispositions that are accorded a certain social value and status as a result of what the dominant class or classes label as the most valued cultural capital" (p. 88). Through the process of legitimization and reproduction, schools disadvantage students whose cultural capital does not neatly align with that of the dominant culture. At the same time, these institutions afford members of the dominant group the privileges and affirmation denied others. Consequently, amidst marginalizing these students, schools also seek to alter their habitus such that they participate in their own social, cultural, and economic oppression and marginalization from the dominant culture, which Freire (1970/1994) dubs *false consciousness*. The constant reinforcement of the habitus in and through schools contributes markedly to hegemony.

Hegemony. Functionally, an ideology, "generates a partial view of the world," according to Watt (1994), "by dissecting it along certain lines, and opening up particular slices of the truth" (p. 185). Such partial views of the world, when institutionally legitimized, shape thought and action. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) remind us, "institutions control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible" (p. 55). Further, as van Dijk (2008) argues, "the dominant groups or

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classes tend to conceal their ideology (and hence their interests), and will aim to get their ideology accepted as a 'general' or 'natural' system of values, norms, and goals" (p. 34), largely as a means of consensus building, ideological reproduction, and the institutionalization of hegemonic power. Hegemony, Gramsci (1971) explains, is the "spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (p. 12). Williams (1977) further suggests that hegemony, "is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming" (p. 110). Althusser's (1971) concept of the ideological state apparatus and Gramsci's (1971) view of hegemony are complementary in the sense that the dominant groups of society position school "as a neutral environment purged of ideology" wherein hegemonic discourse may flourish. Hegemony, thus, not only informs our thoughts, but also influences our actions and day-to-day practices. Practices, which Levinson and Sutton (2001) describe as "deceptively simple," are, "the way individuals, and groups, engage in situated behaviors that are both constrained and enabled by existing structures, but which allow the person to exercise agency" (p. 3). The superficial simplicity of actions to which Levinson and Sutton (2001) refer has to do with the seemingly innocuous reasons that people behave the way they do – reasons that take into consideration neither the pervasiveness of ideology, nor the power it possesses to influence practice when hegemonically constituted.

To be hegemonic, Bienefeld (2002) argues, an ideology must provide people with

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a way of understanding the world that leads them to accept the legitimacy of the existing order, either because it is deemed relatively desirable and just or because it is regarded as natural or beyond challenge. In either case, the existence of such an ideology – by ensuring that fundamental critiques of the status quo will appear as perverse, misguided, or unrealistic – allows social and political stability to be maintained with a minimum of coercion. (p. 208)

Rather than coercion, which often involves physical action or the withholding of financial or other resources, van Dijk (2008) argues that persuasion and seduction, envisaged through the control of public discourse via the media and through education, are much more effective means of ensuring, or manufacturing consent (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Both, he contends, result in the acceptance of an ideological stance that contributes to the further subjugation of subordinate groups and classes in a society. The arguments Bienefeld (2002) and van Dijk (2008) make are based fundamentally on the works of not only Gramsci (1971), but also Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/1972) who held that instead of physical force, ideological hegemony has become the dominant form of reproduction in society.

Giroux (1983) concisely summarizes this point, stating, “[ideological hegemony is] established primarily through the rule of consent, and mediated via cultural institutions such as schools, family, mass media, churches, etc.” (p.23). Consequently, schools and the children they serve have been subject to the ideological visions and values of those driving educational policies. Schools, as sociopolitical systems of cultural transmission (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), simultaneously produce and reproduce the values, belief systems, and political, cultural, and economic

interests of the ruling class in ways that even the power and influence of family cannot mediate (Bourdieu, 1971). As Cassell and Nelson (2013) argue, “schooling imparts basic, deeply interiorized master patterns of dispositions and choice triggers [that] have the power to shape consciousness” (p. 11); in other words, the school is a socializing and acculturating institution through which students learn about, practice, and come to live selected social and cultural norms. The hegemonic power of any ideology is made manifest primarily through political action, largely in the form of policy.

Policy. Policy is always contested, and at many levels. Definitions abound, some more narrow, others broader, of what constitutes policy and the policymaking process. Given that, “much rests on the meaning or possible meanings that we give to policy... [affecting] ‘how’ we research and how we interpret what we find,” (Ball, 1994, p. 15), it is important for us to consider an array of possibilities. Table 1.1 outlines a selection of definitions to the term: Take, for instance, the following ways in which the term policy has been defined:

TABLE 1.1 – Policy Definitions

TABLE 1.1	Policy Definition
Dubnick & Bardes, 1983, p. 8	Public policy is] the expressed intentions of government actors relative to a public problem and the activities related to those intentions.
Kenway, 1990, p. 59	Policy represents] the temporary settlements between diverse, competing and unequal forces within civil society, within the state itself and between associated discursive regimes.
Bryson & Crosby, 1992, p. 63	Public policy is] substantive decisions, commitments, and actions made by those who hold or affect government positions of authority, as they are interpreted by various stakeholders.

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Stone, 1997, p. 377-379	Policy is centrally about classification and differentiation, about how we do and should categorize ... [wherein] dilemmas evoke intense passions because the classifications confer advantages and disadvantages, rewards and penalties, permissions and restrictions, or power and powerlessness.
Cibulka, 1995, p.106	[Public policy] includes both official enactments of government and something as informal as 'practices.' Also, policy may be viewed as the inactions of government, not simply what the government does.
Ball, 1990, p. 3	Policy is clearly a matter of 'the authoritative allocation of values'; policies are the operational statements of values ... policies project an ideal society.
Fowler, 2000, p. 9	Public policy is the dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem. It includes a government's expressed intentions and official enactments as well as its consistent patterns of activity and inactivity.

Ball (1994) further notes that when “the meaning of policy is taken for granted ... theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures they construct” (p. 15), thus influencing both how research questions are framed at the outset, and how resultant data is analyzed. Taylor et al (1997, p. 15-17) articulate a series of general observations relative to the constituent parts of all policies, which they perceive to be both a process and a product. They first argue that *policy is more than just text*; rather, policies are dynamic and interactive documents situated temporally, socially, and geographically. In Florida, the A++ Plan grew out of a specific temporal, social, and geographic climate shaped by, amongst other influences, local and state politics, national directives related to education, and growing public discord about the quality and direction of public education in the state. That being the case, Taylor et al.

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(1997) remind us, *policies exist in context*. No policy exists in isolation; rather, prior history, significant local and regional events, and – most notably for the purposes of this study – “a particular ideological and political climate” (Taylor et al, 1997, p. 16), all influence the shape and tenor of a particular policy. The ideological and political climate of which the authors speak segues into arguably the most significant of their observations addressing policies and values.

Policy is also value-laden according to Taylor et al. (1997). Values permeate all aspects of the policy process, from conceptualization to design, and implementation to evaluation. Who decides is thus of central importance to all policy and policy-making. The Florida A++ Plan represents a view arrived at by the Republican majority of the Florida legislature, under the guidance of then Governor Jeb Bush (R). This reality reinforces another of Taylor et al.'s (1997) contentions: that *policy making is a state activity*. A complex state apparatus that oftentimes struggles internally is nevertheless the primary institution through which policy is articulated. As a state-driven policy, the A++ Plan directly influences all public school students in Florida, and has the potential to influence the course of policies in other states. Further, and since being codified into law, the legislation has been carefully positioned in and through the media using language meant to influence public opinion and perception.

Relatedly, the Taylor et al (1997) further contend that *policy is multi-dimensional*. That is, policies are written, interpreted, and enacted differently by different actors whose visions may lay spread across a spectrum ranging from complementary to adversarial, but which most often reflect and privilege those in power. Policy *implementation is thus never straightforward*: policies are necessarily interpreted and

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mediated by the complex social, economic, and political dynamics of regional and local realities. While policies such as the A++ Plan are passed at the state level, they are enacted at the local level wherein great variance exists from district to district across a broad swath of social, economic, and political lines. Policies, including the A++ Plan, invariably reflect a degree of ambiguity that local officials must interpret and implement, resulting in differential practices and outcomes. Consequently, *policies result in unintended as well as intended consequences*. The unpredictability of outcomes is a hallmark of policy. Local conditions and the interaction effect of a multitude of policies working in relation to one another yield variable results across disparate fields of implementation. This interaction effect is inevitable Taylor et al. (1997) argue because *policies interact with other policies*. Educational policies are influenced by, and interact with, policies from various other fields, including, but not limited to, economics, civil rights, rural and urban development, and labor markets. Policies, including those in Florida, are both discrete and interrelated, situated in an existing policy climate that necessarily runs parallel, and in some cases, in contrast to, sitting local, state, and national legislation.

Extending Point 5 that Taylor et al. (1997) make regarding the policymaking process, Ozga (2000) argues that policymaking is not restricted simply to the State; rather, “education policy can be made by three major groups within the social formation: the state apparatus itself, the economy and the various institutions of civil society” (p. 52-53). Taken in their entirety, the observations Taylor et al. (1997) make of the concept of “policy” frame it as a product *and* a process, a conclusion at which others have also arrived.

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Drawing on the work of Ball (1994) and Foucault (1977), Bell and Stevenson (2006) contend that policy is indeed both a product and a process that, “can now be seen as not only the statements of strategic, organizational and operational values (products) but also the *capacity* to operationalize values (process)” (p. 18). They further conclude that, “conceptualizing policy in these twin terms emphasizes the intensely political character of policy. Policy is about *both* the identification of political objectives, *and* the power to transform values into practice” (p. 18). Educationally speaking, values can be expressed, incorporated into, and acted upon within curriculum and instruction in a great variety of ways.

To that end, “policy” in this dissertation is regarded as a socially-constructed, ideologically-driven, institutionalized doctrine and mode of thinking that governs behaviors, influences attitudes and dispositions, and is reflected in both policy rhetoric and institutionalized action. It is, in effect, the presiding orthodoxy within which individuals engage in the daily practice of their lives.

Considered together, ideology, hegemony, and policy serves to reproduce the values, attitudes, perspectives, and points of view of society’s dominant group. Arguably, the two dominant ideologies of our time that have influenced contemporary educational policies around the world, but in particular here in the United States, are neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Apple, 2006a; Bienefeld, 2002; Brown, 2006; Edmondson, 2000; Weis & Fine, 2004). Before examining these two ideologies more closely, it is important to recognize that ideology is not inherently bad or harmful as is often assumed (Kavanagh, 1995), as ideological stances are just as likely to serve neutral and positive ends as they are negative ones. Indeed, no society is “non-

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ideological” (Kavanagh, 1995), and, in keeping with Althusser’s (1970) assertion that, “ideology (as a system of mass representations) is indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence” (p. 234-5), it is taken as a given that ideology has informed all our social and political practices in history, good, bad, and neutral. As Kavanagh (1995) points out, however, “the problem with specific ideological discourses and practices is not *that* they are ideological, but exactly *how*, and to exactly *which* social conditions of existence they form, transform, and equip men and women to respond” (p. 314). Indeed, ideology is inescapable, framing our actions, systems of values, and perceptions of what was, is, and may be possible. Since its founding, ideology in the United States has been shaped in large part by a singular, overriding vision referred to as the American Creed, an examination of which opens Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This dissertation draws on scholarship from several overlapping fields: (1) The American Creed, (2) literature on the history, meanings, focus, and tensions of “neoliberalism” in educational policy, (3) literature on the history, meanings, focus, and tensions of “neoconservatism” in educational policy, and (4) the growing alliance between the ideologies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism in educational policy.

First, I review the American Creed as an overarching, longstanding, and broadly shared vision of the United States that has created the ideal conditions for the rise of both neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Second, I review the literature on neoliberalism as an ideology, including its sociopolitical history, ideological underpinnings, and both presence and influence upon educational policy. Third, I review the literature on neoconservatism as an ideology, similarly including its sociopolitical history, ideological underpinnings, and both presence and influence upon educational policy. Finally, I review the literature on the ways in which neoliberalism and neoconservatism have come to support one another despite their seemingly contradictory ideological stances.

The American Creed

The concepts of individualism, democracy, egalitarianism, liberty, and an overt anti-authoritarian ethos have endured in the United States since the country's inception, shaping an “American Creed” that informs our national identity and normative actions (Huntington, 1981). Tocqueville (1835/2000) observed these precepts while writing *Democracy in America*, understanding them as simultaneously seductive and appealing

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to our cultural instincts. Together, these concepts came to form a distinct political and social ethos whose formation began when the first European settlers arrived on the New World's eastern shores and continued through the American Revolution.

A number of factors contributed to the growth and nurturance of the American Creed before, during, and immediately after the American Revolution. Of great primacy was the absence of an aristocracy (though aristocratic rule grew more powerful the further south and west one ventured). By and large, the first settlers in America were culturally, linguistically, and religiously homogenous (Daniels, 1991) groups seeking refuge instead of riches, hoping to establish a way of life steeped in the Puritanical values that had contributed to the ushered departures from their respective homelands.

Once in America, it was clear that primogeniture would hold little if any weight as the abundance of arable land and economic opportunity devalued inheritance as a means of establishing wealth. In effect, as Tocqueville (1835/2000) argued, people in America were *born* equal instead of *being made* so, as was the case in Europe. There was, as Tocqueville (1835/2000) famously remarked, an "equality of conditions" (p. 266-267) that pervaded American life, making upward social mobility seemingly available to anyone setting their mind to achieving it.

As the colonies took shape, the British passed much of their day-to-day management to local townships, providing each colony with ownership over its daily routines. This local control facilitated the development of self-governance and independence from centralized authority – important aspects of what eventually came to be known as the American Creed. The independence granted to the colonies fostered a

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desire for not only greater sovereignty and self-governance, but also reinforced their general disdain for centralized authority that steered from afar.

When the American Revolution erupted, the authoritarian hand of British political rule stoked its fire. Historically, this was unusual. In the great majority of social and political revolutions, religion had played a central role in uprisings, usually being the target of the masses because of the role religion played in oppressive governmental interference. As it did not play this role in the American Revolution, religion retained its status amongst the American populace as an ideal (Huntington, 1981) – an ideal that would greatly inform the American Creed.

Upon its victory in the Revolution, America set out to create a government that would purposefully limit the powers of the state in an effort to avoid any possibility of homegrown authoritarian rule similar to that which they had endured under British rule (Daniels, 1991). The resultant form of American government was characterized by myriad checks and balances, the distribution of power between separate branches of the government, and the public election of officials with varying terms, amongst other measures, all of which were informed and fundamentally based upon the American Creed. Analyzing the discrete elements of the Creed will provide a springboard from which an analysis of neoliberalism and neoconservatism may proceed.

Individualism. One of the pillars of belief systems in the United States is individualism: the belief that individuals are the utmost authority on matters, capable of handling affairs more efficiently and effectively than collectives, society or the government. As Tocqueville (1835/2000) observed, “each American calls only on the individual effort of his reason” (p. 403) as a guide to his actions and ideas. “The

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essence of individualism,” Huntington (1981) further explains, “is the right of each person to act in accordance with his own conscience and to control his own destiny free of external restraint” (p. 33). Tocqueville (1835/2000) refers to this as the dogma of the sovereignty of the people, exemplified by unique virtues such as the granting of authority by the people to the government, an idea Huntington (1981) also espouses. In other nations, authority was granted in an entirely opposite manner, wherein a centralized government would bestow authority upon the people and associations of the nation (Huntington, 1981).

In lieu of a strong state, the individualistic spirit of American culture has historically championed a decentralized government and the more recent exemplar of the rugged individual, which is commonly attributed to Herbert Hoover (1928; see also Martinez, 2009; Lakes & Carter, 2011; Rand, 1964). Such a figure is fully self-made and capable of standing against the moral, social, political, and economic inadequacies of society and government bureaucracy, and rising above any obstacle they face through hard work, fortitude, and resilience - a view, according to Cassell and Nelson (2013), that is “ubiquitous, presented over and over again in a recurring cross-generational pattern” (p. 6). And yet, Casell and Nelson (2013) continue

The myth of America as an open society in which there is a generalized equity of opportunity and where upward mobility is available to everyone with the grit and determination to seize it is belied by, and yet nevertheless obscures, the reality of the closed opportunity loops that many persons in isolated, excluded or otherwise marginalized groups face. (p. 16)

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Such views, acting in concert with other related economic factors, have been major factors in America having never witnessed a major Socialist movement take root. Both Lipset (1996, 2000) and Huntington (1981) make the argument that such an absence is a reflection of the deep-seated individualism that took root during our nation's infancy. In addition, both also argue that the overtly Libertarian nature of America has made it resistant to the organization of a strong and well-organized welfare state apparatus that often buttresses socialist movements.

An offshoot of this ardent individuality is a danger Tocqueville (1835/2000) expressed throughout *Democracy in America*: that the desire to define ourselves systematically and systemically as individuals leads inexorably towards selfishness, privatization, and a general state of disconnectedness with the general state of the rest of society (see also Lipset, 1996). This disconnectedness is a product of capitalism as much as it is of individualism, and threatens the very fabric of our society – a society fundamentally built upon the virtue of participation in both social and political milieus. When men, “have no faith in one another” (Tocqueville, 1835/2000, p. 409), they can have little faith in democratic government – a hallmark of the American Creed.

Democracy. Democratic rule has been a hallmark of America since its colonization. According to Huntington (1981), “the essence of democracy is popular control over government directly or through representatives, and the responsiveness of governmental officials to public opinion” (p. 33). The central idea at play here is that the government's power is limited insofar as it is the sovereign public that determines both who will represent them, as well as the shape and manner of that representation. A government that is both responsive and accountable to the people will never become

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corrupt, according to Huntington (1981), because of the naturally volatile state in which that government exists. In addition, Huntington (1981) and Lipset (1996) both make the case for democracy serving as a vehicle for enabling the diverse abilities of diverse peoples to come to the fore. Equal opportunity makes it possible for everyone to aspire to, reach, and share the same stage. In Tocqueville's (1835/2000) estimation, however, the "tyranny of the majority" (p. 239) is certainly at odds with this aspect of the American Creed.

Even today, the rejection of American values – values defined by the majority – tacitly positions a person as un-American and unpatriotic, and in Tocqueville's time made them anti-religion. Although Tocqueville (1835/2000) argues that democracy is immutable and inevitable, he also holds that democracy has many dangers, the most formidable of which is the majority's voice vis-à-vis the government. The government represents the majority, and as such operates as an oppressor wielding power to preserve itself. Tocqueville (1835/2000) goes so far as to say, "I do not know any country where, in general, less independence of mind and genuine freedom of discussion reign than in America" (p. 244), due in large part to the tyranny of the majority.

In addition, Tocqueville (1835/2000) saw slavery and the inhuman treatment of Native Americans as the absolute antithesis of the democratic trends he observed and wrote about in the northeast. Herein, Tocqueville reads American society somewhat differently than Huntington (1981), in that he saw this disparity of treatment and recognized that American democracy was flawed, and was experienced differently by different people. In basing his book on observations in the northeast, Tocqueville was

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able to juxtapose the puritanical views of northerners with the views of southerners, for whom slavery was perceived to be both necessary and appropriate. Huntington (1981), by contrast, saw democracy at that time (and now) as more consensus-oriented: that American nationalism demonstrated a consistent set of beliefs that pervaded everyone's thoughts, regardless of their social and cultural status in the democracy.

Egalitarianism. "The essence of egalitarianism," according to Huntington (1981), "is rejection of the idea that one person has the right to exercise power over another" (p. 33). Lipset (1996) similarly argues that egalitarianism is rooted in the belief that equal opportunity – not to be confused with equality of outcomes – is of great importance to Americans. Tocqueville (1835/2000) would heartily agree, as what struck him most during his visit to America was what he saw as the pervasive *equality of conditions*. In America, Tocqueville posits, the equality of conditions made social mobility a reality for anyone seeking it. Affluence and wealth were not reserved for an aristocracy, but were attainable by the common man through his own toil. The existential expression of egalitarianism was trumpeted by all. Yet further in Tocqueville's (1835/2000) account we also see a difference of opinion related to the normative expression of egalitarianism.

Despite the fact that the American Creed was built in part on the concept of egalitarianism, the "tyranny of the majority" (p. 239) has a decidedly undemocratic effect on society. Specifically, the tyranny of the majority overtly and covertly restrains people in the minority from expressing their peculiarities, abilities, and opinions for fear of being punished or ostracized. This ostensibly silences dissenting opinions, preventing (or at least limiting) them from being voiced and heard. Consequently, it becomes clear that the majority not only possesses a great deal of power over the minority, but also enjoys

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a greater range of opportunity in which to express their opinions and be heard in the public sphere and by the government.

Liberty. Huntington (1981) asserts that, “the essence of liberalism is freedom from governmental control – the vindication of liberty against power” (p. 33). Individual freedom, and thus individual choice, is the foundation upon which America’s social and political states have been erected. Echoing New Hampshire’s state motto, “Live Free or Die,” Lipset (in Wattenberg, 1996) has referred to “old-fashioned liberalism” as the “libertarianism” we see in contemporary times. Liberalism in Tocqueville’s time was most zealously enacted in matters pertaining to the rights of citizens. All Americans, down to the poorest of society, have basic, inalienable rights accorded to them within the Bill of Rights. These freedoms enable any individual to leverage the rule of law for their purposes, despite any social mores that may inhibit such action.

In this way, Tocqueville (1835/2000) emphasizes that, “there is nothing more prolific in marvels than the art of being free; but there is nothing harder than the apprenticeship of freedom” (p. 229). Possessing and practicing freedom, while granting the same license to others with whom we ardently disagree, is a burden American democracy continues to confront. This tension is best expressed through Tocqueville’s departures from Huntington and Lipset.

Although Tocqueville (1835/2000) agreed that liberty itself is something Americans, “dash towards with a rapid impulse and sudden efforts,” (p. 52), he tempers this assertion by noting the greater fundamental import of *equality* to Americans. Without equality – specifically, equality of opportunity – Americans will question the purpose and nature of government, as well as the relative distribution of power in

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society. In such times, revolution is born, often of the anti-authoritarian ethos that pervades American society. This is exemplified by the Occupy Wall Street movement that gripped the United States during the height of the recent recession, and continues amidst the economy's recovery. The impetus for the movement was the pervasive income inequality that exists in the United States (Hacker & Pierson, 2010), and the commensurate disenfranchisement that people feel about their access to and influence over the government that makes the laws by which they live. This discontent is fomented by the belief that a tiny fraction of the American population - the wealthiest and most powerful 1% - have unfettered access and influence over the legislative process, and are able to manipulate said laws to their advantage, oftentimes at the expense of the remaining 99% of Americans (Reich, 2015). Demonstrators have little recourse, though, in light of how ingrained liberty is in the American Creed.

In his famous and influential essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill (1859) argues that, "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others" (p. 6). Mill's claim suggests that individual liberty, in all but the most grave of circumstances, trumps the collective good. Stone (1988) questions this perception, arguing more broadly, "when, if ever, should community or social purposes be allowed to trump individual choice? Under what circumstances should public policy ever limit individual privacy and autonomy? (p. 109). More importantly, Stone (1988) draws our attention to the ambiguity of Mill's (1859) argument: what constitutes "harm to others" is subjective, difficult to interpret, and similarly difficult to associate with a specific cause. Despite

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these compelling arguments, liberty remains a cornerstone of the American Creed and master narrative of our nation.

Anti-Authoritarianism

The individual elements of the American Creed described up to this point culminate in the final and keystone element: the anti-authoritarianism to which Americans so fervently cling. To Huntington (1981), “the distinctive aspect of the American Creed is its antigovernment character. Opposition to power, and suspicion of government as the most dangerous embodiment of power, are the central themes of American political thought” (p. 33). Indeed, as Lipset (1996) asserts, “the American revolutionary libertarian tradition does not encourage obedience to the state and the law” (p. 21). The separation of powers, multitude of checks and balances, frequent elections, and general desire for local control exemplify the antipathy Americans feel for big government. Huntington (1981) terms these pervasive anti-authoritarian proclivities the “antipower ethic” (p. 33). He further extols,

The Founding Fathers, argued that men in power would be tempted to do evil and would infringe the rights and liberties of others unless they were restrained by countervailing power. Hence, government must be weak because men are evil. Their more optimistic successors, on the other hand, started with the opposite assumption about man but arrived at a similar conclusion about government. Because men are inherently well-intentioned and reasonable, strong government is not necessary to control or direct them; government should be weak because men are good. (p. 37)

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Huntington's point was that, even in the face of contrarian perspectives on the nature of Man, Americans sought small, decentralized government and *laissez-faire* governance as a political ideal.

Tocqueville (1835/2000) similarly argues that there are anti-statist tendencies amongst the American populace, noting specifically that townships should manage their own affairs whenever possible. Moynihan (in Wattenberg, 1996) bolsters the notion that Tocqueville observed anti-statism as part of the liberal tradition in America, stating,

Tocqueville would have taken the word liberal to mean someone who did not want too much of a state, wanted limited powers, and didn't have any great confidence in the natural goodness of man so that, as in our Constitution, you make sure nobody can get too much done or too fast. (¶ 63)

Yet Tocqueville (1835/2000), much like neoliberals, also points out that democratic government is a "necessary evil" (p. 194), and that Americans, especially neoconservatives, recognize this necessity. Furthermore, he is also careful to note that democracy naturally moves in the direction of a centralized government, contrary to the decentralization heralded by the American Creed. A root cause of this tacit shift towards centralization is the nature of association in America which Putnam (2000) takes up at great length.

Despite their anti-statist tendencies and general distrust of government, Americans do have a history of significant and regular membership in voluntary and community associations, especially religious ones (Putnam, 2000). It is not so much the structured and systematic organization of people that Americans fear, but the potential for power and its inherent vices to corrupt that organization. As community

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organizations primarily organize to advocate for change to existing legislation, they are ostensibly not a part of the majority, and are thus unable to enact change of their own volition or through influence of their powerful peers. As a result, they do not (and cannot) exhibit an authoritarian stance towards the public. The majority, however, as the face of government, represents a potential oppressing force that can neither evade nor efface America's history of escaping Britain's authoritarian dominion.

Since our nation's inception, the American Creed has undergone very little substantive change ideologically, save for an amplification of the importance of individual rights and an increasingly anti-authoritarian suspicion of the government (Huntington, 1981; Lieven, 2004; Lipset, 1996), witnessed most especially in recent years through the rise of the Tea Party (Williamson, Skocpol, & Coggin, 2011). While periods of creedal upset have been witnessed, such as the rise of the welfare state in the 1930's and the national focus on racial, gender, and ethnic group rights in the 1960's, the trenchant, fundamental realities of the American Creed have persevered (Lipset, 1996). Given these values, the United States is fertile ground for a pair of ideologies that stress in different, but mutually reinforcing ways, the main currents of the American Creed: Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism.

Neoliberalism

Before defining *neo*-liberalism as an ideological stance, it will be useful to trace a brief account of *classical* liberalism so as to limit any confusion between the two as, according to Cassell and Nelson (2013), "neoliberal ideas stand in direct opposition to the use of the term *liberal* in connection with social democratic ideas and policies" (p. 2). The very concept of "neoliberalism" suggests a specific account of the temporal

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development of liberal thought. That is, it suggests that liberalism was at one point in time an influential ideology, but that at some juncture lost significance or fell out of public favor, only to be rejuvenated in more recent times in a new, or *neo*-liberal form. As it turns out, however, classical liberalism has dominated normative political thought as well as practical politics in the West for the past sixty years. Going further back, classical liberalism was the lynchpin of American economics in the 19th century, guided by *laissez-faire* approaches to economic welfare. To that end, and in light of its ongoing importance as a political doctrine, liberalism can easily be construed as a sort of *shared inheritance* (Thorsen & Lie, 2006) among political players within a nation and the constituencies served therein. The fact that the concepts of freedom and democracy, which are the primary underlying values of liberalism, rarely come under critical scrutiny any longer suggests liberalism has not only survived, but also continues to rest at the center of all political dialogue. Table 2.1 articulates several of the primary characteristics of classical liberalism:

TABLE 2.1 – Conceptions of Classical Liberalism

TABLE 2.1	Classical Liberalism
Conception of the State	· There is a negative conception of state power wherein the individual is to be freed from the interventions of the state
Nature of the State	· The State's role in economic life is to be limited based on the ideal of the self-interested individual · Laissez-faire operations cast market and economic activity as natural · The State takes an active hand in reducing social inequalities
Nature of the Individual	· Individuals possess an autonomous human nature and can practice freedom · Individuals experience the market in economic domains of life, while moral and political principles remain unaffected

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Threshold of Success for Policies	Evidence of the withdrawal of the State from economic life, freeing individuals to act
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Neoliberalism should therefore not be understood as the recovery of a lost tradition of liberal, political thought. It should instead be seen as an ideology vastly distinct from, and very often opposed to, classical liberalism. It is worth citing Harvey's (2005) summary of neoliberalism at length as a means of introducing its central tenets:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. (p. 2)

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Harvey's (2005) comments are illustrative of those of one of the founding fathers of neoliberalism, Milton Friedman, who argued that government's primary role in a free economy is to, "preserve the rules of the game by enforcing contracts, preventing coercion, and keeping markets free" (1955, p. 124). The relative importance of free markets to neoliberalism helps to bubble to the surface one of the seeming contradictions of the ideology: that neoliberal ideology does not call for a full abdication of responsibility by the State. Rather, and in keeping with neoconservative principles that help to marry the two together, the State plays an integral role in both the perpetuation of existing and creation of new markets (Apple, 2004; Ball, 2007; Hamann, 2009), as well as the limiting of class resistance to such measures (Wrigley, 2009). Examples of such new markets include recent moves to create voucher programs in public schools that allow students to attend private and parochial schools at public expense, the cap-and-trade policies associated with carbon emissions wherein pollution is traded on the open market, and the health care exchanges that will soon come into existence in the United States. To that end, a powerful, market-based State is one of several necessary features of neoliberal ideology.

According to Ozga (2000), neoliberalism is based on three central precepts. First and foremost, neoliberalism champions that individuals know better than the state what is good for them, hence broad-based deregulation [and decentralization] is of primacy. The second precept of neoliberalism that Ozga (2000) discusses is that the market is a more efficient and more just institution for the distribution of goods and services than the welfare state, hence free market competition, facilitated through governmental action that creates and maintains markets, should govern all social and economic practices.

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Finally, Ozga (2000) maintains that neoliberalism views inequality between individuals and groups as a natural feature of society that cannot be overcome by socially remedial action, hence government policies directed towards socially reconstructive ends should be abandoned (see also Martinez & Garcia, 2000).

Brown (2006) makes several additional contributions to the conversation, expanding on Ozga's second and third points about the importance of the market and the natural presence of inequality. Regarding the nature of the market, Brown (2006) states, "neoliberalism is not confined to an expressly economic sphere, nor does it cast the market as natural and self-regulating even in the economic sphere...it depicts free markets, free trade, and entrepreneurial rationality as *achieved and normative*, as promulgated through law and through social and economic policy" (p. 694). Neoliberal instantiations of the market necessarily are created and reproduced by the State; hence, competition is a hallmark of the neoliberal approach to school reform as it champions the competitive marketplace as a means of improving schools and providing parents (consumers) with the broadest range of individual freedom possible to choose their child's school. If schools stand the risk of losing students and their state tax dollars to other schools, so the argument goes, they will necessarily have to improve the quality of their product (the education they are providing) if they want to stay competitive and thrive within the marketplace.

As to Ozga's point regarding inequality, Brown (2006) adds, "a permanent underclass...[is] produced and accepted as an inevitable cost...thereby undermining a formal commitment to *universalism*" (p. 695), wherein any orientation towards the public good is reduced to self-care – a decidedly inactive orientation towards citizenry. Apple

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(2006a) concurs, noting that people in a society governed by a neoliberal ethic, “act in ways that maximize their own personal benefits” (p. 31), embodying the truest sense of Rand’s (1964; see also Sidgwick, 1907/1981) rational self-interest: that the only rational action worth taking is one that benefits the self.

Further extending the discussion, Harvey (2005) and Martinez and Garcia (2000) discuss at length how neoliberalism endorses individual responsibility over collective or social responsibility. In this sense, it is not just that the individual *knows* better than the state, as Ozga (2000) contends, but that the individual is solely responsible for their actions and the life they lead. Individuals are essentialized in such a way as to be seen as living wholly independent of the social, political, cultural, and economic complexities of the world around them. “Individual success or failure,” Harvey (2005) tells us, “are interpreted in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings...rather than being attributed to any systemic property” (p. 65; see also Lemke, 2001); or, as Foucault (1979) argues, individuals are transformed into “entrepreneurs of themselves” (p. 198). Consequently, “what markets do,” according to Ozga (2000), “is represent social inequality as a natural outcome of individual action” (p. 61), laying all responsibility for one’s position in society squarely on the individual, without any consideration of the prevailing social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of the contexts in which individuals live, work, and learn. Apple (2004) states, “we are witnessing a process in which the state shifts the blame, for the very evident inequalities in access and outcome it has promised to reduce, from itself onto schools, parents, and children” (p. 24; see also Apple, 2001). We are effectively witnessing a coordinated process of

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neoliberalization in society which can be applied across all manner of social, political, and economic institutions, including schools.

This process, as Harvey (2005) points out, must be “sold” to the American people vis-à-vis, “a practical strategy that emphasize[s] the liberty of consumer choice, not only with respect to certain products but also with respect to lifestyles, modes of expression, and a wide range of cultural practices” (p.42) which are tacitly ordained by the state. Neoliberals view the powerful state as a fundamental necessity of, and potent threat to, their interests, thus necessitating the purposeful orchestration of deregulatory policies and the privatization of previously public services (Cassell & Nelson, 2013; Harvey, 2005). Thus, neoliberalization, “require[s] both politically and economically the construction of a neoliberal populist-based culture of differentiated consumerism and individual libertarianism” (p. 42). A more comprehensive comparison of classical liberalism and neoliberalism is shown in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2 – Distinctions between Classical Liberalism and Neoliberalism

Table 2.2	Classical Liberalism	Neoliberalism
Conception of the State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a negative conception of state power wherein the individual is to be freed from the interventions of the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a positive conception of the state as a “market actor” wherein mercantilism is created vis-à-vis the provision of conditions, laws, and institutions necessary for their creation and operation (Brown, 2003)
Nature of the State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s role in economic life is to be limited based on the ideal of the self-interested individual Laissez-faire operations cast market and economic activity as natural The State takes an active hand in reducing social inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s role is to be limited based on the ideal of rational self-interest Market and economic activity are not thought of as being natural and must be purposefully constructed (Brown, 2003) Invisible hand of the free market guides our action; The State actively manipulates population into “making an enterprise of oneself” (Olssen, 1996), ostensibly through “constant and comparative assessment” (Apple, 2004) that removes the State’s onus of responsibility for social change The State is charged with deregulating public sphere to create new markets

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<p>Nature of the Individual</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Individuals possess an autonomous human nature and can practice freedom · Individuals experience the market in economic domains of life, while moral and political principles remain unaffected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The State seeks to create, or mold, an individual who is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur · The individual is solely responsible for his/her actions independent of any external constraints on said actions (the individual is “essentialized”) · Individuals pervasively experience the market in all aspects of life as neoliberalism shifts, “the regulatory competence of the state onto responsible, rational individuals [with the aim of] encouraging individuals to give their lives a specific entrepreneurial form” (p. Lemke, 2001, p. 202)
<p>Threshold of Success for Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evidence of the withdrawal of the State from economic life, freeing individuals to act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Tests of profitability and return on investment, increased privatization and deregulation, personal responsibility with commensurate abdication of state responsibility · Can be broadly construed as an effort to restore class power and return to the economic liberalism of the 18th and 19th centuries

As Harvey (2005) argues, “Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse...it has been incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world” (p. 3; See also Apple, 2006; Cassell & Nelson, 2013). George (1999) concurs, pointing out that neoliberalism is not only commonsensical, but “is made to seem inevitable, like an act of God, the only possible economic and social order available to us” (¶ 8). Neoliberalism’s rise to ideological prominence was made possible through not only the marriage of various culturally appealing values, intuitions, and desires brought together under the auspices of a singular, temporally located conceptual apparatus, but also the nexus of various interconnected economic and political shifts over the past 50 years, many of which have been framed by the American Creed. As an ideological stance, neoliberalism embraces the culturally embedded ideals of the American Creed, particularly the emphasis on individualism and liberty, and the stridently anti-authoritarian ethos that characterizes much of the American populace.

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Ideas alone, however, are rarely enough to predicate public action; rather, the marriage of these ideas with contextually significant events conspire to effectively move an ideology into our core belief system, or escort an existing one out, as has been the case in our own history here in the United States. Thus, an examination of the larger sociopolitical and historical context in which neoliberal reforms were unfolding is a prerequisite to exploring specific studies relevant to this research endeavor.

The Rise of Neoliberalism. The Great Depression brought with it a marked change in economic policy, as the works of John Maynard Keynes came to the fore as a means of both reducing the possibility of future recessions and limiting the power and reach of plutocratic elites and large corporations (Gabbard, 2007). Following World War II, the US, as well its closest global partners, adopted an economic policy that was decidedly Keynesian in its tenor (Harvey, 2005). Contrary to the anti-authoritarian pillar of the American Creed, it was believed that the State, according to Harvey (2005), “should focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, and that state power should be freely deployed, alongside of or, if necessary, intervening in or even substituting for market processes to achieve these ends” (p. 10). Such ‘embedded liberalism,’ wherein social and political constraints and a regulatory environment provided the direction for economic activities, delivered significant economic growth following WWII which continued through the 1960s (Armstrong, Glynn, & Harrison, 1991). The interventionist State played a significant role in guiding the economic direction of the nation at the same time as the State’s social policy, engineered through the Great Society, was directed largely at creating a welfare apparatus (health care, education, etc.) for the citizenry. It is no coincidence that major

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social programs and institutions such as Medicare, Medicaid, and the Office of Economic Opportunity were created, that trade unions and collective bargaining gained nominal power, and that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed during this period of purposeful state action on behalf of the people of the United States.

As the 1960s concluded, however, signs of pervasive problems were emerging with Keynesian economic policies, exemplified by the global “stagflation” (Harvey, 2005) of the early and mid-1970s, wherein rising unemployment, coupled with mounting inflation, posed global threats amidst multinational reductions in revenue (Larner, 2000). While attempts to increase state power through regulatory practices were attempted during the Nixon administration, these policies failed to adapt to the prevailing economic conditions of the time and fell victim to many of the same fates as previous Keynesian economic policies. Alternatives to state-dominated economic policy were thus actively sought in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, bringing to the fore neoliberal, market-based approaches that would largely remove State intervention from economic policies. While the roots of neoliberalism can be traced back to the post-WWII work of Friedrich von Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Walter Lippmann at the Mont Pelerin Society, it was not until the tangible manifestations of a presumably failed Keynesian State became more widespread and felt by ruling elites that practical, corrective actions were explored.

Harvey (2005) makes the case that one of the driving factors in the domestic adoption of neoliberal economic policies in the mid-1970’s was the clear threat increased state intervention and organized labor posed to economic elites and the ruling classes globally. He notes, “One condition of the post-war settlement in almost all

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countries was that the economic power of the upper classes be restrained and that labour be accorded a much larger share of the economic pie...the *economic* threat to the position of ruling elites and classes was now becoming palpable” (p. 15). Indeed, the wealth controlled by the top 1% of the population had fallen precipitously by the 1970s as a consequence of several decades of Keynesian economic policies. These existential threats to the ruling classes led indirectly to the CIA-backed 1973 Augusto Pinochet-led coup d'état in Chile, and subsequent re-organization of the Chilean economy by “The Chicago Boys” (Fourcade-Gourinchas & Babb, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Saltman, 2009; Winn, 2004). Chile served as an initial staging ground for the unfettered free market capitalism that defines neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005; Winn, 2004). The initial successes of the Chilean reforms gave fuel to the fire of domestic neoliberal policies (Cypher, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Winn, 2004), trumpeting their arrival in the United States.

The Nixon and Carter administrations did little to impede the growth of neoliberalism in the early and mid 1970's, with the latter in fact ushering it along its way vis-à-vis the appointment of Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker. Subsequently, the late 1970's and early 1980's bore witness to a neoliberalism that was increasingly brazen and influential politically, made manifest through the economic and social policies forwarded by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, American President Reagan, and recently appointed Federal Reserve Chairman Volcker, all of whom vigorously championed staunchly anti-labor positions, market deregulation, and privatization, and who encouraged and rewarded entrepreneurship, deregulated industries, essentialized difference, and sought policy solutions to reduce entitlements,

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each of which reflects a distinctly neoliberal orientation (Harvey, 2005). In many respects, Thatcher led the neoliberal charge relative to influencing educational policy.

According to Harvey (2005), “all forms of social solidarity [under Thatcher] were to be dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values” (p. 23). Thatcher profoundly influenced educational policy in the UK through the introduction of a mandatory national curriculum, wresting greater central control over what transpired in schools at a curricular level and through its means of assessment, which largely fell thereafter to standardized assessments (Apple, 1993; Ball & Bowe, 1992; Gordon & Whitty, 2010; see also Mitchell, 2003). These ideological stances were embraced by Reagan during his tenure, and were fashioned economically by Volcker during his years as Federal Reserve Chairman.

Volcker, who served under both Presidents Carter and Reagan as Federal Reserve Chairman, and currently serves as Chairman of the recently formed Economic Recovery Advisory Board under President Barack Obama, powerfully contributed to the abandonment of Keynesian economic policies beginning in late 1979, culminating in the raising of the nominal interest rate to nearly 21% in 1981. This move, according to Denwood (2003), ushered in, “a long deep recession that would empty factories and break unions in the US and drive debtor countries to the brink of insolvency, beginning the long era of structural adjustment” (p. 48) which was ostensibly enacted to lower the standard of living of Americans (Parenti, 1999). This effort to limit inflation at all costs, which has since become known as Volcker Shock (Branford & Kucinski, 1988; Klein, 2010), was adapted for use in various other arenas of economic policy, systematically and expeditiously replacing Keynesian economic policy with the economic theory of

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monetarism, which had been influentially reframed in 1956 by neoliberal stalwart Milton Friedman.

Reagan, through his approach of *New Federalism* (Sunderman, 2009), embraced Volcker's vision, making it manifest through the dismantling of public institutions, the deregulation of industry, the decimation of labor unions, and, most relevant to our discussion here, the devolution of responsibility for service delivery to state and local governments. This occurred mainly through the restructuring of *categorical aid*, wherein the government determined how the funds would be used, into *block grants* for states and localities, which would then determine how to best spend the federal dollars (Finegold, Wherry, & Schardin, 2004). This abdication of authority was one of the first moves to decentralize the government's role in education, which would contribute powerfully to greater privatization in future years. These various economic and social agenda coalesced and were crystalized in one of Reagan's most significant contributions to advancing the neoliberal agenda: the *A Nation At Risk* report.

A New Educational Paradigm. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 provided considerable momentum for the shifting of the focus in schools from equity to educational excellence. This was largely framed through the lens of how public schools were failing our children, and that the nation was experiencing a decline in economic competitiveness as a result. An explicit link was made between education and preparation of human capital for the workforce, and reforms such as the measurement of student progress, increased accountability, standardization, and greater local responsibility were positioned as solutions to the problem. As Sunderman (2009) comments,

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The excellence reforms gained widespread acceptance because they provided state policy-makers with a set of solutions that were carefully attuned to the political and economic exigencies of the time. By linking the excellence reforms to economic concerns about the changing position of the US in the international economy, job security, and the future economic prosperity of the country, the report provided a powerful argument that these policies could correct the perceived problems in the educational system and real problems in the economy. (p. 10)

A Nation at Risk was, and continues to be, a widely influential de facto policy (Lingard, 2003) within the field, whose publication is seen by many as a watershed moment in the history of public schooling in the United States.

President George H.W. Bush not only continued, but trumpeted Reagan's policies throughout the entirety of his presidency, importantly convening a meeting of the nation's governors in 1989 in order to shape his administration's America 2000 Plan, which was eventually written by then Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander. Most notable within the goals that were developed was the level of attention given to localities and how they would need to take a leading role in advancing the agenda (Sunderman, 2009). We also see within the outcomes of this meeting some of the first palpable indications of a burgeoning neoliberalism, including federal calls for increased competition in and between schools to promote school choice, voucher programs that utilize public tax dollars for private and religious education, curricular standardization and voluntary national exams, the creation of a Private Industry Council to drive vocational education, and the divestment of federal funds to states and localities

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(continuing Reagan's *block grant* approach) (Sunderman, 2009; Unwin, 1991). While the America 2000 Plan did not substantively change existing policy, it did lay the groundwork for what would become more comprehensive reforms under the Clinton administration.

Clinton embraced neoliberalism as a guiding ideological framework (Fowler, 1995), as evidenced through his economic focus on global markets, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and other similar policies and legislative accords that advanced globalization and a free market mentality. Clinton's primary educational initiative, the Goals 2000 Plan, greatly extended the ideological framework of the America 2000 Plan with an express emphasis on human capital development (Smith & Scoll, 1995). Further, changes made to ESEA in 1994 under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), and the passage of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994) and the National Skill Standards Act (1994), both of which ushered in the credentialing of students, further entrenched Clinton's neoliberal ideology and human capital agenda. The changes made to ESEA required states to develop standards, testing schemes, and accountability systems in exchange for federal aid (DeBray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009; Sunderman, 2009), whereas the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994) promoted occupational majors in secondary education, work experiences, and work-place certificates codifying their skills (Smith & Scoll, 1995) in a tangible, portable form. The National Skill Standards Act (1994) created a Board of advisors whose express task was

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to serve as a catalyst in stimulating the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and of assessment and certification of attainment of skill standards: (1) That will serve as a cornerstone of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills; (2) that will result in increased productivity, economic growth, and American economic competitiveness. (§ 2)

While the transition from a Democratic President to a Republican one is often accompanied by sea changes in the direction of major social policy; however, when George W. Bush took office in 2001, he embraced Clinton's Goals 2000 plan as a primer to what would become his signature educational policymaking endeavor.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), passed into law in 2002 during George W. Bush's first term, built upon the neoliberal premises of Clinton's Goals 2000 Plan. NCLB was enacted with bipartisan support in Congress, and ushered in a new era of accountability and standards, despite the federal government's limited funding of educational expenses. Further, and despite its relatively limited financial contributions, NCLB marks the federal government's most sweeping reform and expansion of federal authority over public schools since the initial passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This move fundamentally reversed Reagan's abdication of federal authority over public schools, creating, "an activist bureaucracy that assertively promoted particular political and policy goals" according to Sunderman (2009, p. 12). NCLB requires that states establish performance standards and define adequate yearly progress (AYP) that all schools, and all sub-groups of students therein, must meet by 2013-2014. Not meeting AYP triggers a series of public admonishments and forced reforms that escalate over time if and when a school continues to remain out of

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compliance. NCLB also promotes the neoliberal objectives of increased school choice, competition in and between schools, marketization, increased testing and accountability, and a more robust role for the business community within public education.

Despite the hopes of many scholars of education, President Obama has largely continued – and in some cases expanded – the policies that were in place when he swept into office. Ravitch (2009) has gone so far as to claim that Obama's educational policies are a direct continuation of the previous Republican administration's, referring to these policies as "Bush II" (see also Costigan, 2012; Giroux & Saltman, 2009; Means & Taylor, 2010; Thomas, 2013).

Obama's neoliberal orientation is best illustrated through his linking of federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars to competition, market-based reforms that bind education to economic growth, school choice, and charter schools within the Race to the Top competition and Blueprint for Reform, the appointment of Paul Volcker, former Federal Reserve Chairman under President Reagan, to his economic team, his support of teacher performance pay and alternative pathways to teacher certification, and the selection of a strident neoliberal as Secretary of Education, former CEO of Chicago's Public Schools Arne Duncan (Giroux & Saltman, 2009; Thomas, 2013). Sunderman (2009) maintains that the Obama administration will likely continue to expand the federal government's role in education, and will embrace the business community, most explicitly through the Business Roundtable, as a primary actor in future policy discussions. Indeed, Lipman (2011; see also Lipman, 2015) observes that Obama's flagship educational initiative, the Race to the Top competition, "is actually part of a global thrust toward the commodification of all realms of existence" (p. 1), reflecting

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a decidedly neoliberal alignment. Obama's (2009) own words when introducing the program belie this ideological orientation:

That's the common spirit --the spirit of common purpose, that all of us have to have in America today. And I'm absolutely confident that if we're all willing to come together and embrace that spirit -- in the living room, in the classroom, and the State House, on Capitol Hill -- then not only will we see our students reaching farther, not only will we see our schools performing better, not only are we going to help ensure our children outcompete workers abroad and that America outcompetes nations, but we're going to protect the dream of our founding and give all of our children, every last one of them, a fair chance and an equal start in the race to life. (§ 53)

Indeed, the Broad Foundation, a venture capital and philanthropic organization founded by billionaire Eli Broad whose 2008 Mission Statement centered around the neoliberal transformation of urban public schools (see Saltman, 2009) through “governance, management, labor relations and competition” (4), wrote in its 2009–2010 annual report, “The election of President Barack Obama and his appointment of Arne Duncan, former CEO of Chicago Public Schools, as the U.S. Secretary Of Education, marked the pinnacle of hope for our work in education reform. In many ways, we feel the stars have finally aligned” (p. 9). Lipman (2015) further asserts that, “the Broad Foundation has invested millions of dollars promoting charter schools and to train a cadre of school district leaders to bring business management to public education, especially in urban districts” (58). Extending this program of neoliberalization, Lipman (2015) contends that Obama's Blueprint for Reform goes further than any similar policy previously written:

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[the policy] provides competitive grants to states, charter school authorizers, charter management organizations, districts, and nonprofit organizations, to start or expand charter and other non-public schools. Through grants and the National Charter School Resource Center, the DOE's Office of Innovation and Improvement supports the creation, replication, and expansion of charter schools. (p. 59)

These various political moves by the Obama administration have both created new educational markets, and set public schools on a trajectory that essentializes learning for economic gain.

The linking of schools to the improvement of the economy is both unambiguous and front and center in our political arenas, maintaining the now decades-long sentiment that the primary function of schools is the bottom line they will engender in the workplace. Since the ascent of neoliberal economic policies beginning in the mid-1970s, the wealth controlled by the top 1% of the population in the United States has increased fifteen-fold, and the ratio of CEO to worker pay has shifted from 26 to 1 in 1970 to more than 240 to 1 today (Bell & Van Reenan, 2013). Moreover, the weakening of the estate tax, the diminution of capital gains and investment taxes, and the recent *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) decision that opened the doors to unlimited corporate spending in political campaigns, looks to further sediment in place the power of ruling economic elites. Harvey (2005) summaratively asserts that, “neoliberalization...has succeeded remarkably well in restoring, or in some instances (as in Russia and China) creating, the power of an economic elite” (p. 19). The past three decades of educational leadership and policy emanating from the White House

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have seen a consistent trajectory toward neoliberal ideals. As Smith (2011) strongly asserts, “neither Republicans nor Democrats can stand with honesty and deny that they have been privy to policies that have encouraged rampant privatization of interests, increased attention to individual desires and lessened focus on the common good, and deregulation of policies that were put into place to protect the common good” (p. 105). It is in this sociopolitical and historical context and climate that studies exploring neoliberalism’s effect in and on both schools and educational policy proceeds. Studies included here have been broken down into four overarching categories: Individual Responsibility, Standardization and Accountability, Competition and Choice, and Workforce Preparation.

Individual Responsibility. The process of neoliberalization begins with a belief in individual responsibility - a core precept of the American Creed. We see this very phenomenon in studies conducted by Edmondson (2000), Stevens (2003), McKeen (2007), Sloan (2008), Arnove et al (1996), Allen and Guthman (2006), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006), and Klaf and Kwan (2010). In each of these studies, contextual, historical, and temporal issues are perceived to have been cast aside in the policy objective for all students to be successful regardless of the conditions from whence they came. Stevens (2003), in writing about what constitutes a “cultural model of the reader” in the eyes of the Reading First initiative, expressed concern that the goals associated with the Reading First model were, “constructed as universally applicable to all students, regardless of particular contexts ... this implies that the ability to read happens, or can be made to happen, simultaneously for all children, as a function of their supposedly identical biophysical development” (p 664). As such, any difficulties a

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child experiences are a function of the child him or herself, independent of the context in which they live and learn. Consequently, the individual student becomes increasingly responsible for their own progress along a developmental continuum that they have been shoehorned into for the purposes of standardization. Edmondson (2000) makes a similar claim when discussing President Clinton's America Reads Policy, noting not only that the policy is, "a tool for ensuring *all* children, regardless of their background, can meet the standards," but also that as a result of the initiative all students can become, "efficient members of society" (p. 23), which echoes the efficiency discourse of markets and an economically-oriented objective. Allen and Guthman (2006), in their examination of neoliberalism's effect on Farm-to-School programs, discerned that there has been a devolution of responsibility from the State to localities and to individuals, effectively absolving the State of any responsibility for ensuring even a reasonable measure of equal opportunity. Success and failure thus fall squarely on the shoulders of individuals, regardless of circumstance.

In both Arnove et al.'s (1996) case studies of Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, and Sloan's (2008) school-level case study of the Success For All program in North Carolina, the researchers observe a shifting of responsibility away from the State to individuals who, through nothing more than hard work and perseverance, are expected to find academic success. Similarly, though speaking from a framework of geographic and spatial relations, Klaf and Kwan (2010) argue that No Child Left Behind subjugates students, teachers, and schools, "through regulatory practices that prescribe an essentialized identity...[that] ignores geographic realities specific to the US context – place-related factors that affect education provision and outcomes, spatial patterns of

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inequality, and unequal access” (p. 205; see also Gewirtz, 1998; Sunderman, 2009).

Klaf and Kwan (2010) further argue that, “the socioeconomic and discursive environments in which schools operate” (p. 201) under the neoliberal tenets of No Child Left Behind Act are not duly considered in the process of identifying a school as being at-risk, or failing – particularly urban districts composed of mainly poor and non-white students. In effect, students are thought of as decontextualized entities wherein place, time, and socioeconomic circumstance do not matter in the least. Finally, evincing neoliberalism’s influence beyond US borders, McKeen (2007), in describing Canada’s National Children’s Agenda as a “neoliberal agenda in lamb’s clothing,” tells us that the policy’s neoliberal ideological basis casts poverty and inequality as irrelevant structural issues of society that do not play a significant role in school success or failure.

Moreover, McKeen (2007) states that while there is acknowledgement within the government that poverty and homelessness are indeed issues of concern, they are strictly a function of dysfunctional families and bad parenting – issues of individual responsibility, not concerns of the State.

Lastly, and in a different take on the effects of neoliberal policy as it relates to individual responsibility, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) focus their attention on teachers and the way in which the neoliberal discourse of No Child Left Behind facilitates the abdication of responsibility from the State down to teachers. NCLB accords preeminent status to teachers in determining the success or failure of students. No longer is it the state’s responsibility to ensure students have equal opportunity in the face of increasing global, national, and local income inequality, dilapidated schools, cultural and linguistic differences, and under-resourced institutions; rather, it is the

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teacher who is meant to shoulder this burden, as well as the blame, for student failures, regardless of the varied and unique lived realities of students in their charge.

Consequently, and in keeping with the neoliberal stance that schools are the ultimate guarantor of the nation's economic standing, teachers are thus made to bear the onus of responsibility of improving student achievement without commensurate State attention to the structural inequalities of society that may well have a greater impact on such success (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Edmondson & D'Urso, 2007; OECD, 2005a). Individual responsibility undergirds neoliberal approaches to educational policy and policymaking, and is often leveraged for political purposes through standardized tests and measures of accountability.

Standardization and Accountability. The findings of researchers such as Klaf and Kwan (2010), McKeen (2007), and others regarding individual responsibility and essentialization suggest the two symbiotically contribute to and are a function of standardization, taking the form of both standardized curricula and exams, and accountability measures that hold all students to an identical threshold, despite the fact that not all students are endowed with identical opportunities to reach said threshold. Each of these mechanisms, differentially explored by Lipman (2003), Journell (2011), Cavieres (2011), Hursh, (2004, 2005, 2007a, 2007b), Torres (2008), and Hursh and Martina (2003), are premised upon and expressive of neoliberal intentions. Each of the studies draw attention to the role of neoliberalism in promoting a culture of standardization that ultimately does a disservice to students who are not a part of the dominant group in society, mainly poor, non-white students, and English language learners (ELLs). Concurrently, such standardization facilitates competition between

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students, schools, states, and nations, and ultimately engenders a platform of market-based choice for consumers of an esteemed educational product.

Lipman (2003), in her case study examination of neoliberal school reforms in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), concludes that the standardization of curricula, the proliferation of purportedly “objective” standardized examinations, and accountability systems that hold all students to the same level of expectations have had demonstrably negative effects on many of the city’s most vulnerable and needy students, as such standardization and the consequent assessment of both students and teachers promotes a climate of competition, anxiety, high-stakes testing that determines class promotion and graduation, and, more simply put, winners and losers (see also Hursh, 2007a; Miner, 1999/2000). The children of affluent families and those living in gentrified areas of the city have received a disproportionate share of additional educational resources, have greater access to challenging and varied curricula and college preparatory courses, and are more likely to be the recipients of progressive pedagogy that takes into account current research on teaching and learning (Lipman, 2003; see also Apple, 1990; Anyon, 1980, 1981; Giroux, 1983; Oakes, 1985; Orfield & Yun, 1999). Poor students, non-white students, and ELLS are considerably more likely to receive, “vocational education, restricted (basic skills) curricula, and intensified regimentation of instruction” (p. 49) based on direct, or scripted, instruction that functions to produce a subordinate cadre of low-wage, working class citizens. Together, these neoliberal reforms have facilitated the development of a, “dual city spatially as well as socially and economically” (p. 28) wherein CPS policies, “impose standardization and enforce language and cultural assimilation to mold the children of the increasingly linguistic and

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culturally diverse workforce into a most malleable and governable source of future labor” (p. 179). In a related and particularly telling study, Journell (2011) examined government and civics classes from three demographically diverse high schools during the 2008 Presidential Election, investigating the nature of the content, the instructional strategies used by the teachers therein, and the student-initiated discussions in which teachers acted as facilitators as opposed to professing sages. He concludes that

...students from working-class households or those in lower-level classes were rarely given opportunities to discuss politics at a national level or engage in analytical discussions of the election; students in middle-to-upper-class schools and those in advanced-level classes were privy to rich discussions of politics on a regular basis...these findings are...symptomatic of a neoliberal approach to education in which students are trained for the presumed roles they will play in the nation's political economy. (p. 133)

Lipman's (2003) and Journell's (2011) observations about the working- and lower-class students are what Ross (2008) argues are purposeful neoliberal reforms that prohibit conversations about the contradictions and inequalities of the current sociopolitical epoch, leading students to accept as natural a decontextualized and mythical State in which they live. Findings similar to those of Journell (2011) were arrived at by Cavieres (2011) in his examination of neoliberal Chilean educational reforms from 1990-2010. While the author concedes that certain indicators have improved relative to public spending in education, he maintains that

...the performance gap among social groups has increased [and] the reform promotes the values of individual productivity that negatively affect some of

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the cultural behaviors developed by low-income groups as a consequence of and as a reaction to the exclusion they suffer...As a result, low-income students' culture has remained excluded from the principles of the educational reform. (p. 126-127)

Low-income Chilean students felt there was nothing they could do to improve their condition, according to Cavieres (2011), drifting further away from integration with the dominant classes of society, and unwittingly contributing to their own cultural and social marginalization in the process.

In his studies of school reform in New York (Hursh, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003), Texas (2007a, 2007b), and England (2005), as well as US federal reform in the shape of No Child Left Behind (2005, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003), Hursh comes to several related conclusions. In New York (Hursh, 2007a, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003) for instance, political shifts in the statehouse, growing budgetary constraints, and the burgeoning influence of the corporate world in schools, coupled with the elimination of the local diploma in favor of the Regents diploma in the early 1990's, centralized curricula in a way that served the interests of both neoliberal and neoconservative ideologues. Neoliberal ideologues, the authors maintain, are interested mostly in being able to compare the results of the standardized test scores that resulted from the centralization of curricula, while neoconservative ideologues were interested most in creating a common culture learned through common state curriculum frameworks (Hursh, 2005, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003). It is also noteworthy to mention that in New York, the increasingly important role standardized testing has come to play has been accompanied by a concurrent increase in the dropout rate (2007b). Hursh (2007a,

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2007b), utilizing research by McNeil (2000) and McNeil and Valenzuela (2001), came to similar conclusions about Texas, wherein standardized testing led teachers to teach to the test, the outcomes of which defined the specific rewards and sanctions for schools, including increased funding.

Hursh (2005, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003) has focused on the standardized testing components of No Child Left Behind, positioning the policy agenda as distinctly neoliberal in its orientation. More specifically, NCLB aims to hold schools more accountable for student learning, and to do so has emphasized regular, standardized testing as a means of discerning student progress. In his analysis of NCLB Torres (2008) concludes much of the same, though points to accountability more broadly as, “the spirit of the law” (p. 50). Torres (2008) further warns that NCLB, which is a “brainchild of neoliberalism” (p. 52), is wholly directed toward neoliberal ends:

NCLB is part of a larger political and ideological effort to privatize social programs, reduce the public sector, and ultimately replace local control of institutions like schools with marketplace reforms that substitute commercial relations between customers for democratic relations between citizens. (p. 50)

Expanding his research, Hursh (2005) further points to England as having a similar policy arrangement as NCLB in the United States, wherein standardized tests are used putatively to improve instruction, but in reality are focused on helping the public distinguish between effective and ineffective schools to facilitate competition and choice. Standardized testing and accountability measures are thus used as a means of comparing schools to other schools, and states to other states – an outcome to which I now turn my attention.

Competition and Choice. Researchers have similarly identified schools as becoming increasingly competitive as a result of neoliberal policies and school reforms. The thinking underlying this view is that increased competition between students, schools, districts, and states will invariably lead to parents becoming better “consumers” of education, and hence more astute “choosers” of the best schools - a veritable rising tide of free market competition that lifts all ships/schools, while sinking/closing those unable to cope with the heightened waters/expectations. Competition and choice are both justified and championed by positioning policies and their subsequent reforms in the context of an increasingly competitive and globalized world (Hursh, 2004). Parents, thus, are perceived as consumers of education within the neoliberal ethic. Lipman (2003), Klaf and Kwan (2010), Hursh (2004, 2005, 2007a, 2007b), and Hursh and Martina (2003) all draw attention to the way in which academic outcomes and accountability, frequently made manifest through the public posting of standardized test results and the letter grading of individual schools, stimulate the neoliberal objective of competition between schools and other schools, and states and other states.

At the federal level, No Child Left Behind’s AYP requirements include a proviso for making results public and transparent, stimulating competition between districts and states, a mantle carried on by the current Obama administration vis-à-vis the Race to the Top program. Hursh (2005, 2007b) argues that such public pronouncements create an oppositional environment in which the most informed and most well-educated parents are able to “choice out” to other districts, intellectually and financially weakening their home districts that are oftentimes already struggling. This effectively creates a situation in which the “brain drain” of top students and their well-educated and informed

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parents leave their home districts for either private institutions or other, more high-achieving public schools. Arnove et al (1996) came to a similar conclusion in their study of four Latin American nations that have introduced school choice and competition into their educational systems, including Nicaragua, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. Hursh (2005) further argues that voucher programs and charter schools here in the United States siphon public tax dollars away from public schools to for-profit, private ventures, monetarily assaulting public schools. As more students choose to attend these types of schools, an increasingly large proportion of tax revenue will be re-allocated to them from what would otherwise go to public schools. Moreover, the differential effects of school choice, driven by a neoliberal market mentality, are quite notable.

Hursh (2004, 2007a), in examining neoliberalism's effect on educational policies and reforms in both Texas and New York, has found schools are actively and competitively recruiting students from other districts as a means of both bringing in additional tax dollars and raising sub-group test scores for AYP purposes. This latter objective of raising sub-group scores is made possible ostensibly through the recruitment of mostly white, middle and upper class students with no disabilities as these students require considerably less money to "adequately educate." In a similar finding, Hursh (2005) discerned that England has also witnessed students being recruited by schools so as to raise their relative standing in the league tables, thus making them a more attractive academic institution. As was the case in Texas and New York (Hursh, 2004, 2007a), it is white, middle class students who are in the best position to be recruited, as they require a minimal amount of money to be successful on competitive exams used to rank a school amongst its peers, thus increasing its relative

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attractiveness. Rankings and other data, however, are oftentimes not an enticing enough vehicle for schools to use in their recruitment practices.

In recent years, many school districts have turned to advertising their schools' strengths not only to their own communities, so as to retain existing students, but to lure students from outside the district in so as to benefit from the tax dollars that would follow them (Miner, 2007). The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District School Committee in central Massachusetts, for instance, entertained the possibility of spending more than \$320,000 over three years to create, staff, and support a new position whose sole responsibility was to recruit and retain students in the context of the burgeoning school choice environment (Russell, 2007). Stokes (2011, 2012) made similar observations in Indiana, remarking upon the prevalence of billboard advertisements, many focused on communicating district strengths, in which schools were investing in order to retain existing students while simultaneously attracting new ones. "We need to market our schools," according to Maconaquah Schools Superintendent Doug Arnold (qtd. in Stokes, 2011), who further acknowledges that marketing has necessarily become a strategic goal for the district. Indeed, Kasman and Loeb (2013) and Loeb, Valant, and Kasman (2011) observed that in the face of increasing competition for choice students, public schools much more heavily turned to advertising/marketing efforts instead of thoughtful and considered programmatic reforms that take considerably longer to demonstrate as positive draws for a district. In an era of increasing competition, the diminution of funding, and rising costs relative to healthcare and the operational expenses of a school, districts are committing larger and larger portions of their budgets to marketing ventures. Further, lost in the myriad

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discussions of recruitment for a district's fiscal survival are the students who are actively *not* recruited, or who are consciously denied admittance in overt and covert ways.

According to Hursh (2004, 2005, 2007a; see also Eckes, 2015; Saltman, 2007; Stern, Clonnan, Jaffe, & Lee, 2014), students with disabilities, ELLs, the poor, migrants, immigrants, and non-white students are increasingly marginalized in this competitive, market-based system of choice, as they oftentimes come to school with more significant needs, and are thus both more expensive to educate, and hold greater potential to diminish sub-group test scores. In this light, schools perceive these students as potential risks that hold a greater likelihood of undermining a school's chances of retaining existing students and attracting students from outside the district. Such students thus possess *little or no choice*, despite the rhetoric of the market mentality, and often find themselves unable to access more privileged institutions who practice exclusionary strategies to enhance their market position in the context of limited enrollment opportunities (Lubienski, Gulosino, & Weitzel, 2009). Bifulco, Ladd, and Ross (2009) and Bifulco and Ladd (2007) have observed that school choice programs in North Carolina have created a school system increasingly segregated by racial and socioeconomic means - findings both affirmed by Mickelson, Bottia, and Southworth's (2008) and Frankenberg, Sigel-Hawley, and Wang's respective reviews of the literature on school choice and segregation, and notably replicated in studies of Sweden by Söderström & Uusitalo (2010), Philadelphia by Saporito (2003), New Zealand by Lauder and Hughes (1999), and a voucherized, post-Katrina New Orleans by Saltman (2007), amongst others. Hursh (2007a) concludes that in an ideologically neoliberal school choice context, "already advantaged schools gain, whereas disadvantaged schools

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lose” (p. 17). This *between school* recruiting has, in some cases, been replicated *within schools*, manifesting itself as a school’s overt focus on selected “high value” students and demographics.

Hursh (2007a), in continuing to examine Texas and New York, argues that the hyper-focus on test results and meeting NCLB’s requirements for adequate yearly progress (AYP) has led schools to focus predominantly on bubble students, or those who are most likely to pass standardized exams with a minimum of increased attention and resources. As these students pass the exams, they lift the school’s sub-group averages to the point of passing AYP. This triage approach (Booher-Jennings, 2005) often leaves a district’s most vulnerable students – typically the poor, non-whites, ELLs, and those with disabilities – to founder with few additional resources and teacher attention in an attempt to pass the examinations, resulting in an even wider achievement gap (Hursh, 2007a; see also Cassell & Nelson, 2013; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Increased competition and choice within public schools inexorably leads to the privatization of currently public schools. Such privatization takes many forms, some more tangible than others, including the expansion of voucher programs and charter schools that in many cases utilize public tax dollars for the provision of their program, but which are not beholden to the same state requirements as traditional public schools.

Voucher programs are growing in number here in the United States, draining tax dollars from public schools (Bartlett et al, 2002). Most notable amongst those cities engaging in voucherization is post-Katrina New Orleans wherein a voucher-based system was put in place that massively privatized what were hitherto public schools (Hursh, 2007; Saltman, 2007; see also Salazar Perez & Cannella, 2010). The move

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diverted public dollars away from the reconstruction of public schools and the addressing of generational inequality throughout New Orleans to the creation of new, privately-operated, for-profit schools - a tack that further positions as natural a market for schools and parental choice among them. This leveraging of disasters as a opportunity to privatize education, as Saltman (2007; see also Klein, 2005, 2008) notes, is similar to Harvey's (2005) claims of "accumulation by dispossession" (p. 123) whereby wealth, public lands, and public services such as public schooling are centralized in the hands of a few powerful, wealthy elites who thereafter shape and dispense it in ways that preserve the status quo for the majority while advancing their own self-interest. Similarly, charter schools administered by for-profit institutions have been appearing all over the country in large numbers and at a fast pace, also siphoning away students and their public tax dollars from public schools (Hursh, 2004, 2005; Sloan, 2008). For example, Chicago's Renaissance 2010 Plan employs many of the same privatization strategies and tactics as NCLB, facilitating the closure of public schools not meeting Chicago's accountability standards which are ostensibly defined through high stakes tests (Saltman, 2007). While NCLB codifies into law the potential for schools to be taken over by "private management" if they do not meet AYP goals over a number of years (USDOE, September 2002, p. 7), we also see for-profit, micro-level ventures entering the education market at a staggering pace, including chain-based tutoring services, placement consultancies, and test preparation firms. All of these for-profit ventures are looking to capitalize on a growing educational market made possible by neoliberal policies and reforms.

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For instance, in discussing the phonics-based reading program championed by Reading First authorities, Stevens (2003) tells us that, “what is present throughout these references [to the reading program] is the commercially published, packaged reading program is the ultimate authority in reading instruction” (p. 665). In her case study of a North Carolina school district, Sloan (2008) concludes that profitability and a strong return-on-investment for Standard & Poor’s trumped academic moves to ensure optimal learning. Profitability was afforded greater significance than student learning, as evidenced by the disproportionate importance placed on calculating Performance-Cost Indicators (PCIs) that juxtapose average per-student spending against a quantified measure of student performance gauged by standardized tests (Sloan, 2008).

Workforce Preparation. Another major focus of neoliberal initiatives in education is the preparation of an able and ready workforce. According to Harvey (2005), all neoliberal reforms are an effort to restore class power and build a competitive, subjugated workforce. Smith and Scoll (1995) and Lauder (2001) have argued similarly, discussing at length the human capital agendas of several presidential administrations focused predominantly on the production of an able-bodied workforce. A number of studies have explored this very issue.

In their analysis of English/Language Arts Standards in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Caughlan and Beach (2007) observed a considerable presence of neoliberal language and goals, including the desirability of schools and curricula being responsive to the business community and needs of the workplace, an implicit focus on the simple identification of literary terms and parts of speech, and the acquisition of information through technical reports, manuals, warranties, labels, forms, and contracts. Such

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workplace skills, the authors argue, are framed by the perceived needs of a global economy, and encourage, “acquiring basic literacy, reading, and writing practices,” whereas , “the more constructivist, flexible types of learning showing up rarely in state standards” (p. 14). Further, the authors contend, the overriding desire of neoliberals to facilitate testing as a means of sorting students leads to certain types of content coverage, learning, and instruction (p. 48), best exemplified in Wisconsin’s and Minnesota’s retention of New Criticism as the dominant mode of literary analysis in high school, despite universities having abandoned the model decades ago (Applebee, 1993). New Criticism, Caughlan & Beach (2007) explain, “assume[s] that meanings are located ‘in’ the text and that readers’ social and cultural schema are irrelevant to constructing those meanings” (p.48). As such, alternative models of literary analysis, such as poststructuralism, critical theory, cultural studies, and feminist critiques, which encourage students to derive meaning from personal experience, author intentionality, and the socio-historical and political contexts in which a piece was written were purposefully marginalized.

On a grander scale, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) have argued that NCLB’s primary mission is, in effect, to prepare students to compete in a global market for jobs. Citing Rod Paige, who was Secretary of Education when NCLB was enacted during Bush’s first term, and Margaret Spellings, who oversaw its implementation from 2005-2009 as Paige’s predecessor, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) argue that their rhetoric relative to NCLB clearly positions the law as being linked to economic ends:

Throughout the rest of the NCLB law and its accompanying rhetoric, the improvement of educational outcomes is directly and consistently linked to global

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competitiveness ... the logic in [their] remarks and throughout the NCLB rhetoric is clear: when the 'output' of excellent teaching is understood as raised scores on high-stakes tests, then students – who are the 'products' of that teaching – can take their rightful (and needed) place in a strong, competitive workforce. (p. 679)

Hursh (2004) and Hursh and Martina (2003) agree based on their review of reforms in Chicago and New York, and those brought about with the advent of NCLB. Edmondson (2000) comes to a similar conclusion relative to the America Reads program, as do Bartlett et al. (2002) relative to their examination of the explosion of charter schools, school-to-work programs, and corporate-sponsored educational initiatives in North Carolina, arguing that economic growth is one of, if not the preeminent, underlying principles governing the policies. Hursh and Martina (2003) add that the vast majority of reforms seen in US schools over the past twenty years – charter schools, vouchers, school choice, increased competition, increasingly rigid curricula, and so forth – are part of a systematic and systemic effort by neoliberal ideologues to re-focus the efforts of schools on the production of skilled workers able to generate economic value.

Both Darminon (2002) and Sloan (2008) conclude that the primary beneficiary of corporate partnerships with schools is not the children, but the corporations that functionally control what students learn, think, and value through not only the curriculum, but also the methods employed by teachers to facilitate learning. Sloan (2008) is unequivocal in her concluding remarks regarding the influence of Standard & Poor's on the district she studied in North Carolina, stating, "this case study makes clearer the connections between the introduction of neoliberal languages and values and the formation of reductive, test-centered curriculum policies at the district level" (p.

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572) to the monetary benefit of those in charge. Sloan (2008) also concludes that, "US corporate entities...are extending their reaches beyond national and state-level policy bodies into local communities" (p. 572) in an all-out effort to increase profitability and control (Robertson, 2005).

Ultimately, the market-based reorientation of schools towards the production of a custom-made workforce focused on creating educational markets and maximizing profits will contribute heartily to the restoration of class power and the continued realignment of capital accumulation back to the elite. As Lipman (2011) argues, "Education markets are one facet of the neoliberal strategy to manage the structural crisis of capitalism by opening the public sector to capital accumulation. The roughly \$2.5 trillion global market in education is a rich new arena for capital investment" (p.1). Public education represents one of the last bastions of truly public expenditure, representing an estimated market value of more than \$4.4 trillion globally (Strauss, 2013).

While neoliberalism continues to enjoy favor in the White House and other political venues, neoconservatism has fallen out of favor to a degree in recent years in light of the long-standing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the decidedly unpopular unilateral steps the US has taken to secure its borders and fight terrorism (Podliska, 2010). To be sure, however, neoconservatism continues to exert a powerful influence over how US citizens live their lives in this sociopolitical epoch (Vaïsse, 2010), and how schools go about their business.

Neoconservatism

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Neoconservatism can be traced back to the work of Leo Strauss and Leon Trotsky, though it did not grow in prominence until the early 1970's amidst mounting stagflation, discontent with Keynesian economic policies that had purposefully grown the welfare state, the social turmoil and excesses of the 1960's (Berliner & Biddle, 1995), the OPEC crisis, the programs of President Johnson's Great Society (Glazer, 2005; Kristol, n.d., p. 3-4), and a sense that liberalism had failed on all fronts, foreign and domestic. Indeed, the earliest neoconservatives, including Irving Kristol, who is considered neoconservatism's ideological grandfather, were disaffected liberals, leading today's neoconservatives into a firm entrenchment in the GOP. This is due, at least in part, because of their alliance with members of the religious right vis-à-vis their shared concerns over social decay, moral decadence, and protecting the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition (Buras, 2008). Strauss, according to High (2009), "insisted that liberalism had taken a wrong turn in the late seventeenth century. It had embraced a contractarian, individualist view of social relationships and a moral relativism, which maintained that judgments of political value depended on historical contingency" (p. 480). Such moral relativism undermined the moral values, and hence the moral character, of a nation and its people.

Neoconservatives cling to this idea, maintaining that without purposeful intervention by the State, the virtues of both people and social institutions in a capitalist society will decline, as neoconservatives would have us believe happened here in the United States as a function of the nation's adoption of liberal political, social, and economic leanings following The Great Depression. As Norton (2004) argues, neoconservatives desire, "a strong state and a state that will put its strength to use" (p.

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178) in order to combat perceived threats to morality, security, and common cultural virtues, ostensibly those derived from the American Creed. Neoconservatives perceive the “decline” of America as being intimately tied to the dilution of both “western tradition” and the perceived social consensus that knit Americans together as part of a common culture years ago. This “we”/“they” mentality, according to Joshee (2009), positions the “we” - the dominant group - as, “hard working, decent, and virtuous,” whereas the “they,” often identified as, “indigenous people, immigrants, women, and the poor,” are “lazy, immoral, and permissive” (p. 96-97). Such beliefs undergird neoconservatives’ clarion call for a return to traditional values that will metaphorically turn back the clock on the perceived devolution of their society.

According to the Project for a New American Century (PNAC, 1997), to bring about such a return, a well-intentioned, strong-willed, and morally conscious State is a necessary step toward the restoration of an idyllic past in which moral values, common culture, and stable communities personified America and its domestic policies, while foreign policy was commensurately marked by the presence of a strong military, and a willingness to, “boldly and purposefully promote American principles abroad” wherein “[Having] Faith in the American creed,” Cooper (2011) explains, “is not enough [for neoconservatives]; it must lead to an activist foreign policy” (p. 11). Relatedly, and as Apple (2006a) asserts about schooling framed by a neoconservative ideology, “a romantic past is often constructed [by neoconservatives], a past that glorifies (particular versions of) family and tradition, patriotism, Victorian values, hard work, and the maintenance of cultural order. Barbarians are at the gates. And unless we restore ‘our’ knowledge, values, and traditions to the central place they once had, civilization will be

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lost” (p. 17). Brown (2006) agrees, submitting that neoconservatism, “identifies itself as the guardian and advocate of a potentially vanishing past and present, and a righteous bulwark against loss” (p. 699). Carter (2005) has argued similarly, asserting that neoconservatism simultaneously works to preserve traditional forms of privilege while marginalizing authentic democracy and social justice agendas wherever it surfaces. Lakoff (2002) brings greater specificity to Apple’s, Brown’s, and Carter’s respective claims, noting that neoconservatives seek to offset the decline in cultural values by advocating for greater curricular censorship relative to text selections and topics, sex education that champions abstinence-only programs, faith-based programming that elevates creationism and intelligent design to at least the same level as evolution, an abandonment of multicultural education, and the promotion of a zealous patriotism in a host of social, political, economic, and educational milieus.

Further characterizing the broader movement, neoconservatives, “do not like the concentration of services in the welfare state,” overtly champion, “cutting taxes in order to stimulate steady economic growth,” and are ideologically tied with religious traditionalists due to the shared observation of a, “steady decline in our democratic culture” that must be purposefully and systematically rectified (Kristol, 2003). Lastly, the neoconservative theme of fear that America’s national security is at risk from internal and external threats, made material in the form of multiculturalism (Kristol, 1995), illegal immigration, color-coded threat levels, and the dual specters of communism and terrorism, is coupled with polemics that suggest, according to High (2009), that “American society will not be able to meet the challenge, whether because it is too materialistic or too democratic or too permissive” (High, 2009, p. 482).

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More recently, and in keeping with this last point, neoconservative beliefs, or “attitudes” as William Kristol (2003) holds, relative to foreign policy have come to the fore as the most salient and public of the ideology’s underpinnings. These beliefs are centered around four central principles according to Kristol (2003):

1. patriotism is a natural and healthy sentiment and should be encouraged by both private and public institutions;
2. world government is a terrible idea since it can lead to world tyranny;
3. statesmen should, above all, have the ability to distinguish friends from enemies;
4. the United States’ national interests extend beyond its geographic borders, thus necessitating foreign intervention when our interests are threatened.

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and The Project for a New American Century (PNAC), whose founders include Irving Kristol’s son William and avowed neoconservative Robert Kagan, and whose framers include former Vice President Dick Cheney, William Bennett, Former White House Counsel Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Norman Podhoretz, Paul Wolfowitz, and former Florida Governor and A++ Plan champion Jeb Bush, have carried the ideological banner of neoconservatism over the past decade. PNAC and AEI have called for an aggressive agenda of foreign policy that purposefully spreads American values globally, oftentimes in a unilateral “big stick” manner. Briefly tracing the rise of neoconservatism will help to shed some light on this most recent neoconservative undertaking.

Various historical events conspired to bring neoconservatism to prominence in the United States. First, the isolationist turn that liberals took following the Vietnam and Six Days wars bespoke their lack of faith in the efficacy and appropriateness of exerting

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American power abroad. Neoconservatives understood this abdication of perceived international responsibility as dangerous in light of the Cold War, and created a context in which liberals could be painted as weak, passive, reactionary, and unnerved, while neoconservatives could be portrayed as strong, proactive, hawkish, and friendly toward our allies in rejoinder to the “flaccidity of the liberal response to communism after America’s defeat in Vietnam” (Heilbrunn, 1991).

Second, the counterculture of the 1960s had not only infiltrated and corrupted mainstream liberalism, according to Heilbrunn (1991), but had consequently sullied the moral and cultural values of the nation, which no longer evinced an adequate degree of intolerance for hedonism, deviance, and disorder. This was most publicly evident in 1969 when Cornell University administrators capitulated to student demands in the face of an Afro-American Society march that found a number of students brandishing weapons (Heilbrunn, 1991). The liberal excesses of the 1960’s exemplified the moral decline neoconservatives would cite for decades to come. Lastly, neoconservatives stridently criticized President Johnson’s Great Society social programs, such as the War on Poverty, as ineffective at providing the ameliorative effects they had set out to deliver. Moreover, Johnson’s social programs were perceived by neoconservatives to be a prescribed effort at social engineering that would invariably result in the redistribution of income and wealth (Kristol, n.d., p. 3-4).

The end of the Cold War and fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980’s were important moments for neoconservatives, as they marked the conclusion of the fight against communism, the ascendancy of global military and economic dominance by the United States, and the beginning of the neoconservative effort to, as High (2009) extols,

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“export democracy, shorn of multilateralism... to the rest of the world” (p. 486). While some neoconservatives took this moment to call for ideological moderation (Kirkpatrick, 1990), a more aggressive neoconservative wing seized the moment to call for American hegemony in the new unipolar world.

Over the course of the next decade, neoconservatives framed their unipolar program of “benevolent global hegemony” (Kristol & Kagan, 1996) through the exportation of American interests and values (Cooper, 2011; High, 2009; Krauthammer, 2004; 1990; Kristol & Kagan, 1996), erstwhile determinedly refusing to participate in international conventions and agreements that might limit its ability to act unilaterally (High, 2009; Kagan, 2004), including the internationally adopted Kyoto Protocol and tenets of the International Criminal Court. The horrific events of 9/11 galvanized the citizens of the United States (Solomon, 2012), creating the very conditions neoconservatives needed in order to push through their agenda in, through, and beyond schools: the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, a glowing patriotism, the fear of traditional American values coming under fire, a sense of a culturally-divided American populace, international sympathy, and a “wounded nationalism” (Levin, 2003; see also Rhoads, 2007).

In many circles, the events of 9/11 were seen as an existential threat to the American Creed itself - as an attack, Cheney (2001) argues, meant to challenge, “the ideas and institutions we admire” (p. 8; see also Finn, 2002). According to Rhoads (2007), the events of 9/11 were used, “to strike fear in U.S. citizens and forge the justification for a New Militarism” (p. 1) framed mainly by a neoconservative political and economic machinery. As such, Rhoads (2007) continues, the potential presence of

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terrorism anywhere at any given time has furnished government anti-espionage agencies such as the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Office of Homeland Security with the impetus to “also be everywhere, including in the classrooms, libraries, and offices of the country’s finest universities” (p. 1). This historical accounting of the rise of neoconservatism helps to frame the context in which the ideology’s principles have leached into schools over the past three decades. In light of this reality, researchers have endeavored to study the effects of neoconservatism in schools and on educational policies. Studies included here have been broken down into two broad categories: Traditional Values and Nationalism, and Fear and National Security.

Traditional Values and Nationalism. Neoconservatism has appeared in schools and educational policies across the globe, and in myriad ways. For example, the championing of a traditional, canonical curriculum that supports conservative values is a common manifestation of neoconservatism in schools. Hartman (2013), in his exploration of recent neoconservative reforms to education, points back to William Bennett, former Secretary of Education under Reagan, as a pivotal figure in the conversation. Bennett, he concludes, felt schools were failing in two of the most critical areas in which they should excel: inculcating moral character in students, and imparting basic knowledge, both of which reflect neoconservative tenets. Both of these concerns, Bennett (1992) asserted, could be addressed largely through narrowly-construed, Western-minded curricular choices, stating, “ideas and ideals ultimately move society— ideas and ideals contained in the great works of Western civilization, which students should encounter through education” (p. 22; see also Cheney, 2001). Such a focus

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belies Bennett's, as well as President Reagan's, neoconservative agenda for schools. In subsequent years, and in reaction to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War that took them by surprise (Fukuyama, 2006; High, 2009), neoconservatives shifted their main focus to affairs of foreign policy and to using America's power for nation-building abroad (High, 2009; Vaïsse, 2010). However, at no point did neoconservatives lose sight of their domestic agenda, which in education reflected a focus upon the development of a traditionalist national curriculum and testing standards during the Clinton administration (Apple, 1996, 2000; Berube, 1996).

Neoconservative efforts came to fruition, at least in part, during Clinton's administration, reflected most significantly in Clinton's GOALS 2000 mandate establishing a National Education Standards and Improvement Council. The Council, according to Berliner and Biddle (1995), was, "charged with promoting national standards for accomplishment in basic academic subjects, encouraging the states to set up reform programs that will enable them to meet these standards, and certifying state procedures for assessing their efforts" (p. 212-213). Ostensibly, a high-stakes system of evaluation was afoot through which intra-state comparisons of schools would be made possible for the eventual purposes of enabling competition and parental choice. The subsequent election of George W. Bush as President in 2000 sparked a vigorous and overt reinstatement of neoconservative values into policy-level discussions of education.

The flagship educational policy of George W. Bush's Presidency, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), touches many aspects of schooling, including curriculum reforms reflecting a decidedly neoconservative disposition. According to

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Means and Taylor (2010), the legislation's efforts to effect neoconservative reform in schools are manifold:

...neoconservative interests...included efforts to de-legitimate science by curbing the teaching of global warming, sexual health, and evolution, coupled with movements to integrate intelligent design and abstinence-only education into the curriculum. It also included the slashing of funding to support bilingual education and multicultural forms of curriculum while promoting textbooks and a curriculum designed to push 'traditional', 'Christian', and 'patriotic' narratives of the American nation. (p. 54)

In keeping with the findings of Means and Taylor (2010), Caughlan and Beach (2007) observed that curricular reforms in Wisconsin and Minnesota, for example, supported many of the same neoconservative dictums.

In their analysis of English/Language Arts Standards in Minnesota and Wisconsin, discussed earlier under the auspices of neoliberalism, Caughlan and Beach (2007) also observe a considerable presence of neoconservatism in the standards most readily apparent in a, "focus on the value of teaching a literary canon that is perceived to foster a Eurocentric, white, middle-class perspective" (p. 18). Such a focus, they argue, undergirds the assumption that we once shared, and should return to, a "common culture" that we all subscribe to and participate in fervently. Such perspectives are delineated in curricula that are highly-structured and painstakingly granular, illustrated in the groups and subgroups of literature, reading, composition, vocabulary, speaking, and listening that students are expected to learn and teachers are expected to teach. Such a diminution of curricula, Caughlan and Beach (2007) claim, "masks the

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contested nature of knowledge” (p. 20), and casts as inferior the values of those not embracing of the value system of our supposed “common culture”.

Relative to Wisconsin, Caughlan and Beach (2007) conclude that, “it is clear that self-exploration and multi-culturalism are out, and Anglo-American cultural heritage is in” (p. 31). Further, language in both the Wisconsin and Minnesota standards reflecting a particular emphasis on “*core sets* of knowledge” that not only valorize the disciplines of English, Math, Science, and History at the expense of others, Caughlan and Beach (2007) contend, but also champions traditional models of instruction at the expense of constructivist models “which would work from the abilities and interests” (p. 31) of students in those states, communities, and classrooms. Such a move positions students to more likely be treated by teachers as passive recipients of information in the banking model Freire (1970) discusses wherein “official knowledge” (Apple, 1993, 2000) sanctioned by the dominant powers of a society is, in effect, poured into the minds of students unprepared to critically engage with it. Official knowledge, according to Apple (1993), is that which, “counts as knowledge, the ways in which it is organized, who is empowered to teach it, what counts as appropriate display of having learned it, and - just as critically - who is allowed to ask and answer all these questions” (p. 222). Such an approach to the construction and sanctioning of knowledge in a society marginalizes divergent opinions about controversial issues, and frequently champions traditionalist, myopic views of otherwise contested events and knowledge. Buras (2008) explores this topic at length, especially relative to the conservative treatment of issues such as the definition of marriage and controversial historical events in textbooks in Texas. This is of particular significance as textbook adoption policies in Texas drive the contents of much

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of what the rest of the country's schools are made to use in their own classrooms (Armenta, 2010; Collins, 2012; Phillips, 2011; Stille, 2002). The reach of neoconservative efforts to influence curricula transcends the core disciplines, however, extending beyond the tradition discourse of Science, Social Studies/History, Health, and English/Language Arts education that were lynchpins to NCLB.

Hebert and Kertz-Welzel's (2012) investigation of the role and meteoric rise of patriotism and nationalism in music education highlights how neoconservatism has permeated the field. The collected work draws upon studies conducted in an array of nations, including Canada, Australia, Finland, Germany, India, and the United States, and portrays how effectively neoconservatives have advocated for the teaching of patriotic songs and national anthems in school settings as a means of binding a diverse *mélange* of people together under the banner of "common" cultural norms.

The ardent nationalism Means and Taylor (2010) identify, the more subtle moves toward a common culture Caughlan and Beach (2007) observe, and the broad-reaching influence of neoconservatism Hebert and Kert-Welzel (2012) observe do not recognize international boundaries, helping to explicate how the ideology has pervaded historically and geographically. Takayama (2007), for instance, in examining neoconservatism's effect on educational policies and reforms in Japan, has found that schools are actively engaged in promoting nationalistic dispositions, focusing on patriotism, a return to traditional Japanese values such as subjugation of the individual to the emperor, and the celebration of the Japanese culture, national anthem, and flag. Indeed, staff members at schools who did not follow the prescribed rules were subject to penalties of various kinds, including dismissal. In addition, Takayama (2007) expresses deep

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concern over a, “neoconservative history revisionist movement” (p. 149) that is espousing a nationalistic agenda through the reformation of Japanese history textbooks. Progressive curricular orientations that are more student-centered are perceived as, “threats to Japanese traditional values and authority structures” (p. 156). These revisionist efforts in Japan have brought with them a neoconservative approach to gender politics, as well, according to Takayama (2007). Neoconservatives in Japan have called for the elimination of gender-free education that they believe has undermined their nation, and in particular Japanese men who no longer feel as powerful in their society, and Japanese children who are no longer, “diligent and willing to work for the good of the nation” (p. 150). The restoration of the, “traditional authority structure where each individual knows their own roles and places in hierarchical power relationships” vis-a-vis such regressive gender politics is thought to be a path to the reestablishment of a romanticized Japanese past the likes of which Apple (2006a) and Brown (2006) allude to in the United States.

Fear and National Security. Finally, a discourse of fear and national security emanates from neoconservative tenets, and has made its way into critical educational policy discussions. Such realities, according to Martin (2011, 2010), were brought to bear on the *Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel* (U.S. DOE, 2008), wherein the subtext of the report frames Mathematics and Science education as issues of national security and safety. This link is made particularly clear in the report’s *Executive Summary*:

Much of the commentary on mathematics and science in the United States focuses national economic competitiveness and the economic well-being of

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citizens and enterprises. There is reason enough for concern about these matters, but it is yet more fundamental to recognize that the safety of the nation and the quality of life - not just the prosperity of the nation - are at issue. (p. xi)

More recently, The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR, 2012) authored a report entitled *U.S. Education Reform and National Security* in which education is positioned as the dominant mechanism for ensuring not only America's economic dominance in the future, but its military and counterintelligence preeminence as well. Chaired by former G.W. Bush Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and News Corporation Executive Vice President Joel Klein, the report also draws upon the thinking of KIPP Program CEO and President Richard Barth, former Young & Rubicon Brands Chairman and CEO Ann Fudge, American Enterprise Institute Director of Education Policy Studies Frederick Hess, Teach for America founder and CEO Wendy Kopp, Leeds Equity Partners President and cofounder Jeffrey Leeds, and former Secretary of Education under G.W. Bush Margaret Spellings, amongst others. The authors point to public school failings as direct threats to our national security, stating unequivocally that "the problems in America's K-12 schools...constitute a very grave national security threat" (p. 4), in part because schools "must produce enough citizens with critical skills to fill the ranks of the Foreign Service, the intelligence community, and the armed forces" (2012, p. xiii). The authors further contend that schools must, "expand the Common Core standards, ensuring that students are mastering the skills and knowledge necessary to safeguard the country's national security," (p. 5). To that end, schools must be held accountable for the learning of said skills and knowledge via a "*National Security Readiness Audit*" (p. 5) that brings with it potential consequences

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such as school restructuring, program alteration, resource reallocation, and leadership change if certain criterion on the audit are not met. The ostensible purpose of this audit is to determine, “how many students are mastering important ‘national security’ skills” (p. 53), such as language acquisition skills, which Camicia and Zhu (2011) observed are being treated not as an academic, intellectual, or even economic imperative, but rather are being treated as a critical national security issue through the National Security Language Initiative for Youth. Indeed, the semi-annual Perspectives section of *The Modern Language Journal* has convened discussion on the linking of language policy to national security in no fewer than five issues between 2003 and 2007, further illustrating the point.

The framing of public education writ large as an existential threat to our national security in the CFR’s report is a direct reflection of neoconservative values inching their way into educational policy debates. Fear is used as a motivating force to effect changes in schools and society that reflect neoconservative principles. Dissenting opinions from several of the authors are included in the appendices of the report, including those tendered by Stanford Education professor and researcher Linda Darling-Hammond, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, Harvard University International Affairs professor Stephen Walt, Global Kids founder Carole Artigiani, and several others who object to the many limitations of the report’s tenuous research base, alarmist rhetoric, myopic conclusions, and narrowly construed recommendations that lean heavily toward market-based, neoliberal solutions for school reform - a reality that marks the alliance between neoconservative and neoliberal ideologies. The fertile ground that was present and leveraged by neoliberals for

advancing their agenda was also pregnant with possibilities for neoconservatives, as well. As it turns out, these ideologies are both complementary and mutually reinforcing of one another in many ways, and have forged an unlikely but powerful alliance.

The Alliance Between Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism

Students, according to Bernstein (1971, 1977), develop their system of values in large part within the culture of the school they attend, in large part reproducing the conditions and culture found therein. "Culture," Collins (1979) tells us, "produces both horizontal and vertical relations" between people, which serve as "the empirical means by which all organized forms of stratification are enacted" (p. 59). To that end, the ideology enacted and reinforced in schools profoundly influences students. Today, students are exposed to seemingly paradoxical and contradictory ideological messages in schools: burgeoning global market forces that are becoming more deeply entrenched in schools, heightening competition and hastening the reframing of the purposes of education toward the development of a neoliberal human capital agenda, are contrasted with the traditional social hierarchies, social values, rituals, and practices actively sought by neoconservatives. On paper, these ideologies would seemingly create oppositional discourses within school culture; yet, they have found considerable common ground upon which to stand. Indeed, neoliberalism and neoconservatism have become close confidants in recent years, largely as a function of their shared antipathy towards the welfare state (Apple, 2004; Gamble, 1986; George & Wilding, 1994; Street, 2005), their concomitant need for a powerful state to guide the imposition of their ideological positions (Apple, 2004; Brown, 2006; Street, 2005), and their collective willingness to, "extend a cannibalism of liberal democracy" according to Brown (2006, p. 691).

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To neoliberals, the State poses a threat not only to individual liberty, but, as Hayek (1976) and Friedman (2000) argue, the State is a collective capable of distorting the process of free exchange between willing and informed individuals. To neoconservatives, according to Loxley and Thomas (2001), the welfare State facilitates, “the erosion of traditional patterns of morality, authority and gender roles through the pursuit of equality via the extension of civil rights” (p. 294) as traditionally expressed through the family, church, school and workplace.

Relative to both ideological stances, the State is thought to be at fault for the present conditions of society, and must be reined in and judiciously deployed for very particular purposes. Thus, paramount to the alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism, which together are oftentimes referred to as the *New Right* (Apple, 2004; Kavanagh, 1987; Levitas, 1986), is the need for a powerful State to exert its influence towards particular, though oftentimes different, ends. Brown (2006) contends that, “just as neoliberals deviate from laissez-faire economics in mobilizing law and policy to support the market and shape social goals, neocons too are statist: they support state regulation of morality, state steering of the economy, and, of course, building a mighty state military enterprise” (p. 700). In the case of neoliberalism, the role of the State is to create and put in place institutions and social goals that reproduce markets (Apple, 2006a; Brown, 2006; Mitchell, 2003; Olssen, 1996); in the case of neoconservatism, the role of the State is to codify a selectively favored belief system into institutional America, wherein individuals are indoctrinated into that belief system. Indeed, Brown (2006) continues, “while many conservatives decry the ‘social engineering’ project they attribute to socialism and liberal democratic egalitarian projects

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such as affirmative action, integration, and poverty reduction, neoconservatism no more rejects state-led behaviorism than neoliberalism does” (p. 697). Brown (2006) concludes neoliberalism and neoconservatism shape the State into a constitutive apparatus that is

Openly partial, maneuvering, and political; openly invested in culture and the market; openly engaged in promoting a civic religion that links family form, consumer practices, political passivity, and patriotism; and openly and aggressively imperial...together they establish a relation of mutual reinforcement between newly legitimized statism in domestic and international policies. (p. 701)

Relative to education, the opening of public schools to voucherization such that private, for-profit organizations functionally operate schools, many of which are principally faith-based, links the ideological visions of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. As Street (2005) states,

For...neoliberal and/or neoconservative faith- and market-based school reformers, [vouchers are] the real and ultimate solution to the cult of public education: the diversion of taxpayer dollars from the transparent common public educational fund to the more authoritarian, unaccountable, and private spheres of market and church. (p. 167; see also Apple, 2006a; Brown, 2006)

Within the context of the marketplace, individuals are expected to act in their own rational self-interest, which leads to a second point of connection between neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

A second nexus between the two can be seen in their complementary views of egalitarianism and individualism, central components of the America Creed.

Egalitarianism could easily be construed as antithetical to both neoliberalism and

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neoconservatism. To neoconservatives, a state that advocates for the redistribution of wealth in any shape or size is wrong, running contrary to its conception of family values and one's ability to stand on his or her own two feet, as the metaphor goes. To neoliberals, where winners and losers are necessarily part of every conversation vis-à-vis the competitive marketplace, egalitarianism is a "treacherous demagogic appeal," (Brown, 2006, p.701) that undermines competitive skill and inhibits innovation. Relative to individualism, both neoliberalism and neoconservatism place great emphasis on the role of the individual in determining his or her own fate. Neoliberal ideology places the individual at the center of the competitive marketplace that serves as the ideology's central tenet. Similarly, neoconservative ideology considers the individual and family unit to be of paramount importance relative to the production and maintenance of cultural values reflective of a particular ethos.

A third link between neoliberalism and neoconservatism is how neoconservative beliefs about the power of the elite, the righteousness of their cause, and the eventual trickle-down theory of both economics and justice have informed neoliberal practices and beliefs related to control and the leveraging of power to the particular ends of privatization and a restoration of a common culture (Gabbard, 2007; Apple, 2006; Drury, 2005, 1999). Further, while neoliberalism inexorably leads toward the breakdown of social relations as a function of increased competition between individual and institutional players, and would thus fall out of public favor over time, neoliberal governments and institutions must develop strategies and tactics that legitimate their policies and policymaking (Bonai, 2003) in order to counter this reality. One mechanism for doing just this is neoconservatism, which effectively binds such disparate

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constituencies together under the auspices of a common culture or system of beliefs. Central to this are two approaches that neoliberal ideologues have adopted from the proverbial neoconservative playbook: controlling the discourse of the intelligentsia, and militarization.

Control of the intelligentsia's discourse equates to the control of ideas, society and, eventually, the future (Lakoff, 2002; Parenti, 2003). To facilitate the propagation of neoliberal ideas about the proper order of society, neoliberal ideologues require an institutional platform from which to publicly project their views in an effort to influence popular opinion. To that end, and in keeping with the ongoing successes realized by neoconservatives who previously embraced such methods (Kovacs & Boyles, 2005; Meagher, 2012; Shaker & Heilman, 2004), neoliberals have organized think tanks, foundations, and policy discussion groups in earnest, including the National Commission on Education and the Economy, and the Carnegie Corporation (Boyd, 2007; Caughlan & Beach, 2007; Scott, Lubienski, & DeBray-Pelot, 2009; Swalwell & Apple, 2011). Domhoff (2006) refers to this triumvirate of organizations as the *policy planning arena*, and, according to Scott, Lubienski, and DeBray-Pelot (2009), they "play an important role in the politics of education" (p. 4), particularly relative to the shaping of de facto policies (Lingard, 2003) that stand to deeply influence public opinion. More recently, according to Scott (2009), *venture philanthropies* have come into being as a major factor in the policy planning arena, deeply shaping the politics around certain, narrowly-focused educational issues, most particularly the funding of charter schools and the use of vouchers.

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Since their formation in the early 1970's, ostensibly as a function of Lewis Powell's (1971) memorandum to Eugene Sydnor, Jr., the Director of the US Chamber of Commerce (Gabbard, 2007; Kovacs & Boyles, 2005), neoliberal-minded think tanks, foundations, and policy discussion groups have sprung up the world over in an effort to more deeply entrench neoliberal thought into the public's common sense understanding of the world order. Powell's (1971) critique, which was steeped in the discourse of neoliberalism as a consequence of Hayek's influence on his thinking, was centered on the idea that increasing regulation was strangling individuals from acting freely in economic markets. That is, the constraints levied against individual economic action were stifling the economy, and needed to be lifted to encourage growth. These regulations, and the nature of the arguments driving them, were the result, Powell contended, of groups seeking to dismantle the capitalist economy and free markets.

Powell's memo is considered one of the initial catalysts of what has become today's dominant neoliberal discourse. Since its rendering, both neoliberal and neoconservative organizations have sought to actively influence public perception of educational issues and, hence, educational policy. As Swalwell and Apple (2011) have stated, groups such as The Aspen Institute, Education Trust, the Business Roundtable, The Heritage Foundation, the Business Coalition for Excellence in Education, and the American Enterprise Institute "listen carefully to the language and issues that come from below. They then creatively appropriate the language and issues in such a way that the very real problems expressed by multiple movements are reinterpreted through the use of powerful groups' understandings of the social world and of how we are to solve 'our' problems" (p. 373). This reality is exemplified in the film *Waiting for Superman* (2010),

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which was framed for public consumption by neoliberal and neoconservative ideological stances (Dumas, 2013; Swalwell & Apple, 2011). In light of the ideological dominance of neoliberalism and the ongoing, though somewhat diminished influence, of neoconservatism today (Johnson, 2014), the purposeful articulation of “business concerns as universal concerns,” according to Saltman (2007, p. 38), conflates the issues of profit acquisition and public service by means of schooling.

A second approach neoliberal and neoconservative ideologues alike have leveraged, according to Harvey (2005), is the militarization of American life. As Harvey (2005) explains, militarization serves as, “an antidote to the chaos of individual interests” (p. 82). Such militarization is experienced most palpably on Main Street through public crusades such as the Yellow Ribbon and Support Our Troops campaigns (Gabbard, 2007). These campaigns serve not only the purpose of re-connecting people in ways that balance the loss of connectedness resulting from competition under neoliberal premises, but also serve the neoconservative interest of maintaining a powerful, outward-reaching, and unilaterally operating military that advances American nationalism, patriotism, and interests at home and around the globe.

The fact that neoliberalism and neoconservatism have found an ideological common ground upon which to work does not diminish the reality that they are also countervailing forces in some important ways. Brown (2006) begins her investigation of the alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism with a compelling question: “How does a project that empties the world of meaning, that cheapens and deracinates life and openly exploits desire, intersect one centered on fixing and enforcing meanings, conserving certain ways of life, and repressing and regulating desire?” (p. 692). The

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alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism seems contradictory on the surface, with the former championing small, laissez-faire government (except in the instance of creating or sustaining markets), deregulation, and free market competition, and the latter prizing increased state control, tradition, and social cohesion, unified by a common culture and moral values. More granular, as Brown (2006) contends, “are the routine effects of neoliberal economics, governance, and political rationality on everyday life, effects that neoconservative commitments chafe against” (p. 698), as can be seen in the recent pushback from the local business community against Indiana’s “religious liberty” legislation. It is worth detailing at length some of the ideological differences Brown (2006) cites in order to better frame the unlikely alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism:

These [divides] include the destruction of small businesses and local commerce; the elimination of jobs and union-secured wages, benefits, and workplace protections; and the gutting of federal and state-funded infrastructure (education, transportation, emergency services) that sustains families and towns...the upright, patriotic, moral, and self-sacrificing neoconservative subject is partially undone by a neoliberal subject inured against altruism and wholly in thrall to its own interest: the neoliberal rationality of strict means-ends calculations and need satisfaction (and the making of states, citizens, and subjects in that image) clashes with the neoconservative project of producing a moral subject and moral order. (p. 698-699)

Further, the centrality of market forces to neoliberalism envisages a borderless future in which, “cultural and national borders are erased” in favor of some “monetary

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nexus,” whereas neoconservatism envisions quite the opposite, actively postulating, “cultural and national borders, the sacred, and the singular discourses of patriotism, religiosity, and the West” (Brown, 2006, p. 699). Indeed, it could be argued that neoconservatism rose as a direct consequence of the excess of the free market capitalism championed by neoliberalism.

This discord between neoliberalism and neoconservatism is, by and large, overlooked not so much as an ideological compromise, but because the rational self-interest of the neoliberal ideologue fits neatly with the neoconservative vision of a limited, but purposefully directed State focused on social engineering. The efforts of each distinct constituency are reinforcing of the broader objectives of each, for as Carter and Dediewalage (2010) have claimed, “Neoliberal and neoconservative forces work in tandem to marketise and reform, and as reform proceeds, to (re)distribute power back to traditional Eurocentric elites, effectively rejecting recent progressive moves to increase equality and social redress” (p. 278). Dale’s (1989/1990) characterization of this alliance as a new form of “conservative modernization ... [which] attempts to simultaneously ‘free’ individuals for economic purposes but control them for social purposes” (p. 4) is an apt one in this regard. The alignment of the two ideologies has had a profound impact on education policy in recent years.

Ultimately, the union between neoliberalism and neoconservatism is a tenuous but effective one for both constituencies, enabling each to pursue its own agenda through the mutually reinforcing principles the other proffers. When the market ethos and unswerving commitment to privatization of neoliberalism combines with the statism and moralism of neoconservatism, “a fiercely anti-democratic political culture results,”

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according to Brown (2006, p. 710) - one that is, “disinclined to to retrain either statism or corporate power, and above all one that literally comes to resent and even attack the classic principles and requirements of constitutional democracy” (p. 710). As such, and in light of the role of schools as (re)producers of the social, political, and economic realities of our world (Althusser, 1971; Bourdieu, 1973, 1979; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a, 1977b), the ideological alignment of these positions bears great significance for schools and educational policy.

The Ascent of Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism in Educational Policy

Education and educational policymaking are far from immune from the effects of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, which are functionally the dominant ideological forces in the field today (Lakes & Carter, 2011; Gabbard, 2007; Hursh, 2007; Apple, 2006a, 2006b; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005; Gandin & Apple, 2004; Hill, 2004, 2003). These are represented at the federal level in an early form through the *A Nation at Risk* (1983) report, and most recently through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Race to the Top Competition, and also at the state and local level through policies that embrace the ideologies independently and through their periodic marriage (Codd, 2007; Hursh, 2007; Apple, 2006a; Hursh, 2004; Hursh & Martina, 2003; Lipman, 2003; Bartlett et al., 2002; Fowler, 1995). As Apple (2006a) asserts, neoliberalism and neoconservatism, “oddly reinforce each other and help cement conservative educational positions into our daily lives” (p. 55), wherein, “neoliberal visions of quasi markets are usually accompanied by neoconservative pressure to regulate content and behavior through such things as national curricula, national standards, and national systems of assessment” (p. 63). Like any marketable commodity, education in a neoliberal ethic

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must demonstrate observable results that are quantifiable and consistent in order to permit comparison, thus reinforcing the need for the very national curricula and national standards called for by neoconservatives in an effort to mitigate, as Apple (2006a) puts it, the, “clear sense of loss” neoconservatives feel: “a loss of faith, of imagined communities, of a nearly pastoral vision of like-minded people who shared norms and values in which the ‘Western Tradition’ reigned supreme” (p. 40).

Within any curricula and standards, including those called for by neoconservatives, there appears legitimate, or official, knowledge (Apple 1986, 1990, 1995, 1996, 2000; Whitty, 1985). Legitimate knowledge is that which has been sanctioned by those in power for delivery to students, codifying what *is* and *is not* important, what is worth knowing, what is worth valuing, and what solutions are possible to existing problems. As such, the identity of those who select such knowledge, and more importantly their ideological leanings, invariably and significantly influences the commensurate ways in which they organize, teach (or require to be taught), and evaluate this legitimized knowledge. If broadly realized, this legitimized knowledge champions one form of common cultural knowledge at the expense of all others, a fear McCafferty (2010) echoes in positing concern relative to the current and distinctly neoliberal epoch. For example, Carter and Dediwalage (2010) have argued that Australia’s 3-year long *Sustainable Living by the Bay* curriculum project openly embraced and reflected the unique nexus of neoconservative and neoliberal ideology:

Neoliberal and neoconservative agendas are enacted within it through its goals and curricula and pedagogical practices, working to reinscribe teachers and students, and to (re)produce Western canonical scientific knowledge. Science

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education like other forms of education then, has been reconstructed by the enterprise ethic of globalisation, as an instance of globalised localism where a local view, that is Australian, of what science education should be becomes universal in its conformity to produce workers for the knowledge economy. (p. 289)

Carter and Dewelage's (2010) findings highlight an important nexus between neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies: while they may not operate symbiotically at all times, they do leave ideological space for each other to take root and flourish. In light of the state's purported inability to maintain high quality public education, neoliberals maintain that the state and federal governments should extricate themselves as fully as possible from the day-to-day operation of public schools, enabling market forces to govern schools in their entirety, including curricula, teaching methods, hiring and firing practices, school choice and vouchers, and so on (Apple, 2004, 2006a; Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Saltman, 2007). Further, neoliberals argue that only in times of economic crisis should the government involve itself in schools as an interventionist state to ensure that the means of production and profit continue unabated - a decidedly economic motivation. Education, like any other tradable good on the marketplace, is thus treated as a commodity to be sold by a profit-minded institution to a consumer. To that end, profit itself drives neoliberal educational policies, not philanthropic objectives, social goals, or the public good. This runs counter to neoconservative rhetoric which seeks to influence the very social goals and philanthropic objectives that neoliberalism casts aside. Yet because neoliberalism treats these goals and objectives as unimportant, it leaves an ideological space for neoconservatives to fill. Rather than being forced to resist *different* philanthropic objectives and social goals, as has been the

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case with neoconservatism's opposition to traditionally liberal education objectives such as multiculturalism, neoconservatives need not fight an ideological war in schools with neoliberals.

Another ideological accord between neoliberalism and neoconservatism relative to schools is the jointly held view that public schools are failing - a view they purposefully position to the public as a means of expanding the influence of market-based reforms and privatization in schools. To neoliberals on both sides of the political aisle, according to Apple (2006a), public schools are, "black holes into which money is poured – and then seemingly disappears – but which do not provide anywhere near adequate results" (p. 31). Such results are often framed in terms of economic productivity, which necessarily values students not as people but as workers, as *human capital* that is processed (educated), utilized (employed), and ultimately either re-processed (re-trained) or replaced (laid-off for newly trained human capital). Such a "plug-in-and-play" (Lauder, 2001) approach to employment practices, articulated within a neoliberal ethic, enables companies to skirt the costs of expensive and intensive training by pushing such costs onto schools and individuals. The disposable worker (Bales, 2000) – one who meets the ephemeral and fleeting needs of an employer and is easily replaced when no longer necessary – is a hallmark of neoliberal intentions relative to education policymaking, and an issue taken up later in this study. To neoconservatives, public schools have become bastions of moral decrepitude wherein the morals of yesteryear have been sullied and need to be taken up once again - a reality, according to Dougherty (2011) and Gottfried (2011), embraced by the religious right whose moral agenda aligns neatly with neoconservatism. Through purposefully

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directed education, it is believed, the idealized past will be restored, thus securing the American way of life and its social, economic, military, and political hegemonic preeminence around the world.

The dual ideologies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and the alliance between the two, form the crux of this investigation into Florida's A++ Plan. The unique nexus of the ideologies in this particular temporal context holds considerable import for students, businesses, individual states, and our nation. It is to the methodology of approach and the analysis of those topics that I now turn.

Chapter Three: Methodology

A number of theoretical constructs have informed the methods and techniques utilized in this critical policy analysis, including critical theory, Bernstein's (1971, 1977) notion of the three message systems of education and the dual concepts of *classification* and *frame*, and Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) notion of the Credential Society. I begin with a cursory description of Critical Theory as it informs the subsequent theoretical constructs applied in this study, most especially that of the guiding analytical framework: critical policy analysis (CPA). After offering a brief description of traditional policy analysis as a foil to CPA, critical policy analysis will be explored in depth as a means of clarifying its purposes and application herein. Subsequently, the contributions Bernstein and Collins have made to this work, illustrating the study's theoretical framework and methodology, will be explored. Finally, an examination of qualitative content analysis is also undertaken, as it serves as the primary means by which data are abstracted and organized for the critical analysis.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory, framed initially by Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx, and refined later by Max Horkheimer (1937) and scholars at the Frankfurt School (Marcuse, 1964; Adorno, 1973; Habermas, 1975, 1976a, 1976b), is the theoretical basis for critical policy analysis (CPA), and the driving force behind the collection of data and its analysis in this study. Critical theory, according to Marshall (1997), "is primarily concerned with issues of social justice and problematizes the institutions and structures of society and education that operate powerfully to maintain unequal and unjust social and political relations" (p. 17; see also Cox, 1980). It purposefully seeks to better understand the

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means by which social and political domination takes place in society, and how it can be interrupted for the benefit of all. To that end, critical theory focuses on analyzing the world through ideological, historical, social, political, and economic lenses (Marcuse, 1964) with an eye towards understanding equity, power relations in context, and how the individual and their experience are both social constructs open to contestation and change (Marshall, 1997). Critical theory is fundamentally emancipatory in nature according to Horkheimer (1982), who asserts that it seeks, “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (p. 244) vis-à-vis thinking and social analysis that is dialectical. To that end, according to Robertson and Dale (2009), “critical theory enables us to see more clearly the link between categories for ordering knowing, and what comes to be known” (p. 26). Further, as Giroux (1983) has stated, “critical theory refers to both a ‘school of thought’ and a process of critique” (p. 8) that, in channeling Hegel’s (1966) notions of *criticism* and *reflection*, aims to liberate individuals from the illusions that oftentimes govern the Master/Slave relationship, empowering the latter to see and make sense out of the various downward pressures that arise from the existing socioeconomic hierarchy. Critical theory shapes the lens through which this analysis of the Florida A++ Plan proceeds, facilitating the purposeful examination of stratification, oppression, and the social and political power structures enabled and supported within schools through the legislation. This is made manifest through critical policy analysis, a method of public policy analysis that runs in contrast to the more traditional, functionalist form of policy analysis which has long been in use.

Traditional, or functionalist, policy analysis has dominated the field of policy analysis for decades (Ball, 1990; Bennett & LeCompte, 1990; Fowler, 2000; Prunty,

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1985), though many educators have attempted to move beyond such discussions toward more critical examinations of policy (Apple, 1998; Marshall, 1997, Shannon, 1991; Ball, 1990; Prunty, 1985). Functionalist policy analyses, Marshall explains, “try to identify and calculate effects of policies with apolitical, objective, and neutral methods” (p. 3). Within a functionalist framework of analysis, the role of the policy analyst is to examine data, analyze relationships within that data, and offer alternatives based on what the data indicate. For example, in her analysis of Reading First grant recipients, Bell (2003) explicitly examined what various states had done to select curriculum materials, to identify appropriate assessments, and to determine the eligibility of professional development providers for the Reading First program. The author reported on levels of satisfaction with curriculum materials, the successful identification of assessment instruments, and the provision of reading coaches and specialists. However, no attention was given to the unique state contexts in which the study was being conducted; rather, all the states and their respective policy arenas were treated identically, with no consideration given to the specific historical, social, or political milieus in which the Reading First initiative was being implemented. In a similar vein, Evans and Walker (2005) used a functionalist approach to identifying how nine separate states defined their vision of reading instruction under the Reading First program. Doing so enabled them to identify similarities and differences in the written policies, but further analysis that extended beyond such a traditional approach was necessary in order to bring greater meaning and contextual sensitivity to the data. This highlights one of the primary shortcomings of traditional, functionalist policy analysis: its decidedly decontextualized nature.

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As Edmondson (2000) asserts, “functionalist analyses do not consider historical, social, or political aspects of education” (p. 5) and “reflect a positivist view that facts are separate from human values and ideologies” (2004, p. 19). As such, functionalist analyses seek neither to explore the origins of a policy, nor explain what the myriad implications of said policy might be beyond its explicit aims. Such analyses are incapable of articulating the values, proclivities, and ideologies tacitly endorsed by a policy’s adoption, implementation, and positioning to the public. Therefore, an alternative model of analysis is necessary in order to unpack these critical issues.

Critical policy analysis offers an alternative approach to examining policy that transcends the limitations of functionalist analyses whose value-neutral, positivist perspective (Taylor et al, 1997). Critical policy analysis, which Edmondson (2004) defines as, “the analysis of the histories and social attachments of policy ideals” (p. 19), asks questions functionalist analyses are unable to pose, such as what political or social epistemology initially gave rise to a policy at the particular time of its enactment; whose values are expressed therein; whose voices were silenced in the policymaking process; and, who will benefit (or not) from the policy’s implementation. In this sense, such analyses recognize the dialectical nature of policy as being both situated within a society’s social, political, and economic structures, as well as being (re)constructive of those very same structures.

Critical policy analyses, Stevens (2003) has further argued, also aim to, “[bring] to conscious levels issues of hegemony, privilege, and marginalization” (p. 663) in ways that effectively challenge the master narrative. It is thus incumbent upon the critical policy analyst to recognize the constitutive nature of policy; that policies represent

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tangible extensions of power and control, purposefully guiding and shaping our actions and beliefs, while commensurately framing the rules by which we live. "Power," Edmondson (2002) contends, "is the central point of analysis in critical policy work" (p. 114). Critical policy analysis is thus premised on the investigation of how power and control are expressed by and reproduced through a policy, vis-à-vis analyzing that policy through a lens purposefully focused on the very historical, social, and political aspects of education that functionalist analyses are incapable of investigating.

In its application, Marshall (1997) tells us that critical policy analysis is "a search for improvement of the human condition, an emancipatory social science...[that] must consider whether a policy will empower and democratize, whether it will dispense goods to the have-nots as much as they consider traditional questions such as whether a policy is efficient" (p. 10). Edmondson (2000) further argues that, "[it is] the responsibility of the policy analyst to consider not just how a particular policy is operating within a certain context, but more importantly who authored the policy, why it was authored, and what the contradictions and omissions of the policy are" (p. 9). A critical policy analyst must always bear in mind that policies are advocated for and written by people in particular times and places, invariably reflecting the values and visions of the policymakers. Moreover, policies are adapted over time to reflect changing political priorities, public opinion, and even policymakers themselves who are often elected officials. In a sense, all policies are transformed over time, as the values and visions of a policy's original framers are interpreted, re-shaped, and adapted to new contextual dynamics, including the existing and constantly shifting policy arena, or policy cycle (Ball, 1997, 2008), into which the legislation was first integrated. It is important to

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remember that critical policy analysis is also a form of political advocacy (Henry, 1993; Prunty, 1985) in and of itself representing a particular vantage point, albeit one that is markedly different than that of the master narrative. The master narrative often reflects the discourse of a society's dominant groups, those possessing and wielding power in ways that preserve the master narrative over time.

By contrast, the vantage point espoused by practitioners of critical policy analysis seeks to interrupt the master narrative in ways that shed light upon injustice and oppression, oftentimes privileging the voices and texts of those marginalized and silenced by traditional functionalist analyses framed by the master narrative. Indeed, as Marshall (1997) points out, the critical policy analyst, "must be adept in the political world to be effective and to provide methods for the oppressed to gain power, while viewing school policy critically to expose oppressive structures" (p. 9-10). An example of a critical policy analysis is the study Evans and Walker (2005) conducted into the Reading First program. While their initial study was framed by a functionalist approach intended to identify how nine different states defined reading instruction, they conducted a subsequent critical policy analysis in order to unearth aspects of prescription and control contained within the legislation, to reveal how the legislation was forged in reaction to perceived failures by schools, teachers, and prior policies, to express what was missing or left out of the legislation in order to narrow its implementation by local educational actors, and finally, to reveal contradictions that exist within the policy. These nuanced insights contextualized the policy's implementation, exploring the distinct difficulties and site-based subtleties governing the policy's implementation and success. In addition, their analysis brought to light both the struggles of implementation and the

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otherwise silenced discourses of those opposed to the legislation, whose voices had been unheard amidst the din of adopting and implementing the Reading First program. In a similar vein, Iverson (2007) conducted a study that examined how diversity policies shape the reality of students of color. She determined that the dominant discourses in diversity plans pose students of color as outsiders, concluding that such policies serve to (re)produce subordination and the status quo. Additionally, Shaw (2004) analyzed welfare reform legislation from a critical policy perspective, determining that existing legislation largely perpetuates social stratification by constructing onerous barriers to education for women on welfare.

The critical policy analyst thus explores how educational policy has been influenced by and reflects the latent power relationships of a society in an effort to influence policy towards a more equitable lived social, political, and economic reality for all. However, policy alone does not mediate practice within schools, thus it is necessary to consider the school and classroom level implications of the Florida A++ Plan as a means of considering its local impact.

Consequently, this study proceeds in keeping with Prunty's (1985) assertion that a critical analysis of educational policy would necessarily have to pay careful attention to Bernstein's (1971) three message systems of the school: curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. According to Prunty (1985), the three message systems act as, "conduits through which the values institutionalized by the policy are imposed upon students and perpetuated in society" (p. 136). A closer examination of Bernstein's three systems, as well as the related concepts of *classification* and *frame*, will elucidate their importance to this study.

The Message Systems of Schools

Bernstein (1971) defines the first of the message systems, *curriculum*, as, “what counts as valid knowledge” (p. 47), and positions curriculum at the nexus of how periods are broken down temporally in schools (referred to as “units”), and what specifically is selected for instruction during those periods (referred to as “contents”). The degree to which the boundaries of different contents are clear-cut or blurred, which Bernstein (1971) defines as *classification*, delineates whether the contents stand in closed or open relationship to one another, respectively (Bernstein, 1971). When contents stand in a closed relationship to one another, highly separate, bounded and hierarchical in nature, a *collection type* of curriculum exists wherein, “the learner has to collect a group of favoured contents in order to satisfy some criteria of evaluation” (p. 49). To that end, Bernstein (1971) stipulates that a *collection type* of curriculum is often guided by an underlying concept of what the outcome is to be: “the gentleman, the educated man, the skilled man” (p. 49), and so on. A clearly articulated vision of what the student will be at the end of his or her education personifies the *collection type* of curriculum. In contrast to this, when the boundaries of different contents are blurred and an open relationship exists between them, encouraging of knowledge construction and overarching themes that connect the disciplines, an *integrated type* of curriculum exists. Wrigley (2009) has argued that vocational curricular tracks could be characterized as *collection types*, whereas, “more academic studies,” reflective of an *integrated* curricular type, “receive a less clearly defined and broader preparation for the more flexible challenges they will face in white-collar and professional employment” (p. 66).

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Bernstein (1971) defines the second of the message systems, *pedagogy*, as, “what counts as valid transmission of knowledge” (p. 47). Bernstein’s (1971) concept of *frame* is used to determine the structure of this message system. *Frame*, according to Bernstein (1971), refers to, “the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organizations, and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship” (p. 50). *Frame* also articulates, “the range of options available to teacher and taught in the *control* [emphasis original] of what is transmitted and received in the context of the pedagogical relationship” according to Bernstein (1971, p. 50), including the selection, organization, pacing, and timing of instruction and methods. He continues, “where framing is strong, there is a sharp [strong] boundary” wherein the range of options available to teachers and pupils is limited. Alternately, weak framing precipitates a blurred boundary within which a wider range of options is available to teachers and pupils. Bernstein (1971) is careful to point out that *classification* and *frame* can vary independently of one another, such that strong *classification* and weak *frame* may simultaneously exist, and vice versa.

The last of Bernstein’s (1971) message systems, *evaluation*, is defined as, “what counts as valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught” (p. 47). This message system is a function of the first two – curriculum and pedagogy – understood in the context of a school’s *classification* and *frame*. Ultimately, according to Bernstein (1971), the evaluative system socializes students into particular “states of knowing” and “ways of knowing” (p. 57) to different degrees based upon the *classification* and *frame* of the institution.

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The contribution of Bernstein's (1971, 1977) work to this analysis of the Florida A++ Plan is manifold. Each of Bernstein's Message Systems of Schools is influenced by the legislation to serve ideologically-determined ends, and his concepts of *classification* and *frame* will serve as analytical tools to deconstruct the specific nature of that ideological influence. In a similar fashion, the work of Collins (1979, 2000, 2002) serves to couch the prevailing tenets of schools today within certain ideological premises, and help to make manifest how the Florida A++ Plan facilitates social reproduction beyond the school walls and Bernstein's message systems.

The Credential Society

The United States is moving closer to what Collins (1979) termed a *credential society*, wherein individuals are largely defined by the academic credentials and certified skills they possess (see also Jackson & Bisset, 2005). When state and corporate institutions determine those credentials, the credentials – and by extension those who seek them – tacitly endorse dominant cultural and social values espoused by the credentialing institutions in much the same way that policies tacitly reflect the values and visions of the policymakers. In hegemonic fashion, the values and visions these institutions project become so embedded in our society over time that they become the norm, accepted piecemeal as common sense by a populace unaware of the manipulation to which they have been subjected. Schools function as the dominant socializing (Bernstein, 1971, 1973, 1975) and credentialing (Collins, 1979, 2002; Jackson & Bisset, 2005) systems in the United States, and hence – rightly or wrongly – are seen simultaneously as the dominant systems of both social mobility and stratification as well.

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The educational credential system, concludes Collins (1979), “has provided the means of building specialized professional and technical enclaves, elaborated bureaucratic staff divisions, and in general has served to monopolize jobs for specialized groups of workers and thus insulate them” (p. 90-91). To be sure, Collins (1979) positions the United States as the most credentialed society in the world, resulting in an educational system that is correspondingly structured and self-reinforcing.

Collins (1979) further describes two types of mobility systems present in schools that are the result of the credential society: *sponsored mobility* and *contest mobility*. Sponsored mobility systems, historically found in more European educational systems, have a set “branching point” which, once reached, guide students down a particular career path that usually results in a trade credential, scientific degree, or other technical certification. Contest mobility systems, which historically have characterized the American model of schooling, rely on competition between students to determine who will pursue vocational goals, higher education, or other career paths. In both cases, a currency value is afforded the credential for use and competition in the marketplace of employment. Arguably, the A++ Plan propagates a blend of the two mobility systems Collins (1979) describes, which I refer to hereafter as a *market mobility system*.

Market mobility systems. A market mobility system in our schools is characterized first and foremost by a responsiveness to the visceral and temporal needs of business. Instead of setting their own academic paths, students may well find themselves in an instructional track whose curriculum, pedagogy, and means of evaluation – mirrors of Bernstein’s (1971) three message systems of the school – are

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determined, at least in part, by the needs and wants of businesses who desire a specific skill set for a particular and bounded period in time. When that period of time passes, and a student's credentials are no longer valuable as a means of advancing the corporate agenda or bottom line, the student will be forced to either re-enter the marketplace of the school to obtain a new credential, or to engage in oftentimes costly on-the-job training or professional development that focuses entirely on generating profit accumulation. In the meantime, they will be replaced, likely by a recent graduate, who possesses the now necessary skill set, and who can be paid an entry-level salary, again enhancing the profit margins driving the entire endeavor.

In a sense, the skills the student once possessed will have expired, sending the message that they are not valued by their employer. In the past, professional development, on-the-job training, and other forms of skill development were commonplace expenditures for businesses – they were necessary in order to prepare existing employees for the next wave of innovation and development. Engagement in these forms of organizational development also illustrate a company's willingness to help its employees evolve and mature, while commensurately retaining the craft knowledge (see Burney, 2004; Leinhardt, 1990) acquired during their years of service. However, with a consistent stream of custom-trained employees emanating from publicly-financed schools, such measures of organizational development will no longer be necessary, at least to the already limited extent with which they exist today. The market mobility system effectively creates a revolving door of employment that values the corporate agenda of control, profit, and efficiency over a social agenda of participation, equity, and security.

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The market mobility system also creates the conditions for increased competition between workers (Collins, 2000), as workers must seek continual re-education and skill development in order to remain competitive with the labor pool, as evidenced by the diminution in value of both the high school diploma and, more recently, the Bachelor's Degree. Collins (2002) reminds us:

A high school degree has become little more than a ticket into a lottery where one can buy a chance at a college degree, and that in turn is becoming a ticket to a yet higher level lottery. Most degrees have little substantive value in themselves; they are bureaucratic markers channeling access to the point at which they are cashed in, and guaranteeing nothing about their value at the point at which they are cashed. (p. 24)

As a consequence of the devaluation of such degrees, the increase in the pool of credentialed workers capable of performing a job drives down the market value of individuals' skills, enabling organizations to hire top employees at low salaries.

Furthermore, the market mobility system pits students against each other in ways that reflect the competitive spirit of neoliberalism, expressed through the marketplace. Students in the marketplace of the school are held individually and independently responsible for their successes and failures; they are ostensibly, as Wilson (2007) argues, "made accountable for their predicaments" (p. 97). In so doing, social institutions such as school boards, communities, and the everyday taxpayer, as well as local, state, and federal institutions and legislators, are let off the hook; they bear no responsibility for the success or failure of these students, and hence bear no responsibility for making substantive changes in our social, economic, and political

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structures to address comparative inequalities. As Lakes and Carter (2011) aptly state, “our educational institutions have become re-territorialized with business-driven imperatives that legitimize the symbolic capital of entrepreneurial and individualized selves” (p. 110).

The contribution of Collins’ (1979, 2000, 2002) work to this analysis of the Florida A++ Plan is significant in several ways. First, the concept of the *credential society* will be used as a means of better understanding the ostensible aims of the legislation as a developer of a human capital agenda. And second, the idea of the *market mobility system*, which is a derivation of Collins’ (1979) *sponsored* and *contest* mobility systems, will serve to frame the analysis of the legislation as serving particular ideological ends.

Together, critical theory, Bernstein’s message systems of the school, Collins’ work on the credential society, and the idea of the market mobility system serve to both frame the ideological underpinnings of the A++ Plan, and act as an analytical framework within which the legislation will be unpacked.

Methodology

This critical policy analysis, framed by a qualitative content analysis to be described shortly, was applied to a broad array of formal and informal documents that pertain to and are reflective of Florida’s recently enacted A++ Plan. Because this study is concerned with both the rhetoric of the discourse of particular policy texts and the social actions they engender, both text and context must be carefully examined to better understand what is missing from enacted policy and who is privileged and excluded as a result. Written and oral policy documents, and specific statutes within the A++ Plan, were selected over a 4-year period from 2006-2010 on the basis of their having a direct

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impact upon any of Bernstein's three message systems of the school: curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. In addition, written and oral policy documents bearing an overt ideological tenor, such as the *Parent Primer on Career Exploration*, were also included in the study as a means of more fully framing the depth and breadth of ideological reach. To that end, the following documents were included in this study:

1. Engrossed, or draft, versions of House Bill 7087 (the A++ Plan), along with the Enrolled, or final, version of the legislation signed into law by former Governor Bush, drawn from the Florida Department of Education's website. The major focus of this study is on the ideologies that shape and inform this particular piece of legislation. As such, it was important to consider both the Engrossed and Enrolled versions of the legislation in order to more fully gauge the tenor of the discourse surrounding the bill during its formation, and the stepped gestation of certain ideas. Absent such an analysis, the breadth and depth of ideological reach may not have been fully recognized and understood.
2. Public records of congressional hearings related to the A++ Plan, largely in the form of congressional journals and staff reports drawn from the Florida Senate and House of Representatives. These journals and staff reports reflect committee meetings and reports, floor proceedings, the full text of amendments considered, and breakdowns of how each member of the Florida Congress voted on specific congressional matters. These documents were included as a means of more fully explicating the debate (or lack thereof) surrounding the specific statutes of the A++ Plan.

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3. Official press releases, FLDOE website information, public speeches, and commentary from policymakers and official proponents of the A++ legislation which serve to influence public opinion and garner political support for the legislative positions established in the law. In addition, the *Parent Primer on Career Exploration* was also examined as a part of this study as its publication served to directly support the legislative agenda outlined in the A++ Plan. These artifacts were obtained through web searches and database queries using a variety of key word combinations related to the provisions of the A++ Plan. All of the official press releases were available on the Florida DOE website, though commentary from officials often appeared in print and web-based newspapers.
4. Publicly available data from the Florida Department of Education website illustrating specific aspects of the legislation in question, such as the number and specific types of majors offered at various Florida high schools over time.

As to the context of the policy documents and their origins, these sources were placed along a timeline of public release and examined using CPA as the guiding framework of analysis. In order to comprehensively frame these documents within the context of their production and implementation over time, an historical accounting of the overriding socio-political events taking place before and during their conception, formation, and finalization was conducted, and was framed within the timeline. For example, the periodic election of state and federal political leaders brings incumbent change to the policy arena and environment (Joshee, 2009), and thus have great bearing on the specific documents and policies emanating from the Florida Department of Education and other related governmental agencies. The purpose of this historical

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approach is to better situate the A++ Plan within the context of existing federal and state policies, as no policy exists in isolation; rather, policies exist in parallel (or contrast) to other policies (see Appendix E for an overview). Such an approach enables researchers to see across political administrations, policies, and periods of time in such a way as to provide a more comprehensive accounting of not only where a policy has derived from, but also how the interaction effects of contextual events, existing policies, public sentiment, and de facto policies (Lingard, 2003; see also Kovacs & Boyles, 2005; Shaker & Heilman, 2004) led to the creation of new policies and policy directions. As the A++ Plan is an omnibus bill reaching upwards of 300-pages, a judgment sample was taken from the data as a means of identifying for the reader the most significant aspects of the policy for this investigation of the legislation's ideological underpinnings. Statutes included in this analysis were selected based on their perceived impact on classroom practice vis-à-vis Bernstein's three message systems of the school, and projection of neoliberal and/or neoconservative doctrine, as articulated within the data of a qualitative content analysis, as well as by looking at ideological language revealed through a thematically-categorized word count.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a means of describing, quantifying, and analyzing phenomena observed within a given text or texts (Krippendorff, 1980; Sandelowski, 1995). It enables a researcher to examine theoretical ideas and constructs, enhancing his or her understanding of the data by distilling the full body of the text into thematic categories that are subsequently analyzed for meaning, in this case through the lens of critical policy analysis.

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Qualitative content analysis was first used as a method for analyzing political speeches, advertisements, various types of articles, and hymns in the late 19th century (Harwood & Garry, 2003), and has shown steady growth in utilization across a variety of disciplines in the last quarter century (Bryman, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). Historically, content analysis has been used as a means of understanding the meaning of communication (Cavanagh, 1997), identifying critical processes within a phenomena (Lederman, 1991), and focusing attention on the meanings, intentions, consequences, and context of selected texts (Bryman, 2004; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Mayring 2003). In this study, qualitative content analysis was employed to unpack and categorize data for commensurate analysis utilizing CPA as the guiding framework. There are two traditional approaches to qualitative content analysis: inductive and deductive.

Inductive and Deductive Content Analysis. The two primary ways in which content analysis is used are *inductively* and *deductively*. Inductive content analysis is often employed when there is little or no information available about the phenomenon in question, or if existing information is fragmented in such a way as to substantively require organization (Lauri & Kyngäs, 2005). The categories used for sorting data are thus inductively derived from the data. To that end, an approach couched in inductive content analysis moves from the specific to the general, such that particular instances of data are observed and combined into a larger whole or general statement.

Deductive content analysis is used when the categories in question have already been operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is theory testing (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999). Deductive content analysis thus moves

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from the general to the specific, applying an existing theory to the specific instances of data.

As there is no published research examining the Florida A++ Plan, much less its ideological underpinnings and the discourse surrounding it, this study utilizes a deductive model of content analysis in order to taxonomize data into categories and sub-categories for subsequent abstraction and analysis using critical policy analysis. Data were reviewed methodically and on multiple occasions to ensure the consistent application of the coding scheme and deep familiarity with the documents. The unit of analysis is necessarily varied in light of the data being examined in this study. As it relates to the actual A++ Plan and congressional journals, the unit of analysis is the statute, whereas the unit of analysis for other data sources, including press releases and other affiliated artifacts and policy documents, is the full text.

The Process of Deductive Content Analysis

There are three main phases to deductive content analysis: Preparation, Organizing, and Reporting. There are, however, no standard or systematic rules for the abstraction and analysis of data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). A brief explanation of each of the stages, accompanied by examples of their application in this study, will help to clarify the approach undertaken herein.

Phase I: Preparation. The preparation phase begins with the selection of data, or a sampling thereof. According to the Government Accountability Office (1996), probability or judgment sampling is necessary when a document is too large to be analyzed in its entirety. Once the data or sampling is selected, the unit of analysis must be selected. The unit of analysis could be a letter, word, sentence, portion of a page,

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theme, the number of participants in discussion, or the length of a discussion (Polit & Beck, 2004; Robson, 1993). The unit selected should be narrow enough to limit the possible number of meanings to a manageable range of categorization that will take place in the second phase of the process (Mayring, 2002), but should not be so narrow as to result in the fragmentation of data across too broad a range of categories. This is often accomplished through the use of a word count evincing the relative importance of certain words and phrases to a writer or speaker, revealing on some level what they value (see Carley, 1993). While word counts have limitations, most notably the decontextualization of the words, when used as one element of a larger qualitative analysis as is being conducted here, a word count adds a layer of legitimacy, integrity, and rigor to one's analysis, and helps to temper the researcher's tendency to overweight or underweight emergent themes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; see also Miles & Huberman, 1994). As such, a word count (see Appendix C) was conducted on the enrolled (final) version of HB7087 as a means of explicating the underlying ideological orientation of the legislation.

Once a researcher has selected the unit of analysis, he or she must also decide whether to examine only the manifest content, or the latent content as well. The latent content includes the silences (Mazzei, 2003, 2004) of what is not said in a text, as well as body language, posture, and phatic language such as sighs, laughter, and asides that are often present in verbal discourse (Morse, 1994; Robson, 1993). For example, in their critical analysis of Reading First grant recipients, Evans and Walker (2005) came to the conclusion that the policy requirements as written silenced oppositional voices, limited the types of reading instruction possible, and denied policy benefits to select

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groups. Consequently, they felt that a coding category of “What’s Missing” was critical, as “what was missing provided hidden (and not-so-hidden) messages as to what is valued and considered important [and conversely what is not] in reading instruction and assessment “ (p. 159). Such an approach is very much in keeping with the tenets of critical policy analysis. Consequently, a similar tack was utilized in this examination of the Florida A++ Plan, wherein terms commonly associated with progressive education (Kohn, 2008) were also sought out and enumerated in the word count as a means of illustrating the absence of certain ideological predilections, acknowledging that all policies spring from some ideological basis.

The next step in the Preparation phase is to make sense out of the data as a whole. Dey (1993) articulates five key questions to facilitate this process:

1. Who is telling? This question helps to reveal who designed, vetted, delivered the policy in question.
2. Where is this happening? This question answers where the policy will be or is being implemented, and is having an effect.
3. When did it happen? This question answers when a policy was being designed and vetted, as well as when and during what period it was implemented.
4. What is happening? This question attempts to articulate what was happening in the context of implementation that prompted the creation of the policy, including the social, economic, and political arenas.
5. Why? This question attempts to answer why was this policy approach was pursued as opposed to others, situating it in a sociopolitical context.

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The aim of this macro-level approach to the text(s) is to become thoroughly familiar with the data – a precondition to deriving insight from it (Polit & Beck, 2004).

This approach also begins to explicate the sociohistorical and political context in which the data is made manifest (Mayring, 2002; Sabatier, 1986). For example, in their recent study investigating the federal role in adolescent literacy, Hauptli and Cohen-Vogel (2013) explicitly undertook an investigation into the sociohistorical time period from the Johnson administration through the Obama administration to more fully understand the political, social, and economic arenas in which adolescent literacy policy had been and continues to be framed. The authors investigated not only the policies that directly influenced adolescent literacy, but also the larger policy arena that influenced both public opinion and policymakers during each administration, such as President Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the purposeful linking of literacy to the strength of a democratic society during the Nixon administration, Clinton's coupling of literacy to American economic development and ongoing dominance, and the most recent NAEP results influencing President Obama's policy positions. Hauptli and Cohen-Vogel (2013) argue that these larger political, social, and economic agendas deeply influenced the formulation and framing of adolescent literacy policy during the respective political administrations, reflecting the sentiments of both the public and policymakers of the time. As a consequence, it was critical to examine these agendas in order to reliably and accurately situate and understand the data in context. In the context of this study, for instance, press releases figure prominently in the public positioning of the legislation, and Dey's (1993) question protocol served as a basis for my reading of them. For instance, when commentary was offered to the press about

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one or more of the statutory requirements of the legislation, as when former K-12 Public Schools Chancellor Cheri Yecke commented upon the absence of research linking a major statutory requirement of the A++ Plan to rising graduation rates, great care was taken to ascertain the identity of the speaker, her or his role relative to the legislation, when and where said comments were offered, and what the effect of those words were upon readers and listeners.

Once preparation of the data was concluded, including identifying the unit of analysis, narrowing the focus of the research, and situating the research focus in its sociohistorical and political context, all framed by the work of Collins (1979), Bernstein (1971), and the concepts underlying critical theory, I proceeded to Phase II of the process: *Organizing*.

Phase II: Organizing. The second phase of a deductive content analysis includes open coding of the data, the creation of a structured categorization matrix into which the coded data will be sorted, and the structuring of data into thematic units as a means of hypothesis testing and comparison to extant data/research. Open coding is the first step in Phase II, and refers to the process whereby the researcher enters notes and headings into the text itself that demarcate its meanings. The headings and notes, examined alongside a word count if it is also conducted, are subsequently collected onto coding sheets, and overarching categories are created to bind them together in a matrix. Oftentimes, contingency tables are used as a means of visually quantifying the thematic data in tabular form.

As Titscher et al. (2000) state, “the core and central tool of any content analysis is its system of categories: every unit of analysis must be coded, that is to say, allocated

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to one of more categories” (p. 58). The process of creating the categories into which data will be sorted is not well-defined (Kohlbacher, 2006; Krippendorff, 1980; Mayring, 2000;), but typically develops iteratively out of the data itself to ensure reliability (Eisenhardt, 1989; Kohlbacher, 2006; Mayring, 2000), though it is not uncommon for selected categories to be established before the data is coded if a particular category logically befits the data (Dey, 1993). As Dey (1993) notes relative to policy analysis in particular, “the policy evaluator is more than likely to generate a category system around an established set of policy issues, and specific categories may already have been anticipated in the methods used to collect data” (p. 103). Dey (1993) elaborates on this point at length:

Creating categories is both a conceptual and empirical challenge; categories must be ‘grounded’ conceptually and empirically. That means they must relate to an appropriate analytic context, and be rooted in relevant empirical material. Categories which seem fine ‘in theory’ are no good if they do not fit the data. Categories which do fit the data are no good if they cannot relate to a wider conceptual context. We could say that categories must have two aspects, an internal aspect - they must be meaningful in relation to the data - and an external aspect - they must be meaningful in relation to the other categories. (p. 102-103).

Dey (1993) further notes that the creation of these categories and consequent placement of data points into them is not simply a process of finding “like” data and lumping them together. Rather, the process involves finding common points of “belonging” that imply a comparison of data that do and do not belong within a given category.

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As the categories emerge organically from the data during the sorting process, they are revised to ensure accuracy, reliability, and validity (Dey, 1993; Gläser & Laudel, 1999, 2004; Mayring, 2002, 2003), as well as fidelity with the unfolding data set (Bryman, 2004; Dey, 1993; Mayring, 2003). Once the categories have been established, data are sorted according to their thematic orientation, the purpose of which is often to construct a conceptual map, or model, of the text(s) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) illustrating their thematic relationship to one another. While sorting the data into thematic groups necessarily requires a degree of interpretation to determine where data best fit, analysis of the data itself should be kept to a minimum during this time in order to maintain the fidelity and integrity of the data and process. For example, in his study of how states and the federal government differentially conceptualize student writing proficiency on state-administered assessments as opposed to federally-mandated assessments, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Jeffery (2009) utilized a content analysis to investigate constructs of writing proficiency implicated in 41 US states and on the nationally-mandated assessment (NAEP). Jeffery (2009) coded rubric content for the various state and national assessments, and derived six umbrella categories distilled from frequently appearing thematic threads of data. Sub-categories were created thereafter within each of these six main umbrella categories to bring greater efficiency to the process of coding and subsequent analysis.

The final step in Phase II, termed “Abstraction,” is used to articulate a description of the research topic. Abstraction proceeds as the data are being apportioned from open coding and word count, if one is employed, into thematic categories and sub-categories. Abstraction is mainly focused on synthesizing the categorized data into analytical

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understandings of what the data reveals. Dey (1993) further explains that abstraction, “is a means to greater clarity and precision in making comparisons [enabling researchers to] focus on the essential features of objects and the relations between them” (p. 100). While no strict rules exist for the process of abstraction (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), the data, as well as exemplars, outliers, and patterns revealed within it (Miles & Huberman, 1994), are identified, linked, and analyzed (Dey, 1993). These links between the data help to explain the relationships that exist between them.

In this study, the various written and oral policy documents selected during Phase I were heavily notated on four separate occasions, using clean copies of the documents during each iteration to promote greater objectivity with each subsequent reading. The independent sets of notes were then compared so as to identify both consistencies and inconsistencies within each reading of a document, and when the latter were noted, additional readings were undertaken to mete out the source of the differential observations and to settle on a conclusive rendering. Subsequently, the data were looked across as a means of identifying patterns in the ideological orientation of the language and purposes of the statutes and claims. As patterns emerged from the data, as was the case with one of the legislation’s staunchest commitments to “workforce preparation,” the various data points and policy documents were linked vis-à-vis a categorization matrix as a means of creating an intellectual “map” of the A++ Plan’s ideological moves.

Once the data were organized, linked, and abstracted, the actual analysis of the data commenced in keeping with a critical policy analysis informed by the work of Bernstein (1971, 1977) and Collins (1979, 2000, 2002). The analysis was undertaken as

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a means of better explicating the implications of the ideology underpinning the legislation in question, with an express emphasis on how power and control are reified through the provisions of law, and how a melange of free market capitalism, ardent nationalism, and business influence have infiltrated the legislation. Table 3.1 documents the specific analytical questions that were utilized to deconstruct the A++ Plan and related artifacts.

Table 3.1 – Data Sources and Analytical Framework

Research Question	Data Sources	Analytical Framework (Critical Analysis)
<p>What are the implications of the A++ Plan's ideological orientation for schooling and the reproduction of inequality in Florida?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engrossed and enrolled versions of House Bill 7087 (Florida A++ Plan) • Public records of Congressional hearings, largely in the form of Congressional journals and staff reports drawn from the Florida legislature • Official press releases from the Florida Department of Education, official website information from the Florida DOE website, pertinent public speeches addressing the legislation, and commentary from proponents of the legislation. In addition, the <i>Parent Primer on Career Exploration</i> was also examined as a part of this study as its publication served to directly support the legislative agenda outlined in the A++ Plan • Publicly available data from the Florida DOE website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All collected documents were examined for the presence or absence of references to the economy, business and industry, certifications and credentials, the workplace, instances of overt nationalism or jingoism, traditional values, and so forth, especially in relation to the manipulation and/or control of Bernstein's three message systems of schools (curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation), and the furtherance of Collins' variable notions of the Credential Society • Documents and statutes that included references to the above mentioned concepts were coded for the context in which the reference occurred. <p>All collected documents were analyzed based on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the statute, press release, or other formal communication in question premised upon or implicitly supportive of either a neoliberal or neoconservative ideological orientation? If so, what influence does the ideology exert? • Does the statute overtly or tacitly produce or maintain inequality or unequal opportunity? • Whose perspectives are represented and privileged, and whose are silenced and marginalized? • What is missing from the legislation and its public portrayal? • Do proponents of the legislation espouse a certain worldview that is reified by statutes within the law?

After the data were abstracted, linked, analyzed, and scanned for exemplars, I shifted to the third and final phase of a deductive content analysis: *Reporting*.

Phase III: Reporting. Following the organization and abstraction of data in Phase II, results and the process utilized to arrive at them are reported openly, including the coding scheme, categories and their meanings, subcategories, and themes. Such transparency is critical for maintaining the fidelity of the data and research, and facilitates replication by future researchers. The enumerated word count employed in this examination of the A++ Plan is available in its entirety in Appendix C, and the categories into which the word count and open coding data of the A++ Plan were abstracted are available in Table 4.1. The four categories into which the data were abstracted came to serve as the four primary ideological imperatives present in the A++ Plan.

Criticism of Qualitative Content Analysis

As has been the case with most forms of qualitative analysis, quantitative scholars have criticized content analysis on the grounds that it is subjective and lacks validity (Titscher et al., 2000), is unreliable (Krippendorff, 2004), and lends itself neither to generalizability (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) nor statistical analysis (Morgan, 1993). Criticisms that content analyses yield nothing more than word counts and simplistic descriptions of the data are not uncommon, yet belie the reality that the method creates fertile ground for researchers to access and analyze the values, beliefs, and practices promoted within a particular policy arena. Similarly, numerous researchers have concluded that content analyses does indeed enable researchers to draw replicable, valid inferences based upon their findings (Kohlbacher, 2006; Krippendorff, 1980;

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Mayring, 2002, 2003; Titscher et al., 2000). Relatedly, there is considerable support for the notion that policy documents are in fact texts which, according to Lander and Jackmore (2005), “emerge out of, but also produce, particular policy discourses” (p. 100), lending further weight to the selection of this research approach.

Summary

Using a process of qualitative content analysis as outlined above, this analysis of statutes from the A++ Plan and other artifacts pertinent to the plan’s public positioning moves beyond their superficial appearance to address the ideological essence, values, coalescing themes, and motives underlying the texts. The findings of this study were thereafter situated in a broader context of educational reform so as to serve as a signpost for subsequent policy analysts and, hopefully, politicians as they attempt to make sense out of possible policy directions and their potential outcomes. The study concludes with an examination of alternative solutions to the educational problems present in Florida for which the A++ Plan was ostensibly designed to rectify.

Chapter Four: Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism in the A++ Plan

Chapter Four, which serves as an analysis of the statutory requirements of Florida's A++ Plan, referred to also as HB7087, reveals a series of four interconnected, interdependent expressions of ideological imperatives that are sometimes subtle, and oftentimes overt. These ideologically-motivated policy imperatives - an allegiance to workforce readiness, a burgeoning system of standardization and accountability, the elevation of traditional values and nationalism, and the championing of individual responsibility - undergird much of the legislation, and in particular shape its most student-centered statutes; ergo, they stand to deeply influence Florida's children. My examination of these imperatives began with a word count and abstraction of terms into thematic categories associated with a given ideological orientation, including neoliberalism, neoconservatism, and progressivism (see Appendix C) in this case. Thereafter, the chapter progresses through a qualitative content analysis of the statutes themselves, governed by the methodological approach detailed in Chapter Three and my overarching research question of "What are the implications of the A++ Plan's ideological orientation for schooling and the reproduction of inequality in Florida?". This leads to a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the legislation's ideological basis in neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Subsequently, Chapter Five takes up the mantle of contextualizing the ideological imperatives of the A++ Plan identified in Chapter Four in a larger sociopolitical arena. Concluding this study, Chapter Six summarizes the study's findings, articulates implications for students, teachers, and schools, and discusses next steps for progressive educators.

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I began my examination of the A++ Plan by conducting a word count on the engrossed (draft) and enrolled (final) versions of HB7087 as a means of quantifying, thematically categorizing, and finally abstracting the critical terms and phrases relative to both the formative thinking underlying the legislation, and as a reflection of the political influences made manifest in its final iteration. Table 4.1 summarizes these findings, which may be found in their entirety in Appendix C. Of particular note in Table 4.1 is the weight given to three of the legislation's four ideological imperatives - Workforce Readiness, Standardization and Accountability, and Traditional Values and Nationalism - which align closely with neoliberal and neoconservative principles, and which will each be discussed in turn in this chapter. My thematic coding of the word count brings together terms of like purpose; for example, the ideological imperative of Workforce Readiness was abstracted from the myriad references to career preparation, the workforce, business and industry involvement in curriculum and assessment design, and so on. The final iteration of HB7087 exhibits significant increases in the frequency of use of terms related to these three ideological imperatives, as will be shown throughout this chapter in the more granular analysis of each ideological imperative at work in the legislation. By contrast, and also illustrated in Table 4.1, HB7087 pays scant attention to terminology more closely linked with progressive education (Kohn, 2008), setting up a clear juxtaposition of what the architects of the A++ Plan value as school outcomes.

Table 4.1 - Word Count in Engrossed/Original and Enrolled/Final A++ Plan

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Abstracted Category	Iterations in Original Bill	Iterations in Final Version of Bill	Net Change (Original to Final)
Workforce Readiness (workforce, workplace, economic, school-to-work, business, industry, employment/employer, free enterprise, career, job/occupation, free enterprise)	100	170	+70
Standardization & Accountability (standards, standardized, accountability/accountable, evidence, scientific, scientifically, research-based)	102	159	+57
Traditional Values & Nationalism (patriotism, flag, character)	0	11	+11
Progressive Education (caring, community development, democracy/ democratic, diversity, diverse, inclusive, differentiated, disadvantaged, meta-thinking, multicultural, problem-solving, self-evaluation, social justice, collaboration (between students), intrinsic motivation)	1	7	+6

The final ideological imperative present in the A++ Plan - that of Individual Responsibility - is subtly woven into the fabric of the law and its public positioning in a latent manner that adroitly disguises its intent. No specific language is utilized in the plan to suggest an emphasis on Individual Responsibility, hence its absence from Table 4.1; but, the policy maneuvers in HB7087, its public positioning vis-à-vis press releases,

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and legislative support documents such as the *Parent Primer on Career Exploration*, all described later in this chapter, indicate a shifting of the onus of responsibility to individuals and local communities, away from the state - a move in keeping with not only neoliberal ideology, but also the axioms of Individualism and Anti-Authoritarianism expressed in the American Creed. These issues are briefly touched about upon here in Chapter Four, and are both contextualized in a larger policy arena, and thereafter examined in greater depth, in Chapter Five.

While the word count alone presents only a snapshot of the decontextualized terminology incorporated into the legislation, it does provide readers and policy analysts a window into the ideologically-driven language receiving preference in the law which may impel more careful scrutiny of the law and additional research around its gestation, ramifications, and outcomes. Indeed, as Synowich (2014) remarks, “ideology directs its subjects in ways that are not transparent to the subjects themselves; law as ideology, on this view, cloaks power” (§ 3). As such, a careful examination of the actual statutory requirements, looked at in and through the methodological approach detailed in Chapter Three and in concert with the word count, reveals the depth and ideologically neoliberal and neoconservative purposes of the legislation’s four governing ideological imperatives. Together, these ideological imperatives serve as the foundation upon which the bulk of the legislation is constructed, and through which Florida’s students will be educated. The first ideological imperative to be addressed in this analysis is that of the A++ Plan’s elevation of workforce readiness as a critical outcome of Florida education.

An Allegiance to Workforce Readiness (and the Fear Being Used to Drive It)

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As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the central tenets of Neoliberalism - and one that is front and center in the A++ Plan - relates to the preeminence of the economy as a driver of what takes place in schools. The A++ Plan exudes this maxim, evincing a burgeoning allegiance to workforce readiness and preparation that outstrips all other objectives of the legislation. This is observed first in the word count and subsequent categorization of findings into thematic strands (Appendix C) which illustrate how the rhetoric of neoliberalism was infused into the bill from its original incantation to its final form. Notable in this are significant increases to references to the "Workforce" (8 in the original, to 12 in the final), "Workplace" (7 to 11), and "Economic" (4 to 8). Of particular note, however, are the references to "Career," of which there were 46 references in the original bill, growing to a stunning 79 in the final iteration; and to "Job(s)/Occupation(s)," of which there were 11 references in the original bill, and a near tripling of the figure to 28 in the final bill. Put in context, such numbers dwarf the incorporation of more educationally progressive terms such as "Democratic" (2 references in the final bill), "Diversity" (1 reference), "Disadvantaged" (1 reference) and "Inclusive" (0 references). These references convey a rhetorical commitment to the premises of neoliberalism, made manifest through the language and intent of the statutory moves undertaken by the A++ Plan. Indeed, the overwhelming presence of language pertaining to Workforce Readiness in the A++ Plan bespeaks an ardent commitment to linking schools directly to the business community. The word count, however, evinces but a lexical layer of the legislation's ideological orientation; the practical manifestation of neoliberalism is diffused throughout the entirety of the legislation's attention to workforce readiness.

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Effects on students. Through the A++ Plan, Florida schools have, in effect, been charged with preparing a ready-made workforce for the corporations and businesses flocking to the state as a function of the “biggest company incentives” and “friendliest tax codes” (10/5/2006) former Governor Bush could forge. Arguably, with the establishment of tax havens and an effete corporate tax code that have attracted businesses and entrepreneurs (Enterprise Florida Inc., 2015), including billionaire industrialists and staunch libertarians the Koch brothers (Greenpeace, 2010; Kennedy, 2012), the state needed a mechanism for the production of a workforce to meet increasing demand. Schools, it appears, are just the mechanism the former Governor needed. According to the former Governor, “It is never too early to prepare students for the demands of college and the workforce” (Workforce Florida, 2006, ¶ 1).

As such, a commitment to buoying the state’s workforce needs was set in motion linking both middle and high school academic outcomes to workforce preparedness. Statute 1007.21 of the A++ legislation tells us, “it is the intent of the Legislature that students and parents develop academic achievement and career goals for the student’s post-high-school experience during the middle grades” (lines 2065-2068). To achieve these ends, Florida’s middle school students are required by HB7087 to take a career planning course resulting in a “personalized academic and career plan” in order to be promoted to high school (lines 1066-1074), absent which progression to the high school level is prohibited. The thinking behind the endeavor, according to a Florida Department of Education (2006b) press release, is that “encouraging career exploration at a younger age provides an important incentive to work hard and strive for greater academic achievement.” This public-facing language echoes the language written

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directly into the legislation, wherein career planning is said to, “engage students in developing a personally meaningful course of study so they can achieve goals they have set for themselves” (lines 966-968). More practically, students in the middle school career planning course will be expected to create a portfolio in Florida’s Career Information Delivery System (FCIDS), complete an interest profiler through the system, and identify high school career clusters that include the resultant occupational outcomes (FLDOE, 2007). Radiating a distinctly neoliberal orientation, Florida students will be entering high schools having career-minded objectives and a pathway to their completion laid out before them before they set foot in the building.

In addition, and more significantly, once Florida students matriculate into high school, each and every one will also be required to identify a Major Area of Interest (MAI) prior to entering the 9th grade (lines 1265-1268). A Major Area of Interest consists of four credits, or year-long courses, which must be taken sequentially and in parallel with their other coursework. Comparatively, and expressive of how significant MAIs are to the Florida legislature, it is noteworthy that students are also required to take four credits each of English and Math, yet only three credits each of Science and Social Studies, and one credit each of Fine Arts and Physical Education. Students may elect to “double major” (an additional four credits/courses) or add a minor (three credits/courses) to their first major as a means of intensifying their specialization. On paper, the MAIs are designed to be flexible, enabling students to annually move in and out of majors with relative ease as student interests morph over time. The MAI provision of the A++ legislation has drawn considerable interest nationwide (Associated Press, 2006; Illinois State Board of Education, 2006; Renaud, 2006), and bears scrutiny for its

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unusual tack that mirrors a traditional collegiate model. A related statute addressing Career and Professional Academies (1003.493) will be taken up later in this chapter.

The publicly identified impetus for the Major Areas of Interest provision of the A++ Plan (Associated Press, 2006; Garry, 2007; Lewis, 2006) was a combination of the state's stagnant high school event dropout rate (4.1%, 34th in the nation in 2005) and perpetually low graduation rate (57.5%, 48th in the nation in 2005) - rates that dip even further for Florida's minority populations in particular (Editorial Projects in Education, 2006; NCES, 2008; NCES, 2010). Upon the statute's public release, former K-12 Public Schools Chancellor Cheri Pierson Yecke stated, "Today we make the bold leap from wanting to increase the relevance of high school to actually doing it" (FLDOE, 2007a, 12 January). The notion of high school students utilizing majors to combat the dropout rate was originally suggested by a state high school task force according to John Winn, former Florida Education Commissioner - and current corporate reform movement champion (Ravitch, 2013) - who amorphously added that the provision, "came from research on what keeps kids in school and what engages them" (qtd. in Kaczor, 2006, ¶ 8). The legislative move also leverages the American Creed insofar as it elevates *Liberty* to a particularly high standing, championing individual choice wherein students are able to take greater ownership over the sequence of their high school courses through these unique tracks. While the formation of these majors signals a new orientation towards the course structure of Florida high schools, few substantive changes have in fact been made to classroom offerings.

A Florida Department of Education memorandum (2006a) related to the Major Areas of Interest indexes a small handful of proposed "new" courses, more than half of

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which reveal an overt focus on career exploration. A cursory examination of these courses provides a window into the legislation's market-oriented intent. Some examples of new courses for 7th and 8th grade students that reflect this neoliberal, business-centric orientation include Career Exploration and Decision Making, Computer Applications in Business, and Exploration of Health Occupations - each of which has at its respective center a decidedly occupational focus - and finally a mandatory Life Choices course. In this last course, students will receive a firm grounding in the skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurial careers in fields such as textile and clothing science, interior design, and consumerism, the sum total of which will be the development of a career plan that details "job preferences" and "training requirements" (p. 46).

Alternatively, the "new" courses that do not evince a career focus, such as Civics, World Geography, and Exploring Technology, are hardly innovative or unique. The Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, framed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1994), include *Civic Ideals and Practices*, *Science, Technology, and Society*, and *Global Connections* as three of only a handful of thematic strands that frame the entire discipline. These strands represent the best thinking of the NCSS, and embody the expectations the organization harbors for all school-age children studying social studies. That said, one move within the legislation's selectively granular attention to *Required Instruction* bears particular scrutiny.

Aside from History and Health - which will be addressed shortly - only Economics receives any treatment in the *Required Instruction* section of the A++ Plan. Therein, the decidedly neoliberal ideal of championing free markets is made manifest, wherein the legislation requires the teaching of, "the nature and importance of free enterprise to the

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United States economy” (lines 1201-1202). No other economic system receives such treatment, thus idealizing the position of free markets, and ergo competition, as essential and common sense facets of American economic culture. Put in the context of the rest of the A++ legislation, this move sediments in place Florida schools’ responsibility for preparing students for a competitive work environment, and provides graduates with a marketable “credential” of sorts in the form of their specialization.

In addition to the Major Area of Interest statute requiring students to declare a major, Statute 1003.493 of the A++ Plan creates *Career and Professional Academies* (CPA) through which students may receive both their high school diploma and industry certification/credentialing in a career-oriented field of study “designated as high growth, high demand, and high pay” (lines 1699-1700), preparing them for employment in corporate America immediately out of high school. While certainly not guaranteeing an individual a job, the ostensible “successful preparation” of students for employment in this manner shifts the blame away from employers onto the individual if they in fact cannot acquire a job thereafter, illustrating one silent means by which the A++ Plan elevates individual responsibility. That fact aside, CPAs are openly described in the legislation as, “programs that integrate a rigorous academic curriculum with an industry-driven career curriculum” (lines 1634-1636). The goals of the CPAs are twofold: first, to “increase student achievement and graduation rates through integrated academic and career curricula;” and second, to “focus on career preparation through rigorous academics and industry certification” (lines 1644-1647). While graduation rates have indeed risen in Florida, as have FCAT scores, which will be taken up shortly, the rise on these rates cannot be causally-linked to CPAs, and may well be a function of other

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factors, including the closing of underperforming schools, and the shifting of students from these institutions to charter, voucher, and private schools that are not obligated to report on such data. Regardless, such a dual-emphasis on career-based curricula and industry certification through a CPA evokes Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) notion of credentialing, previously detailed in Chapter Three.

The architects of the Career and Professional Academies aspired to build the state economy by “meeting industry needs for skilled employees” vis-à-vis internships, on-the-job training, and curricula *designed by* the “local workforce development board, the chamber of commerce, or the Agency of Workforce Innovation” (lines 1700-1702) who will act in concert with local industry. Few content standards are made explicit in the legislation, though the few that are reveal a decidedly neoliberal orientation:

1. An emphasis on work habits and work ethics
2. Reading for information skills
3. Interpersonal skills
4. Decision-making skills
5. The importance of attendance and timeliness in the work environment

The ambiguity of the first content requirement - an emphasis on work habits and work ethics - is concerning, as such an amorphous requirement could take on any variety of shapes at any location at which it is pursued. The amorphous quality of the requirement lends itself to local interpretation, steered by a neoliberal objective. As the program is designed not by educators, but by those deeply entrenched in the for-profit business community whose primary objective and motivation is increasing the bottom line for the company and its shareholders, one might draw the conclusion that such

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“work habits and work ethics” will consist of practices that help realize just such a corporate objective. Indeed, in their examination of CPAs in twelve Florida school districts, Estacion, D’Souza, and Bozick (2011) have determined that of the 45 “wall-to-wall” Career and Professional Academies, wherein an entire school is organized around a framework of career academies, as opposed to smaller “school-within-a-school” academies being embedded in a larger institution that serves a wide array of differentiated interests, 89% (40 of the 45) were located in one of the poorest counties in the state, Miami-Dade. Moreover, they discovered an array of telling phenomenon about these wall-to-wall CPAs:

On average, high schools offering wall-to-wall career academies had higher rates of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (42 percent compared with 37 percent), of racial/ethnic minority students (84 percent and 53 percent), and of students receiving special education services (25 percent and 13 percent) than their school-within-a-school counterparts. A higher percentage of students enrolled in wall-to-wall career academies were Hispanic (45 percent compared with 16 percent) and received special education services (25 percent compared with 13 percent) than their school-within-a-school counterparts. (Estacion, D’Souza, & Bozick, 2011, p. ii)

This data indicate that poor and minority students are considerably more likely to be enrolled in a CPA, and in some cases have *no choice* but to be enrolled in one if they happen to attend one of the 45 wall-to-wall career academies (Estacion, D’Souza, & Bozick, 2011), lest they exercise school choice in order to opt out of the district. The re/

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production of existing racial and socioeconomic divides in society is a plausible outcome of such a move, as CPAs serve as a pipeline for entry-level employment.

The next three content requirements - Reading for information skills, Interpersonal skills, and Decision-making skills - seem innocuous enough on the surface, but in the context of preparing individuals for immediate entry into the workforce, seem likely to serve decidedly corporate ends at the expense of personal ones, again embodying a neoliberal orientation in which individuals are commodified and valued relative to their contribution(s) to the economy. Indeed, the Reading for Information requirement comes up again shortly in a discussion of the Ready-to-Work Certificate. The lattermost of the content requirements, that of the “importance of attendance and timeliness in the work environment,” is quite striking, as it makes manifest in school curricula a corporate environment of dominance and employee docility wherein not missing work, and normalizing standard work days/hours, is deeply valued. Such moves are buoyed further through the Ready-to-Work Certification program that the A++ Plan also sets in motion.

As was the case with the previously discussed Career and Professional Academies, the Ready-to-Work Certification Program, Statute 1004.99 of the A++ Plan, advances the neoliberal interests of the corporate world over those of Florida's students (see <http://www.floridareadytowork.com/>) through its ethic of workforce readiness. Through the Ready-to-Work Statute establishes an economic imperative, amplified by a multi-headed discourse of fear, globalization, and existing educational inadequacies steeped in neoliberal and neoconservative doctrine.

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In crafting the Ready-to-Work legislation, Florida politicians (House of Representatives Staff Analysis, 2006) used the RAND Corporation's report *The 21st Century at Work* (Karoly & Panis, 2004) and the US Chamber of Commerce's National Work Readiness Credential Project (NWRCP) as policy guides. The RAND Corporation, a think tank counting noted neoconservatives Condoleeza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Francis Fukuyama, and Zalmay Khalilzad (President George W. Bush's ambassador to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United Nations) amongst its former administrators, was born in 1946 out of the United States Army Air Forces, has been seen as advancing American hegemony and imperialism for many years (Johnson, 2002, 2004, 2008a, 2008b). Florida's use of the RAND report as a framework for its educational policy decisions is revealing considering the ideological trend of its administrators, and gestation in the US military. Johnson (2008a) sums up the RAND Corporation's historical influence in no uncertain terms, evincing a distinct commitment to the neoliberal tenets of economic importance and individual responsibility, the latter of which is closely shared with neoconservatives: "Much of RAND's work was always ideological, designed to support the American values of individualism and personal gratification" (¶ 10). Similarly revealing is Florida's dependence upon the NWRCP as a guiding framework for the Ready-to-Work Certification Program.

The US Chamber of Commerce's National Work Readiness Credential Project was developed "through a five-year, national consensus-building process that included businesses, unions, chambers of commerce, education and training professionals, and state workforce investment board" (see <http://www.workreadiness.com/about.html>), and is currently headed by former Florida WorkKeys network operator and ardent Jeb Bush

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and GOP advocate Joe Mizereck. It is notable that a web search for the Florida WorkKeys program now directs interested parties to the website for the Florida Ready-to-Work program, and that Mizereck's tenure at Florida WorkKeys helped launch both the NWRCP, and his own personal involvement therein. The project's primary objective is to, "create a skills profile and assessment that measures the foundational skills of value creating relationships" with an agenda of promoting a credential "as a confirmation that [students] have the skills to add value on the frontline in entry level workplaces" (see <http://www.workreadiness.com/nwrcred.html>). In all key respects, Florida's Ready-to-Work program mirrors the theoretical premises of the RAND report, and the utilitarian moves of the NWRCP.

Drawing from the NWRCP's playbook, and the RAND Corporation's findings, the Ready-to-Work Certification Program has been crafted expressly to "enhance the workplace skills of Florida's students to better prepare them for successful employment in specific occupations" (lines 2014-2016). In order to receive a Ready-to-Work certificate, students must initially take a, "pre-instructional assessment that delineates the student's mastery level on the specific workplace skills" (lines 2030-2032). The assessment is designed by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, which was recently rebranded as the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO), and whose primary mission is "advancing Florida's economy by championing the state's economic development vision" (2014, ¶ 2).

The FDEO's pre-instructional assessment, which helps to sort potential employees meeting the wants and needs of Florida businesses, consists of three, hour-long multiple choice assessments: Applied Mathematics (basic arithmetic, workplace

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mathematical reasoning, percentage discounts/markups), the aforementioned Reading for Information (reading comprehension on policies, regulations, memos, notices, etc.), and Locating Information (comprehension of workplace graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, forms, and gauges). Following the pre-instructional assessment, students engage in “a targeted instructional program limited to those identified workplace skills in which the student is not proficient” which “must be customized to meet identified specific needs of local employers” (lines 2033-2037). The specific skills and knowledge students are to acquire in and through the program are thus a direct reflection of local industry’s instrumental needs taking the shape of marketable commodities (Ball, 2006; Ryan & Hermann, 2005), not what is necessarily in the interest of the individual beyond employability, or of our democratic nation. Finally, upon completion of the program, students are awarded a “work credential” and portfolio “delineat[ing] the skills demonstrated by student as evidence of the student’s preparation for employment (lines 2038-2041).

Quite literally, students will possess a document enumerating what they are and are not able to do which they are then expected to present to prospective employers as proof of their abilities. It is noteworthy that employers may subscribe to be part of a network of companies listed on the Florida Ready to Work website, thus becoming part of an internal network of businesses that enjoy privileged access to potential employees. The economic potential here is manifest, as the Ready-to-Work Certification Program stands to be a tremendous boon to Florida employers whose interests and bottom line are advanced in myriad ways through a systematic program of school-based worker preparation. Indeed, a significant and tangible result of the Ready-to-Work

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program is, “a clear, consistent statewide standard of the job skills an individual possesses” (FLDOE, 2006b), thus creating a pipeline of credentialed employees, making it easier and more efficient for employers to hire and fire employees.

Consider, for instance, the following statements from supporters of the Ready-to-Work Certification Program, gleaned from the Workforce Florida Weekly Update (2006, Feb 14; see also FLDOE 2006b) that was released immediately following HB7087's passage into law:

This is an excellent example of connecting the workforce system's demand side with the education system's supply side. The result is a winning proposition for businesses who need access to a highly qualified workforce

Curtis Austin, President of Workforce Florida, Inc.

'Ready to Work' will help Florida employers tap into skilled workers that are tailor-fitted to their business needs

Katherine Wilson, Chair of the Workforce Florida Board of Directors

As an economic development tool, 'Ready to Work' will ensure business recruiters that there is a ready and qualified workforce in Florida that is in step with their specific skill requirements

Susan Pareigis, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation

The 'Ready to Work' initiative is the perfect combination of what

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students want and prospective employers need ... The end result is a trained workforce with skill sets and credentials that have relevance to both employees and potential employers

Representative Joe Pickens (R), Chairman of the House
Education Appropriations Committee

One of the biggest challenges for Florida's businesses is finding potential employees who are prepared for today's job market ... The 'Ready to Work' initiative will help provide businesses with entry-ready employees

Frank Ryll Jr., Florida Chamber of Commerce President

Note that not a single educator is amongst those cited in the Workforce Florida Weekly Update, nor were any educators cited anywhere in that document. Rather, only politicians and members of the business community whose economic interests are advanced by the legislation were cited in the Workforce Florida piece. The common thread linking the comments together into a narrative reveals how elated the business community was with the passage of the Ready-to-Work program, as the outcomes students would possess at the conclusion of said program would feed directly into the entry-level recruiting pipeline of the corporate world.

To advance the Ready-to-Work initiative, more than \$50 million was initially earmarked by the Florida legislature at former Governor Bush's request (FLDOE, 2006b), on top of the some \$460 million already set aside for school district workforce programs (Workforce Florida, 2/14/2006), further elevating the legislation's commitment

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to advancing an economic agenda. This latter figure also includes professional development dollars that have been purposefully reassigned through the A++ Plan to support, amongst other things, workforce preparation (3994-3998). Ultimately, the success of the program will be determined through outcome measures that include “business and industry satisfaction, employment and earnings, [and] achievement of industry certification” (lines 1719-1720), amidst several other more traditional measures of academic gains, including FCAT scores.

That said, the increasingly complex and constantly evolving arena of Florida standardized testing makes the comparison of gains on these measures across years possible, but difficult. Boehme (2014) sums up this reality succinctly:

In the past fourteen years [Florida] school grades have become a complex metric because of changes in student score expectations, improvement and other measures of achievement (so-called raising the bar), and student academic acceleration, such as Advanced Placement participation and pass rates. Nineteen rule changes since 2002, including seven substantive amendments to the school grading system. (p. 14)

Nevertheless, in 2012 Florida Governor Rick Scott released data locating FCAT scores around levels of poverty, gauged by percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch (FLDOE, 2012). The data confirm that while FCAT scores are indeed rising across the state, these data were deliberately and significantly skewed, as the passing threshold for certain of the tests were modified *after* the results came back so as to manipulate the passing rate in the public’s eyes, giving the appearance of greater success on the tests than was actually achieved by Florida’s students (Kurlander,

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2012). For example, when the original results for the 2012 third and tenth grade FCAT Writing tests came back, only 27% and 38% of test takers passed, respectively. In response to these abysmal scores, the Florida Department of Education lowered the passing mark on the test to such a level that 81% of third graders were shown to have in fact passed - a stunning turnaround.

History also reminds us that we should look at this data with a degree of circumspection, as Lipman (2003), Booher-Jennings (2005), and Natriello (2009) all found that schools serving high-minority, high-poverty student populations are more likely to dedicate blocks of time to test preparation, taking time away from instruction. The focus of this test preparation is often on students nearest to passing state tests, ignoring and further marginalizing students most likely to drop-out – historically minorities and the poor (Booher-Jennings, 2005). In effect, schools purposefully target students nearest to the passing mark as a means of elevating them, while ignoring the needs of students both in the middle and who are failing by too large a margin to merit institutional attention as a bloc.

Despite the reality of Florida's skewed data, and the troubling historical moves to prop-up test results, the district-level data revealed by Governor Scott (FLDOE, 2012) nevertheless reveals that while FCAT scores are improving, they are doing so at a significantly slower pace in schools serving high-poverty and high-minority student populations (Chatterji, 2005; Nickinson, 2015; Rogers, 2012; Tschinkel, 1999, 2003). Tellingly, the data evinces that a district's performance on the FCAT parallels the district's percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch. Rogers (2012) explores this phenomenon in depth:

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In 2010-11, Marion [County] ranked No. 44, the same as its FCAT scores. In 2011-12, when it was No. 45 on FCAT, it was No. 48 in free/reduced lunches. And last year, when it was 50th in FCAT, it was 51st in free/reduced lunches. There's clearly a pattern here...Scott's 2012 list showed St. Johns County (St. Augustine) No. 1 on FCAT and No. 1 with the least students on free and reduced lunches, while North Florida's Madison County was last, No. 67, on FCAT and No. 65 in free/reduced lunch participation. (§ 9)

Relatedly, of the ten schools serving school populations consisting of 70% or more minority students in Escambia County, one received a "C" grade, eight received "D" grades, and one received an "F." Similarly, every school in Santa Rosa County to receive an "A" grade serves a school community consisting of less than 30% minority students.

These results are consistent with a community's socioeconomic class as well, wherein only three of the twenty-one schools in Escambia County serving student populations receiving free/reduced lunch at rates above 70% received "B" grades. Of the other eighteen schools, six received "C" grades, nine received "D" grades, and three received an "F." The same results can be seen in Santa Rosa County, wherein the only two schools receiving "D" grades serve student populations receiving free/reduced lunch at rates of 68% and 86%, respectively.

These data have a bearing on programs such as the new Ready-to-Work initiative in that the programs tend to target students more likely to be predetermined to enter the workforce right out of high school. As such, the Ready-to-Work program stands to re/produce existing divisions of social class in Florida, wherein the poorest

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counties in the state find the least success on standardized assessments, leading to a greater concentration of vocational and credential-focused educational interventions.

Florida's students are not alone in this reality, however, as their parents, too, are targets of the A++ Plan's allegiance to workforce preparation.

Effects on parents. Students are not the only school constituents targeted by the Major Areas of Interest, Career and Professional Academies, and Ready-to-Work programming as parents, too, have been a focal point of the A++ Plan's attention to Workforce Readiness, primarily through the publication and distribution of a report entitled the *Parent Primer on Career Exploration* (FLDOE, 2007b). Put together by the Office for Workforce Improvement as a supporting document for the A++ Plan's rollout, the *Primer* utilizes much of the same neoliberal rhetoric seen in the positioning of the Major Areas of Interest, Career and Professional Academies, and Ready-to-Work initiative. In it, parents are charged with shoring up resource- and counselor-deprived school districts by "step[ping] up and act[ing] as a career advisor" (p. 4), the first stage of which involves educating said parents, "about what is happening in the labor market" such that "you might help your children make more informed choices" (p. 4), or what is ostensibly a further pretense toward individual responsibility and the outcomes of "good" and "bad" choices. In effect, parents - as potent influencers of their children - are being purposefully influenced towards particular ideological ends. Parents are provided myriad business-friendly ideas through the report, including that they "can begin to discuss career exploration as early as elementary age" (p. 6) in order to build career awareness and interest, and that attributes such as punctuality, responsibility, dependability, interviewing, and resume writing are critical to a child's eventual success as an

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employee (p. 9-12). There is even a tacit endorsement of majors such as nursing, physical therapy, and radiography at the expense of enrolling in liberal arts or social science majors (p. 9) - a move overtly cast as having to do with one's earning and profit potential. The *Primer* also encourages parents to steer their children toward, "using and interpreting labor market information and job projections" as a means of pursuing work, diminishing the role of one's passions as a driver of his or her career path. The emphasis on Workforce Readiness does not stop here either, though, as the neoliberal orientation towards this legislation goes one final step further in its focus on creating a labor force for Florida businesses and corporations.

Effects on school board members. In addition to targeting students and parents with a vision of their respective futures in the labor force, the A++ Plan also creates the conditions by which locally-elected school board members may deliberately drive promotion and graduation requirements that include "career and technical education courses in order to provide a complete education program" (lines 1015-1016). The State has ostensibly empowered local school boards, who answer to local parent and business constituencies, to leverage their power to bend graduation requirements to be more inclusive of career education of various sorts. This career education may include, for instance, "practical arts courses that provide generic skills that may apply to many occupations" (814-816), courses designed to provide students with "exposure to a broad range of occupations to assist them in preparing their academic and occupational plans" (813-814), and "job-preparatory instruction in the competencies that prepare students for effective entry into an occupation, including diversified cooperative education, work experience, and job-entry programs that coordinate directed study and

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on-the-job training” (821-825). Such moves as these, which influence students, teachers, parents, and school boards, serve to propel the State’s ideological imperative of producing a workforce ready to engage in an increasingly competitive global market, though for some Florida students this means occupying certain jobs/positions in society - an issue addressed at length in Chapter Five.

The end game for this initiative, which began under former Governor Bush’s tenure, is to, “ensure Florida remains in ascendancy and our students are prepared to compete in the global market” (Bush, 10/5/2006), laying bare his vision of an economically thriving Florida whose schools churn out students for the express purpose of competitively production and accumulation of wealth, which is tacitly constituted as a surrogate for happiness. Even the Sunshine State Standards, the governing curriculum framework for the state of Florida, requires periodic review that, through the A++ Plan, includes input from “representatives from business and industry who are identified by local education foundations” (line 347-348). The Sunshine State Standards articulate the grade-by-grade standards to which students are held accountable, primarily through the standardized Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), which will be discussed in greater detail shortly. Florida’s standardized testing regimen serves as the primary means by which the state’s students are compared to one another locally and nationally, and internationally in a de facto sense.

Fear as a powerful motivator. A corollary to the A++ Plan’s clarion call for workforce readiness is the locating of this call in a context of overt competition and overriding nationalistic fear - a move simultaneously reflecting neoliberal and neoconservative axioms embraced by not only the authors of the A++ Plan, but

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President Obama, wherein he has stated unequivocally, “Our future is on the line. The nation that out-educates us today is going to out-compete us tomorrow. To continue to cede our leadership in education is to cede our position in the world” (Obama, 2010). Former Florida Governor Bush (2006b) himself has said quite plainly that not only will “these majors will make high school more relevant to our students” (§ 94), but they will enable students to “compete against students [not only] in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, but also China, India, and Japan” (§ 101; see also, FLDOE, 2007). “We must,” Bush (2006b) continues, “renew and upgrade our commitment to educating and preparing our students for success in the global marketplace” (§ 104), echoing former Florida Lieutenant Governor Antoinette Jennings’ statement that measures such as the Ready-to-Work program “will ensure our students have the skills necessary to succeed in Florida’s growing and competitive marketplace” (Workforce Florida, 2006, § 19). The marketplace to which Bush and Jennings are referring is one that, while indeed adding jobs, is seeing the vast majority of those jobs consistently created in the local, low-paying service sector (ADP, 2015), as evidenced most recently in January 2015 wherein 90% (13,000) of the 14,4000 jobs created across the state were service sector positions.

This fact aside, former Governor Bush went even further, stating, “If we can’t provide businesses looking to relocate or expand in Florida the *workers*...we won’t receive our share of investment and growth” [emphasis original] (2006b, § 110). The fear of falling behind other states and nations economically is parroted by supporters of the various pro-business and industry initiatives in the A++ Plan, including members of the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Workforce

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Florida Inc., and pro-business politicians, almost all of whom fall on the right side of the political spectrum (Workforce Florida, 2/14/2006), as well as through parent-facing reports such as the *Parent Primer on Career Education* (2007). The potential of the United States falling from its perch of world economic dominance is a primary driver of this legislative and ideological imperative. As such, one of the central means by which Florida is pursuing this imperative is through practices of increased standardization of curriculum and pedagogical practice, nestled amid intensified accountability for narrowly-construed academic and instructional objectives.

A Burgeoning System of Standards and Accountability

In order to produce students who are “workforce ready” in accordance with the neoliberal axioms previously outlined, the A++ Plan’s second ideological imperative advances a system of standards and accountability that ushers in unprecedented levels of curricular and pedagogical standardization, while commensurately elevating levels of accountability for students, teachers, and schools. Such heightened levels of accountability are, in large part, aimed at casting public schools as failures that require reforms framed by the business community or powerful state whose ideological interests are expressed in the recommended reforms, notwithstanding greater school choice as a means of diverting public tax dollars away from “the transparent common public education fund to the more authoritarian, unaccountable, and private spheres of market and church (Street, 2005, p. 167; see also Apple, 2006a; Brown, 2006), the replacement of staff and administration with potentially more ideologically desirable practitioners (Lipman, 2015), and so forth. The purposeful re-casting of the FLDOE’s Division of Research and Measurement as the newly christened Division of

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Accountability, Research, and Measurement (line 3) sets the stage for an intensification of efforts in this arena, beginning with the most significant means by which accountability is presently taken: state-wide standardized testing.

Effects on students. Of primacy here, despite the nominal treatment it receives in the legislation, is the ongoing use of the state's long-standing standardized test, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), which all students in grades 3 through 11 are required to take. In the case of the particularly high stakes 10th grade exam, a passing score must be earned in order to graduate from high school. For a complete record of FCAT examination requirements (FLDOE, 2015), see Appendix B. In recent years, additional standardized End-of-Course assessments have also been offered in selected courses, passage of which is required in order to earn credit for the class. Students, thus, are continuing to be held most accountable by standardized assessments that determine whether they earn credit for year-long classes and can even graduate from high school. Beyond these student-specific ramifications, the FCAT's influence over school practices runs throughout classrooms, administrative offices, and the state budget.

Effects on schools. Florida's well-established tradition of public shaming - which began with former Governor Bush's initial education reform, the A+ Plan's (FLDOE, 1999) efforts to make publicly-available report card-style "grades" of every K-12 Florida public school - will continue through the A++ Plan, with the FCAT enduring as the primary gauge of school success or failure. In fact, publicly-announced and published "grades" of every high school based on FCAT results, graduation rates, violence rates, and student attendance will not only continue, but be grown.

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The new requirements delineated in the A++ Plan expand on the previous stipulations, denoting that schools will not only be graded, but must also produce “annual public disclosure reports” that articulate the school’s grade according to the Florida DOE, the disaggregated percentage of all students in grades 3 through 10 performing at levels 1 and 2 on the reading portion of the FCAT, the disaggregated number and percentage of all students retained in grades 3 through 10, the total number of students promoted for “good cause” (lines 2713-2719), and the school’s disaggregated high school graduation rate (lines 705-708). Publicly, this practice is meant to better facilitate informed parental choice - a central concept of neoliberalism (see Friedman, 1955; Harvey, 2005) - enabling families to opt-out of districting requirements under conditions outlined in Section 11 of the legislation. Therein, it is stated that all schools must adopt policies that

[allow] students attending schools that have been designated with a grade of ‘F,’ failing to make adequate progress, for 2 school years in a 4-year period to attend a higher performing school in the district or an adjoining district or be granted a state opportunity scholarship to a private school. (lines 722-728)

While the choice/transfer requirements in the majority of this requirement reflect what is expected of public schools relative to NCLB, the provision of state opportunity scholarships to attend private schools transcends federal requirements, and sets in motion the utilization of public tax dollars by families desiring to attend charter, private, for-profit, and religious institutions - a practice which elevates both neoliberal and neoconservative discourses. Neoliberal’s interests in markets and market-based

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reforms are advanced through growing student populations in charter, private, and for-profit educational institutions. At the same time, neoconservative interests, which have long been associated with voucherized religious education aimed at a restoration of traditional values (Apple, 2006c; Buras, 2008; Street, 2005), are promoted through the realignment of public taxpayer dollars to pay for religious education that would otherwise be coming out of a family's pockets.

It is also notable that Section 1008.34(2) maintains the existing practice of using these school grades as the basis for granting "A" rated schools, and those schools improving two grade levels, "greater authority over the allocation of the school's total budget" (lines 2974-2975). In effect, schools able to perform relative to the State's rubric are rewarded for their willingness and ability to meet the state's ideologically-premised expectations relative to practice and program, whereas schools unable to face greater State control, and less local control relative to their budgetary allocations.

Moreover, when a school is designated with an "F" performance grade, the State may take any variety of steps to remediate both the school and district, including evaluation by a community assessment team that includes corporate input, the contracting of educational services through private for-profit enterprises, the withholding of state funding, the reorganizing and/or replacing of staff, the hiring of new leadership (lines 2906-2925), and the grossly ambiguous and decidedly ominous "changing certain practices" (line 2900-2901). In addition, schools with such a performance mark are mandated to provide even more voluminous and detailed public reports on performance, practices, and further disaggregated graduation rates that are increasingly granular.

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Effects on teachers. In addition to students and schools being held more broadly accountable vis-à-vis the A++ Plan, so too are teachers. The effectiveness of a Florida teacher will be primarily appraised through “data and indicators of improvement in student performance” (lines 3932-3933), measured most significantly by student performance on the FCAT, and more recently on standardized End-of-Course assessments. The following list more fully details the performance appraisal criteria:

- 1 - Performance of students
- 2 - Ability to maintain appropriate discipline
- 3 - Knowledge of subject matter
- 4 - Ability to plan and deliver instruction, and the use of technology in the classroom
- 5 - Ability to evaluate instructional needs
- 6 - Ability to establish and maintain a positive collaborative relationship with students' families to increase student achievement
- 7 - Other professional competencies, responsibilities, and requirements as established by rules of the State Board of Education and policies of the district school board.

It is interesting to note that the first two criteria focus on student performance and discipline, followed thereafter by a teacher's knowledge of their subject matter, ability to effectively deliver instruction, and a teacher's proclivity with assessing the instructional needs of his or her students. The dual focus on individual student performance, measured predominantly by standardized tests (Lipman, 2011, 2015), and the maintenance of classroom discipline, advances a ideologically neoliberal position

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wherein contextual factors such as poverty and family life have little if any salience in an assessment of student performance, and how order and “respect for authority” (HB7087, line 2015) - one of the required elements of the A++ Plan’s mandatory Character Development Program - are prized above all others despite much research to the contrary (Berliner, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Edmondson & D’Urso, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto, 2000; OECD, 2005a; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Rothstein, 2004). Cochran-Smith (2004) argues that using test scores alone to evaluate teacher quality, and arguably as the dominant factor as is the case in Florida, is a narrowly construed and myopic focus that distracts attention from the role that poverty, institutional racism, lack of opportunity to learn, and inequitable resource distribution play in the conversation of educational success, implying that, “there is no need for policies and programs intended to address [these] larger issues” (p. 199). Yet it is this very sense of individual responsibility - and accountability - that is driving Florida’s reforms in this regard.

Much of the direction of these moves towards holding teachers fully and directly accountable for the performance of their students stems from the edict that “Teachers lead, students learn” (line 557), a line drawn directly from the very first guiding principle of the *Better Educated Students and Teachers - Florida Teaching* (2003) legislation - a line that was pulled from the A++ legislation’s very final incantation, but which clearly holds sway over the policy. The emphasis of the teacher performance appraisal criteria is clearly upon maintaining control of one’s students, and enabling their performance on state assessments - not on the actual teaching abilities of the individual in question.

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Relatedly, as a whole, the practice of continuously evaluating teachers vis-à-vis the neoliberal ethic of competition and rising accountability creates not only tension between teacher and administrator, but an animosity between the two that further sharpens the divide between practitioner and evaluator (Webb, Briscoe, & Mussman, 2009). Further, such continuous evaluation normalizes teachers to a state of constant surveillance (Vinson & Ross, 2003), akin to Bentham's "panopticon" (in Bozovic, 1995; see also Foucault, 1977), within which all of one's actions are scrutinized overtly and covertly for their impact upon state-sanctioned academic and social outcomes. As such, teacher knows that every step they take is observed, particularly through digital means such as electronic grade books, student information systems, and email, amongst other means, as an electronic "paper trail" is available for 24/7 viewing by a superior. Such a reality may well create a "chilling effect" (*Wieman v. Updegraff*, see also *Shelton v. Tucker*), thereby steering teachers to make choices about curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments - Bernstein's three message systems of the school - that are particularly conservative as a means of promoting self-preservation. Indeed, as Bourdieu (1980) asserts, "The most successful ideological effects are those which have no need of words, but only of *laissez-faire* and complicitous silence" (p. 133). Further reinforcing such conservative moves are the incentives built into the system of performance appraisal.

In addition to teacher assessment focusing on the above seven areas, high performance by teachers thereupon is rewarded under section 56 1012.22 wherein all Florida schools are required to adopt a performance-based pay model through which "instructional personnel who demonstrate outstanding performance" may earn a "5-

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percent supplement in addition to their individual, negotiated salary” (lines 3800-3803). While districts may write their own performance-based pay model, it must be approved by the Florida Commissioner of Education who, again, was made a political appointee, as opposed to an elected official, during Jeb Bush’s first term as Governor of Florida. In 2013 alone, some \$480 million was set aside for these performance incentives, eclipsing the respective total budgets for Educational Media & Technology Services, classroom materials and supplies, and school safety, amongst most other line items (FL Governor’s Office, 2014). Such performance incentives, which have their basis in neoliberal thought (Connell, 2013), create a context of competition in schools and amongst teachers. One means by which such competition is made possible is through the use of scientifically-based research which makes for easy comparisons between students, teachers, and schools.

The elevation of scientifically-based research. The A++ Plan exudes an overt commitment to the use of scientifically-based research. Scientifically-based research has fallen under scrutiny in recent years (Leistyna, 2007; Lather, 2004; Hursh & Martina, 2003; Allington, 2002; Metcalf, 2002; Coles, 2000), due to methodological concerns with its appropriateness and potential for generalizability, its predilection to gauge student learning across all demographics using a singular testing instrument, and ideological concerns with its politically conservative origins. In addition, the for-profit testing and tutoring industries spawned from the creation of new educational markets pregnant with financial potential have blossomed during this era, reaping tremendous financial benefits (Central Florida School Board Coalition, 2012; Horn, 2005; Clarke, 2004; Miner,

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2004/2005) from the commitment to scientifically-based research and the tests that accompany it.

Notwithstanding these myriad concerns about the practice and profit of scientifically-based research, it is to be explicitly used in Florida for remedial literacy instruction and Reading Recovery (lines 1981, 2587, 2630-2632, & 2681-2685), an amorphously-articulated series of “educational activities” (line 4026) aimed at preparing students for further education and entry into the workforce, professional development programs through which “content area teachers *need* to become proficient in applying scientifically-based reading strategies through their content areas” [emphasis added] (lines 1025-1027; see also line 4171), and a new series of “credentials” - evincing Collins’ (1979, 2000, 2002) forecast of a credential society - related to effective reading practices in selected disciplines (lines 511-541). The markets created through these moves, such as those related to instructional and assessment materials for reading, stand to be financial boons to any company able to leverage the opportunity. Relatedly, the mandate related to scientifically-based research speaks to the regard with which the legislation’s architects hold research that does not express a narrowly-construed scientific basis, implicating broad swaths of qualitative educational research that deviates from the strict empirical model which has been used in the medical community, and which has served as the basis for much of the methodology associated with scientifically-based research in education.

The legislation goes so far as to furnish a “Research-based Reading Instruction Allocation” aimed at providing funding to districts for “professional development...in scientifically based reading instruction” (line 3532) emphasizing the development of

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reading “technical and informational texts” (line 3534), and for the purchase of “supplemental instruction materials that are grounded in scientifically-based reading research” (lines 3537-3538). The focus upon technical and informational texts speaks directly to the interests of neoliberalism (Verkoren, 2008), as the diminution of interpretive literary and political texts, and the resultant critical discourse often flowing from discussions around such texts, is a common outcome of such moves. As such, literacy itself is commodified into a set of utilitarian skills shaped by the neoliberal demands of the workplace.

More obliquely, but no less important, the A++ Plan creates the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) at Florida State University. The Center is unambiguously charged with assisting and supporting districts with not only the “implementation of *evidence-based* literacy instruction, assessments, programs, and professional development” (lines 1981-1982), but also the actual *creation* of “research on reading, reading growth, reading assessment, and reading instruction which will contribute to *scientific knowledge* about reading” (lines 1988-1990). This further advances a positivist vision of research and practice that not only treats all students alike, but which also labors to define reading as a finite set of easily quantifiable - and thus easily compared - skills and sub-skills. In keeping with this positivist notion in which all students can be taught and assessed in the same ways regardless of contextual circumstances, there is a decidedly neoconservative tenor to many of the instructional requirements delineated by the A++ Plan.

The Elevation of Traditional Values and Nationalism

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The third ideological imperative promoted in the A++ Plan, that of purposefully elevating traditional values and a sense of nationalism through the legislation's deliberate curricular moves, expresses and reinforces a distinctly neoconservative rhetoric that works alongside the utilitarian, market-inspired neoliberal elements of the legislation to promote, amongst other outcomes, a sense of individual responsibility as it relates to the reconstitution of a "common culture." The *Required Instruction* statute, and the respective clauses within it, make manifest the *New Right's* (Apple, 2004) collective neoliberal and neoconservative need for a powerful state (Brown, 200; Apple, 2004; Kavanagh, 1987; Levitas, 1986) as a means of not only opening new markets in the educational milieu, but also powerfully leading a restoration of an idyllic American past. These clauses, which directly impact curricula, and thus students and teachers as well, are steeped in an ennobling of a selective American history, stridently pro-American views, and a return to a values-based system of education that neoconservatives have espoused consistently for years.

The new history in Florida. History is perhaps the broadest and most significant of the three disciplines granularly addressed by the Florida legislature, including the previously addressed discipline of Economics wherein free markets are championed, and Health which will be addressed shortly, and it is in the History curriculum that the neoconservative tenet of an ennobled American experience is pushed directly into what is being learned by Florida's students. Shaping the entirety of Clause F of the *Required Instruction* statute of the A++ Plan is the proclamation, added by Republican State Congressman Richard Glorioso and Senate Majority Whip Mike Fasano (Kelly, Meuwissen, & Vansledright, 2007), that, "American history shall be viewed as factual,

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not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable” (lines 1159-1161). Indeed, in his deliberations about the wording, Glorioso admitted, “I don’t want [students] to construct anything...I want students to read the original documents” (Dolinski, 2006), ostensibly espousing a verbatim reading and understanding.

This position, though, is in fact a *softer* one than was in the draft version of the bill, wherein the original text included an additional proviso: “the history of the United States shall be taught as genuine history and shall not follow the revisionist or postmodernist viewpoints of relative truth” (FLDOE, 2006b). Despite the eventual rhetorical softening of the legislation, the implications and intentions explicated in its gestation are clear: history is not open to interpretation, but is rather a commodity, an agglomeration of decontextualized and static facts that are agreed upon by those in power, and taught to students who are to question neither their validity nor their veracity.

Of the twenty-one *Required Instruction* clauses, fifteen explicitly address content to be taught within the high school History curriculum. Of particular note is the fact that of the fifteen clauses, only clause G, requiring the teaching of the Holocaust, directly addresses content related to world history, though the period in question does still possess distinct ties to American history as a function of our involvement in World War II. The remaining fourteen clauses, as will be shown momentarily, focus entirely on American sovereignty, government, civic practices, and values in a multitude of ways. It is worth noting, again, that the following content - as well as all other History content taught in Florida - is to be taught *factually*, according to the A++ Plan, leaving no room for interpretation.

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Clauses A, B, C, E, F, I, and L require that instructional staff “efficiently and faithfully” teach a distinctly American-centric curriculum, to very particularly include the following: America’s discovery, colonization, the War for Independence, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, national sovereignty, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property, the adoption of a republican form of government, the branches of government, the relationship between governmental structures of the nation, state, and local municipalities, the Civil War, American expansionism, the industrial revolution, the civil rights movement, and Florida’s history. Such a decidedly nationalistic tenor to this content rings of neoconservatism, though the incorporation of a commitment to “limited government” speaks to the triumvirate of neoliberal ideology and the American Creed’s axioms of Liberty and Anti-Authoritarianism.

Clauses H, P, and Q specifically address the teaching of the contributions of historically marginalized or disenfranchised groups in American society, including African Americans (H), Hispanics (P), and women (Q). No mention is made of other such groups, including Asians, Native Americans, the LGBT population, non-Christians, or non-native English speakers, amongst others, suggesting a narrowly-framed definition of “diversity” was employed in shaping the legislation. Further, aside from specifically requiring instruction on the history of Africa that explicitly led to the development of slavery, the passage of slaves to America, the experience of slavery, and abolition, no further guidance or granularity is offered within the legislation as it relates to these groups - a fact that runs in stark contrast to the acutely direct and highly

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granular approach taken in the previously discussed clauses addressing American history and government.

Patriotism as a character trait. Clauses D, S, and T of the *Required Instruction* statute are unique from the previous clauses in that they aim to purposefully influence the nationalistic values of students. Clause S is the most composed and specific of the three, subtly incorporating both ideologically neoconservative and neoliberal axioms. The clause requires all schools districts to create and have approved through the Florida DOE a character development program that stresses, amongst other objectives, commitments to patriotism, responsibility, self-control, and respect for authority (lines 1203-1215). These outcomes are, in effect, treated as marketable commodities to be possessed by students, though no means of actually assessing such outcomes are defined by the legislation. These four required elements of the A++ Plan's character development program promote an overt patriotic sentiment, individual responsibility, and a subservience to those in positions of power - a mash-up of neoliberal and neoconservative principles that speaks to the ways in which the two ideologies overlap with one another to create an authoritarian state in which businesses and corporations hold tremendous power.

Arguably, Clauses D and T could very easily have been subsumed into Clause S, as they require, "Flag education, including proper flag display and flag salute" (lines 1149-1150) and instruction around, "the sacrifices that veterans have made in serving our country and protecting democratic values worldwide" (lines 1216-1218), respectively, which both evoke the pronounced patriotism invoked by Clause S.

A Neoconservative take on Health and Life Skills. Finally, the discipline of Health is addressed in the remaining two clauses of *Required Instruction*, J and N. Clause J requires instruction on “the true effects of all alcoholic and intoxicating liquors and beverages and narcotics upon the human body and mind” (lines 1180-1182). Much debate is percolating in political and medical circles today about the very effects that the state of Florida claims are incontrovertibly “true.” Moreover, nestled amongst more typical Health-oriented content such as nutrition, personal health, substance abuse, and family life, Clause N requires that students must also leave their Health classes with “an awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard” (lines 1188-1189) - a reflection of highly traditional, neoconservative principles related to morality and religion that contrast sharply with the neoliberal principles of liberty and personal choice.

Relatedly, and in the same mandatory Life Choices course previously discussed as a purveyor of neoliberal ideology vis-à-vis its commitment to career planning and entrepreneurship, the class will also carefully examine “the roles and responsibilities of family members” (FLDOE, 2006, p. 46), suggesting there is a right and wrong, or at least preferred, orientation to family roles and responsibilities therein. Given the traditional orientation to Health and Social Studies, and in light of the largely neoliberal and neoconservative ideological tenor of the rest of the A++ Plan, it seems likely that a traditional family orientation will be the preferred class model. Former Governor Bush’s (10/5/2006) invocation of religion when he stated, “God has given every child the ability to learn” amid his championing of the legislation further evinces this conservative orientation.

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Considering the scope of all these major changes to the day-to-day business of school, including new courses, a vast array of major area of interest requirements whose sequence spans multiple years and may shift annually, an emphasis on workforce readiness, an elevated emphasis on standardized testing, and shifting graduation requirements, one might expect the Florida Department of Education to take the lead in providing the necessary resources to make manifest its plans. However, quite to the contrary, the State - in neoliberal fashion - is in fact drawing back from local involvement in schools relative to both human resources - addressed momentarily vis-à-vis a shift to increased individual responsibility - and economic support, which will be addressed in Chapter Five.

The Championing of Individual Responsibility

The final ideological imperative exuded by the A++ Plan, that of championing individual responsibility over state or collective responsibility, has been touched upon throughout the preceding examination of the legislation's first three ideological imperatives. To be sure, according to the Florida House of Representatives' own Staff Analysis, the A++ legislation "Promote[s] personal responsibility" and "Safeguard[s] individual liberty" (3/16/2006); for instance, the Major Areas of Interest is meant to empower students "to take charge of their education" (3/16/2006; FLDOE 2007). At that, the most significant and deliberate move made in the A++ Plan related to the prizing of individual responsibility relates to the provision of counseling services.

Through the legislation, and in an effort to mitigate the incumbent problems associated with the high student-to-counselor ratio in Florida (FSCA, 2011), the Florida Department of Education has created an online advising system - FACTS.org - which

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offers digital tools such as the e-Personal Education Planner (ePEP), an application designed to help students, “make informed choices about education options, defining their priorities” (Fennell, 2005, ¶ 10). The FACTS.org website is positioned as the first and primary destination for students planning the trajectory of their high school career, including their respective majors, course selection, and related career aspirations, despite the Florida Department of Education’s own admission that working closely with teachers and counselors is important to the determination of student course sequencing (FLDOE, 2007a, 2007b). A closer look at the FACTS.org website is revealing.

The very first navigation link on the FACTS.org website - a site openly marketed to and serving both middle and high school students - is *Career Planning*, within which students may “Determine your interests, skills, and work values,” “Search for careers,” and “create resumes...and get help finding jobs in your area” (https://secure.flchoices.org/Career_Planning/_default.aspx). The prominence of this messaging on the website sends a clear ideological signal of what its neoliberal architects both prize and believe students should take away from using the website, and - ostensibly - from acquiring an education: a willingness and ability to contribute to the economic development of a company wherein an individual’s value is derived primarily, if not exclusively, from their economic utility. In addition, the home page of the FACTS.org website notably features advertising blocks and links entitled “Industry Certification Descriptions,” “Career Cruiser,” and “Division of Career & Adult Education,” further reinforcing the ideological simpatico between neoliberalism and neoconservatism relative to the ethics of personal responsibility, the individual as the sole arbiter of his or her own fate, and the championing of an economic imprimatur. The

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fact that the DOE's "advising system" has a career orientation should come as no surprise considering its authors in Tallahassee.

Interestingly, in recent years the FACTS.org website has been rebranded as Florida Choices (<https://secure.flchoices.org/>), and has been subsumed into the larger Florida Virtual Campus website, blurring the lines between high school and collegiate education as means of further eroding the lines that have historically demarcated them, while simultaneously diminishing the market worth of a high school education. As Collins (2002) notes, "A high school degree has become little more than a ticket into a lottery where one can buy a chance at a college degree, and that in turn is becoming a ticket to a yet higher level lottery (p. 24; see also Tannock, 2006). In effect, the very concept of the worker gets subsumed into that of the "lifelong learner," representing a distinctly neoliberal position made manifest by an omnipresent educational marketplace able to serve the needs of any person, of any age, at any time of day, in myriad ways.

Finally, and notably, the A++ Plan, as well as the programmatic and curricular requirements engendered through it, is situated in a larger policy arena whereby communities and individuals are bearing an increasingly large financial burden compared to historic Florida norms, tacitly undergirding all of the policy moves previously discussed herein. While the legislation does not explicitly reveal this fact, as financial allocations are addressed through separate legislation in Florida, Chapter Five will contextualize this reality amidst the growing onus of financial responsibility shouldered by localities, and the incumbent - and disproportionate - ramifications of this truth for Florida's students and schools.

Conclusion

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Chapter Four reports on the four ideological imperatives threaded throughout the duration of the A++ Plan - those of an allegiance to workforce readiness, a burgeoning system of standardization and accountability, the elevation of traditional values and nationalism, and the championing of individual responsibility - and how they establish a matrix within which Bernstein's (1971) three message systems of the school are controlled for neoliberal and neoconservative ends. The *curriculum*, or what counts as valid knowledge by the school, is steered through programs related to workforce readiness and statutes delineating a narrowly-construed assemblage of required instruction belying a *collection type* of curriculum aimed at producing a credentialed worker. The *pedagogy* of schools, or what counts as valid transmission of knowledge, is manipulated by the legislation's elevation of standardized testing, the leveraging of fear as a motivator to shift instruction towards the cultivation of instrumental outcomes, and the introduction of workforce placement programs that purposefully situate students literally and figuratively in the grips of the business community through internships, on-the-job training, and career-centric curricula often designed by the business community. The *framing* of which Bernstein (1971) speaks is evidenced herein, as an increasingly *strong* frame is coming into existence in Florida, handcuffing teachers and districts through legislative machinations that limit the range of what is taught and how. And finally, the spoke of *evaluation*, or what counts as the valid realization of knowledge, is engineered to reflect the priorities of the curriculum and the pedagogical methods being prized and rewarded in and through the legislation, best exemplified through the continued championing of standardized tests, the elevation of industry-defined credentials, the further development of school choice as informed by mandatory public

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reporting of grades and graduation rates, and the patent commitment to career-centric outcomes.

The cornering of Bernstein's (1971) messaging systems - curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation - through the A++ Plan steers Florida educational policy towards neoliberal and neoconservative ends. The legislation embraces the most salient axioms of the respective ideologies, and seeks to utilize schools - ostensibly sociopolitical systems of cultural transmission (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) - as a means of re/producing the values, belief systems, and political, cultural, and economic interests of those in power. As a result, those historically in power remain so, while further disenfranchising, marginalizing, and silencing people, institutions, and discourses which pose a challenge to this narrative. Absent such agents, the historic divides of race, socioeconomic status, and other such oppressive structures will be re/produced in and through Florida's schools, further sedimenting in place an institutional power dynamic that privileges and rewards a select few of Florida's students, ostensibly while preparing remainder of Florida's students for credentialed work.

Chapter Five: Unpacking and Contextualizing the A++ Plan

In Chapter Four, I examined the specific language of the A++ Plan, as well as associated support documents and official press releases, as a means of explicating the legislation's ideological orientation. Therein, a clear tendency towards neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies in the legislation was revealed. Chapter Five unpacks and examines the incumbent effects and potential dangers of the A++ Plan's ideological-driven moves to Florida's students, teachers, and schools, contextualizing the legislative actions within a larger policy arena focusing explicitly upon the four primary policy imperatives revealed through the study's qualitative content analysis.

This critical policy analysis was designed to analyze the ideological underpinnings of Florida's A++ Plan. In keeping with the method of critical policy analysis, particular attention was paid to legislative references to underserved populations, historically marginalized groups in society, and the growing commitment in schools to educate students who are "competitive" in various ways. The language used to position these legislative moves, and the maxims undergirding the practical manifestations of the legislation, also served as a focal point of this inquiry. The study was guided by Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) notion of the *credential society*, Bernstein's (1971, 1977) "message systems of schools," and critical theory (Horkheimer, 1937; Marcuse, 1964; Adorno, 1973; Habermas, 1975, 1976a, 1976b) as a conceptual framework for analyzing the ideological axioms of educational policy, and by Dey (1993) and Mayring (2000, 2002, 2003) as a methodological framework for understanding and engaging in qualitative content analysis.

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The premise upon which former Florida Governor Jeb Bush based the A++ Plan was that his initial reforms, including publicly “grading” schools through report cards, requiring the FCAT exam for all 3rd through 10th grade students, opening the door to charter schools and voucher plans through school choice, eliminating “social promotion,” and rewarding high-performing schools while closing low-performing schools, were in fact successful, positioning the 2006 legislation as, “Build[ing] on the successful reforms we have worked to implement since 1999” (Kaczor, 2006; see also Bush, 10/5/2006). The purported “success” of those earlier reforms has been cast into serious doubt by a broad spectrum of educational scholars (Chatterji, 2004; Haney, 2006, 2008; Lee, Borman, & Tyson, 2007). In their examination of Bush’s initial regimen of education reforms from 1999, Lee, Borman, and Tyson (2007) state unequivocally, “It is clear that different racial and ethnic groups in Florida have differential access to the benefits of school” (p. 276). Dishearteningly, this finding is just as germane in 2015 under the A++ Plan as it was when the authors made their observation of Florida schools in 2007 under Bush’s A+ Plan.

Workforce Readiness for All (But for Some More than Others)

As starkly revealed in Chapter Four, the A++ Plan’s allegiance to workforce readiness transcends any of its other ideological imperatives, evincing a mandate to prepare students for the working world and corporate culture, especially those who have been historically marginalized and underserved by schools. While Jeb Bush invoked the term “reform” as a means of gaining public support for his propositions in the A++ Plan, Diane Ravitch (2013) stingingly critiques this move, remarking that, “‘Reform’ is really a misnomer, because the advocates for this cause seek not to reform public education but

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to transform it into an entrepreneurial sector of the economy” (p. 19), replete with the neoliberal imperatives of free-markets, capitalism, and competition. Ravitch’s comments are apt ones, especially in light of the A++ Plan’s moves relative to Major Areas of Interest, the Ready-to-Work program, Career and Professional Academies, and the elevation of a free market economy.

Florida’s Major Areas of Interest and the reproduction of inequality. Most notable amongst the A++ Plan’s statutes is the Florida legislature’s mandate that all high school students declare a major. Florida’s Major Areas of Interest (MAI) requirement forces all students to pursue a sequence of courses meant to appeal to their personal interests and passions, ergo leading more of them to stay in school and graduate. While there is indeed much evidence that suggests students who perform below expectations and dropout of high school tend to find their classes uninteresting and irrelevant, these are by no means the sole or single reasons students dropout (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; Editorial Projects in Education, 2006). Many factors contribute to such a decision, including poverty, parental levels of education, low expectations from teachers and administrators, truancy and bad behavior, types and levels of family involvement, and frequent moving between schools, amongst many others, as well as combinations thereof. Then, what does this move portend for middle school students being forced to choose a major before they walk in the door of their respective high schools? At an even more granular level, this begs the question, “what is the relationship between selecting a major and inequality in our schools and communities?”

On a school level, despite the Florida legislature’s best efforts to convince the public of the utility, novelty, and uniqueness of the program, the “majors” and “minors”

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currently in place consist of the same individual courses previously offered before HB7087, suggesting little has substantively changed in the way Florida schools will do business. With but a few exceptions addressed shortly, courses have simply been re-packaged as tethered series of courses, or tracks, under novel programmatic headings aimed at motivating students in ways not previously realized. To major in Arts-Visual Arts, for instance, a student would need to enroll in four related, sequential courses, such as Art History/Criticism, Digital Arts, Drawing/Painting, and Pottery. These courses are neither new nor purposefully innovative in either scope or sequence. The legislation augments neither the course content nor methods of instruction used within the course, summarily leaving them unchanged from what they were prior to HB7087 being enacted. If the courses were poorly taught prior to the legislation, or lacked depth or breadth of content, this provision does nothing to remedy these shortcomings. As such, while students are left with little that is substantively new, save for a handful of state-designed, career-oriented courses and tracks meant to appeal to them with greater fervency, the business community reaps the benefit of now being able to more easily recruit and hire students who have been commodified by a neoliberal system actively parsing students by their abilities.

Of course, one point of flexibility written into the legislation allows schools, teachers, and even individual students, to suggest future majors, minors, and courses. On the surface, this is a laudable and welcome opportunity for schools, teachers, and students to have greater voice in the direction of education, though the FL DOE admits that the majors a school will likely suggest would be a function of the “interests of the students in the community” (FL DOE, 8/26/2006). Therein, more affluent districts -

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benefitting from a highly-educated clientele, generous financial support for new initiatives and technologies, and veteran teachers and administration - likely will consider more progressive-minded, forward-thinking majors such as genetics and engineering, whereas less affluent communities might not as a function of their diminished exposure to progressive educational thinking, reduced levels of financial support, and revolving door of teachers and administrators who ostensibly lack investment in the community, amongst other factors (Biddle, 2014; Howard, 2008).

Further to the point, the approval of these new courses, majors, and minors rests unilaterally with the Commissioner of Education, an individual politically appointed by members of the Florida Board of Education who are in turn politically appointed by the Governor - a political reality brought to fruition during former Governor Bush's first term in office (Matus, 2006). Putting aside the fact that many Floridians might disagree with and should voice public protest over the academic merits of Commissioner-approved majors such as Administrative Assistant, Custodial Assistant, Retail Trade Assistant, and Office Support Personnel - the existence of which as real majors will taken up shortly - Florida residents have no direct means of holding the Commissioner accountable. Although a review committee makes recommendations to the Commissioner, final approval summarily resides with this partisan appointee, not with a publicly elected official who can be held accountable by Florida voters for his or her decisions - a move that runs counter to and undermines the principles of Egalitarianism and Democracy espoused by the American Creed. Moreover, the term of Florida's Commissioner of Education runs in excess of the Governor's term, so even if the public were to oust a

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sitting Governor from office via an election, her or his politically-appointed Commissioner would continue to preside over the direction of Florida educational policy.

Another point of flexibility championed by the legislation's architects regarding the MAI is that students may annually shift from one major to another without formal penalty. Orndorff and Herr (1996) found that up to 75% of *college* students change their major, oftentimes more than once, so Florida's high schools will have to prepare for a constantly shifting program of major choice, adding a layer of complexity to the enrollment process. That aside, while a formal *penalty* may in fact be avoided by students opting to shift majors, a bevy of practical and socio-emotional obstacles serve to make such shifts more difficult than the legislation lets on. Addressing these obstacles piecemeal will reveal just how difficult it is for students to shift their major(s).

It is important to remember in this discussion of annually shifting majors that the purely theoretical nature of a policy and the practical realities of its implementation usually differ from one another, oftentimes in significant ways (Apple, 1979, 2006a; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Habermas, 1968). While the legislation suggests that a shift in major will be readily facilitated by students, parent(s), and guidance counselors, and that students will be able to move seamlessly from one major to the next if they so choose, this oversimplifies what is a complex issue when put into practice. Several potential obstacles stand in the way of students altering the trajectory of their coursework and major track.

First, when a social circle of friends, helping one another during their formative years to develop one another's identity (Pahl, 2000), form a community of learners and complete several courses (or years) of work side-by-side in a major as Florida has

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made manifest through HB7087, the likelihood of one of those students changing majors and leaving that support network of friends will be significantly diminished (Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002). This is especially true of linguistic, racial, and cultural minority groups in schools who would otherwise lack the support of their peers (Azmitia & Cooper, 2001).

Second, research indicates that peer ability has a significant impact on student achievement, suggesting that once a student becomes part of an instructional and social cohort, tracked or otherwise, the caliber and commitment of the collective student group therein becomes a harbinger of what to expect from individual students (Ding & Lehrer, 2004). As such, it will be cognitively difficult for students to shift from a general or vocational track to a more challenging academic track as an individual's performance tends to mirror one's peers once entrenched in the group dynamic of the track or "major" (Natriello, Pallas, & Alexander, 1989; Oakes, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1976).

And third, every discipline has a unique discourse associated with it (Hyland, 2004), characterized mainly by the idiosyncratic terminology employed to frame the field. The prospect of having to learn a new "language" when switching majors from Environmental Science to English & Journalism or from Carpentry to Entrepreneurship will no doubt further discourage some students from switching to a field they may find more compelling.

In sum, the student will likely be emotionally and intellectually bound to their chosen major vis-à-vis their achievement level, the academic discourse they begin to develop and master, and the social and cultural relationships they have developed with their friends and teachers, as well as the overt and latent pressures that will come from

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these groups. This danger is further elevated by the fact that students are not always able to enroll in their first choice of majors, a problem identified by Palmetto Ridge High School Principal Roy Terry (Miguel, 2007), who noted that limited facilities, teacher availability, and seating kept some students from enrolling in their first-choice majors. Moreover, if too few students enroll in specific courses that would contribute to one's major, that course will be dropped, making it increasingly difficult for students to complete the required sequence of four credits to complete their major according to South Fort Myers High School Chief Academic Officer Connie Jones (Clark, 2008). Thus, when Chancellor Yecke remarks that high school students "will be able to pursue...the area that they are going to do the rest of their lives" (Garry, 2007, ¶ 7), skepticism should naturally follow. Indeed, as will be discussed shortly, the availability and very types of majors offered in Florida's high schools differ widely, mainly as a function of the racial and socioeconomic demographics of the students being served at a particular institution.

In addition, the parental pressure that so often accompanies school success will assuredly follow students not only in the initial determination of their major(s), but also in the propensity for students to "stick it out" in majors to which they are not fully committed (Astin, 1993; Leppel, Williams, & Waldauer, 2001; Simpson, 2001). This is especially true in light of today's "iConnected Parents" who have become increasingly savvy about pressuring their sons and daughters vis-à-vis the sweeping proliferation of laptops and smartphones that facilitate instantaneous communication between parents and their children in ways previous generations never experienced (Hofer & Moore, 2010). While college students have enjoyed a degree of independence from their

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parents associated with their age and relative geography - often choosing to attend school away from home, though that trend is nominally shifting due to rising higher education costs (Sallie Mae, 2014) - middle and high school students face heavier burdens of pressure from parents that have a more powerful influence and bearing upon their decisions (Hornby, 2011).

The above criticisms of the legislation's theoretical intent of allowing students to easily shift between majors have a strong research foundation, and dark implications. The functionalist assertion that policy moves directly from policy formulation to "pure" implementation is short-sighted, not taking into account the local realities and complexities of schools, and the diverse communities they serve (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Oversight is imperative at both the school and district level to ensure students are not ushered into one major or another for reasons other than the student's best interests and desires. History warns that such encouragement, and hence disproportionate tracking, has taken place all too readily for disenfranchised and marginalized groups in society (Oakes, 1985, 1990). Ainsworth and Roscigno (2005) further caution that, "if teachers and counselors disproportionately encourage certain students (e.g., minorities, the poor, immigrants, those who have parents with less education, etc.) to enroll in vocational courses, these students may come to believe that they are neither suited for nor capable of success in college preparatory courses" (p. 261). Such a warning holds true for students of all demographics, none of whom should be forced down or coerced into an academic or career path based on unwarranted beliefs, biases, or expectations.

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Once directed down such paths, research indicates that lower and working class parents, as well as minority parents, seldom challenge such decisions (unlike middle and upper class parents) when they come from school personnel (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Oakes, 1985; Ozga, 2000). Arguably, it is these same lower class and minority students who are disproportionately enrolled in vocational education (see Campbell & Laughlin, 1988; Rivera-Batiz, 1995; Silverberg et al., 2004) in hopes that it will help see them through graduation – echoing the same aspirations the Florida legislature has for the Major Areas of Interest provision of the A++ Plan.

However, Ainsworth and Roscigno (2005) have found quite the opposite: that participation in vocational education classes in fact *increases* the likelihood of dropping out of high school. In their study, the skills acquired through vocational education courses frequently prompted students to leave school for jobs in an effort to provide income for themselves and their families - ostensibly a neoliberal victory that Florida may in fact be seeking to emulate. Ainsworth and Roscigno (2005) further argue that the “potential negative effects are not indiscriminate, but rather disproportionately affect those of lower social class backgrounds in particular” (p. 269) – the very students most likely to be tracked into vocational education classes in the first place. Acknowledging the fact that the lower and working classes and minorities are already over-represented in vocational education, it is important to ask if all schools in Florida will offer vocational curricula, or whether such curricula will exist only in select schools split along demographic lines of race and class.

Even in instances where vocational education exists in more elite enclaves, it is often the case that “vocational” in these highly affluent schools means classes in

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architecture, journalism, graphic design, and engineering, whereas in poor and high-minority schools, “vocational” means classes in sewing, industrial arts, customer service, and other such professions (Kozol, 2005). As will be discussed shortly, this is exactly what can be seen happening in Florida today – a process that may be further entrenching and facilitating the reproduction of class divides throughout the state and nation. What is served by this policy move are the ideological interests of the neoliberal architects of the legislation, as well as the interests of the business community.

Using data publicly available on the Florida Department of Education website, the number and types of majors offered at public high schools in the 2007-2008 academic year in Florida were investigated, delineated by schools serving high-minority/high-poverty student populations and low-minority/low-poverty student populations. The data are included in their entirety in Appendix A, and are briefly summarized below in Table 5.1.

As is evident from the data, schools composed of high-minority, high-poverty student populations serve approximately 14% more students than schools characterized as serving low-minority/low-poverty, possess dropout rates nearly 3.5 times as high, have more than 6.5 times as many students characterized as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and have graduation rates almost 35% lower. One might expect a wider variety of majors to be offered at these schools, the logic being - in keeping with the former Bush administration’s claims of making content and instruction more relevant as a means of simultaneously raising the graduation rate and lowering the dropout rate - that they need to offer a broader array of choices in order to appeal to not only the larger average student body being served, but to a student body which has historically

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dropped out of school at significantly higher rates than students attending more affluent, less racially diverse schools. The data, however, suggest otherwise, revealing that schools serving high-poverty, high-minority student populations offer on average nearly 35% *fewer* majors from which students may choose than schools serving low-minority, low-poverty student populations.

Table 5.1 - Numbers of Majors at Demographically Different Florida Public High Schools

	# Majors Offered	Dropout Rate (%)	Graduation Rate (%)	Student Population
High-Poverty/High-Minority (n=17)	26	5.23	49.72	2297
Low-Poverty/Low-Minority (n=70)	35	1.51	84.21	1970

For a statute enacted expressly to combat the dropout rate by appealing to students' interests, as the Major/Minor provision was, this appears to be an inauspicious beginning. Students with a greater propensity to dropout have fewer majors through which to explore their interests, talents, and skills. Unfortunately, the raw number and percentage of majors being offered at these schools do not begin to tell the whole story.

A meticulous review of the actual majors offered at the schools, using a one-tailed T-test ($p < .05$), reveals a statistically significant ($t = 2.4757$, $P = 0.00765$) finding that majors in the Industrial/Vocational and Business categories are more likely to be offered in schools serving high-minority/high-poverty student populations than in schools serving low-minority/low-poverty student populations . Drawing again from data in Appendix A, it was discerned that nearly 34% of majors at high-poverty/high-minority schools are some form of an Industrial/Vocational or Business major, as opposed to only 27% of majors at more affluent, less racially diverse schools.

Even more to the point, the very *types* of Industrial/Vocational and Business

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majors offered differ vastly between the two student populations (see Appendix D for a complete rendering of the specific Industrial/Vocational and Business majors offered at each of the high-poverty/high-minority and low-poverty/low-minority schools). Schools serving low-poverty, low-minority student populations more frequently offer Industrial/Vocational or Business majors including Web Design, Television Production, Architecture, and Marketing, whereas schools serving high-poverty, high-minority student populations more frequently offer Industrial/Vocational or Business majors such as Cosmetology, Automotive Technology, and Culinary Arts.

In this sense, the Major Areas of Interest provision may in fact be facilitating the reproduction of inequality by offering not only fewer overall majors in schools serving high-poverty, high-minority student populations, but also a higher percentage of qualitatively different Industrial/Vocational and Business majors at these same institutions. As Postman (1995; see also Taylor, 2013) points out, “the making of adaptable, curious, open, questioning people has nothing to do with vocational training” (p. 32), though this is precisely what is underway in Florida’s schools, particularly at institutions serving largely minority and impoverished communities. Former Florida Senate President Tom Lee stands in stark contrast to Postman’s assertion, (qtd. in Workforce Florida Weekly Update, 2006) maintaining that, “government ought to be run more like a business – and that means putting the customer first ... the [Governor Bush’s] education initiative does just that.” The question of who that customer really is in Florida’s schools seems to have been answered with this expansive commitment to workforce readiness: the business community.

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This is not to suggest that a simple reproductive correspondence exists between schooling and a student's subsequent place in society and the workforce; rather, it is an expression of the fundamental differences between poor and affluent schools, and the futures they envision and engender for children therein - a finding that runs in stark contrast to the "essence of individualism" Huntington (1981) claims undergirds the American Creed's sanctifying of Individualism. Indeed, it supports Casell and Nelson's (2013) claim of an open American society as being *mythical* in the sense that equity of opportunity and upward mobility are reserved for the privileged few traveling in closed opportunity loops, as opposed to anyone of lesser means who is sold the story that grit and determination will help them to overcome the long odds working against them and their school peers.

Ultimately, the conclusion the Florida legislature has drawn between students finding their coursework uninteresting and irrelevant, and forcing them to declare a major as a means of rectifying the problems of graduation and dropout rates, is tenuous at best, and a veritable shot in the dark when held to even a modicum of scrutiny. While graduation rates have indeed risen in Florida over the past decade, the national trajectory is pointing even further upward; thus, Florida continues to rank near the bottom of the most recent GradNation report's data on adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGR) (2014), tied with Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina for the 5th lowest rate in the country. At the same time, income inequality, which research indicates is linked to struggling high school graduation rates (Gordon, 2013; Kearney & Levine, 2014), has widened in Florida ahead of national norms according to Trigaux (2014):

From 1979 to 2011 in the Sunshine State, the top 1 percent enjoyed a hefty

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116 percent gain in average income to \$1.14 million. Over the same 32-year period, the rest of Florida — the "bottom 99 percent" — saw their average income *drop* 8 percent to \$35,393. Nationally, the average income of the top 1 percent rose 129 percent. The 99 percent bumped up 2.3 percent; that's a puny gain, but it is still better than Florida's decline. (¶ 4)

Indeed, the Economic Policy Institute determined that from 2009 to 2011, *all* income growth in Florida went to the top 1 percent, who also saw their incomes rise nearly 10 percent; by contrast, the other 99 percent of Florida's working population experienced a nearly 2.5 percent *decrease* in income (Sommeiller & Price, 2014).

Without addressing any of the underlying social, cultural, and economic complexities of schools and the communities they serve, it is unlikely that substantive progress towards poverty reduction will come from this new requirement. Indeed, the OECD (2005a), in its investigation of the variables effecting student learning, states that, "the first and most solidly based finding is that the largest source of variation in student learning is attributable to differences in what students bring to school – abilities and attitudes, and family and community background" (p. 26). Berliner and Glass (2014) came to similar conclusions, noting, "less than 30% of a student's academic success is attributable to schools, and teachers are only part of the overall school effect, perhaps not even the most important part" (p. 51). Berliner (2013) further contends that variables outside a school or teacher's control have a substantial influence on a student's education:

Out-of-school variables account for about 60% of the variance that can be accounted for in student achievement. In aggregate, such factors as family

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income; the neighborhood's sense of collective efficacy, violence rate, and average income; medical and dental care available and used; level of food insecurity; number of moves a family makes over the course of a child's school years; whether one parent or two parents are raising the child; provision of high-quality early education in the neighborhood; language spoken at home; and so forth, all substantially affect school achievement. (p. 5)

There is a significant body of research dating back more than a decade undergirding this position (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Rothstein, 2004), calling into question the wisdom of legislation such as HB7087 that explicitly and sweepingly impacts schools, but which makes no effort whatsoever to address the home or community conditions from which students are coming.

Skeptics of such a legislative move are not limited to academic circles, as public response to the provision has been tepid at best. In an unscientific online poll conducted by Edutopia (Bernard, 2006), a website sponsored by the George Lucas Education Foundation, a resounding 80% of respondents said that they did not support the requirement for students to declare majors as per the A++ requirements. Similar votes of skepticism have been expressed in various education-oriented blogs, as well as in newspapers from Florida to New York to Iowa (Daily Iowan, 2006; Kaczor, 2006; Perry, 2006). Interestingly, even former Florida K-12 Public Schools Chancellor Cheri Yecke, who has written for conservative think tank The Fordham Foundation and whose legislative past links her to efforts to introduce intelligent design and creationism into Minnesota's otherwise progressive-minded public school Science curriculum (Welbes, 2003), openly concedes that "there is no research per se that says selecting a major is

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going to make a difference” (Garry, 2007) to Florida’s dropout rate. Despite the conflict between Yecke’s assertion here and Winn’s earlier claim (Kaczor, 2006) about a purported body of evidence supporting such a policy trajectory, Florida’s Republican legislators were not dissuaded from pursuing this course of action.

Despite the public’s discontent, and Yecke’s outright admission regarding the absence of evidence that such a policy move will have any discernibly positive impact whatsoever, the Major Area of Interest provision has been publicly positioned as a salve to both the overall dropout and adjusted cohort graduation (ACGR) rates by means of playing to student interests, leveraging the career connections between what students learn and how that will be subsequently utilized when they enter the workforce, and overtly linking education to a student’s future economic security and well-being. Notwithstanding this rhetoric, little has substantively changed relative to school practice as a function of this mandate - a fact that is very much in keeping with research attesting to how the theoretical purview of policy and its practical manifestation in classrooms often fail to align (Apple, 1979, 2006a; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Habermas, 1968).

Fundamentally, the Major Areas of Interest provision of the A++ Plan does nothing to address the underlying social and economic conditions that lead to dropping out, and tacitly undermines not only the Individualism prized in our American Creed, but also the Egalitarianism cherished therein. The patently unequal opportunities afforded these different groups vis-à-vis the Major Area of Interest mandate illustrates just how far afoul the policy is from Lipset’s (1996) assertion that equality of opportunity is a central facet of the American experience. Were it so, it is hard to imagine that

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Americans would continue to embrace policies that deliberately segregate society. As is the case with the Major Areas of Interest, the Ready-to-Work program, as well as the Career and Professional Academies, created through the A++ Plan work to reproduce the status quo of society.

Ready-to-Work, CPAs, credentialing, and fear: A neoliberal marriage. In addition to the Major Area of Interest, the A++ Plan also sets in motion the creation of Career and Professional Academies (CPAs) and the Ready-to-Work Certification Program, of which the explicit, neoliberally-aligned function of both is to graduate high school students into the workforce holding industry certifications and credentials that create the conditions for Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) credential society. As Hursh (2001b) presages, this is, "part of an overall societal shift away from people as creative producers of their own identities, culture and society, to people as producers and consumers of economic goods" (p. 349) who, ostensibly, are "produced" vis-à-vis market influences for economically instrumental purposes.

The allure, and in some cases the necessity, of taking a decent paying job right out of high school will draw many students - especially those of limited means - into the workforce and away from higher education (NCES, 2013; see also Carnevale & Strohl, 2010), thus limiting not only their long-term earning potential, but also their potential for advancement. The function of CPAs is to leverage this instrumentalism, and is fundamentally indicative of neoliberalism's greater concern for corporate ends than social or personal ones - oftentimes at the expense of the individual. In effect, the formation of CPAs signals an amplification of the tracking system that began drawing considerable attention in research circles several decades ago (Anyon, 1997, 1980;

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Oakes, 1990, 1985). It is notable, too, that students in need of reading remediation, who are more likely to be tracked vocationally, are encouraged to take said remediation through these career-centric academies as they offer “innovative methods” (line 3554). The language and intent here is striking: that innovative methods to help at-risk readers are to be found not through traditional means of classroom education, but through CPAs fundamentally shaped by and for business interests. One of the primary means by which the Ready-to-Work Program and the CPAs have been sold in Florida is through a discourse of fear, one that is both *local* as it relates to an individual’s future employment prospects, and also *national* as it relates to America’s global prosperity.

The purposeful use of schools to mold the workforce of tomorrow (see Workforce Florida Weekly Update, 2006, Feb 14) denotes a decidedly neoliberal orientation to this legislation. At the same time, a discourse of fear about Florida’s students finding gainful employment is espoused by supporters of the A++ legislation seemingly as justification for increasing the role of the business community in schools. In addition, a burgeoning narrative of America losing its economic preeminence in the world to the forces of globalization amplifies this fear. The *Parent Primer on Career Exploration* (2007), produced by the Office for Workforce Improvement and used as a supporting document for the A++ Plan’s Workforce Readiness initiatives, parlays these fears, going so far as to claim, “We read in the news every day about businesses filing bankruptcy or closing, company layoffs and downsizing, and even jobs being transferred to foreign countries” (p. 8). Such alarmist rhetoric stokes the flames of parental distress and student apprehension. The point is made so explicitly, in fact, that former Governor Bush expressed a commitment to the business community that the Ready-to-Work

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Certification Program will provide “evidence to employers that students are prepared to work” (Florida Budgetary Office, 2006, ¶ 1), revealing an ideological mindset that the publicly-financed government, and our public schools in particular, are beholden to the needs of business, chiefly as a means of ensuring economic supremacy in the competitive global marketplace. Indeed, the pipeline of ready-made employees that will flow out of Florida’s high schools, and which is already flowing out of American colleges, is meant to better situate American companies in what is cast as a flattening global marketplace (Friedman, 2005) that threatens our nation and its children.

Friedman (2005) argues that a series of ten “flatteners” have leveled the global economic playing field via the nexus of proliferating information technologies, political shifts such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, and increasingly complex global supply chains, making India and China, amongst other nations, essential nodes in an ever more interconnected global marketplace of products and ideas. Advocates of the A++ Plan have seized on this narrative, agitating fear amongst Florida’s students and their families; yet, as Richard Florida (2005) points out, the global marketplace is not nearly as economically flat as Friedman (2005) has suggested (see also see also Christopherson, Garretsen, & Martin, 2008; Ghemawat & Altman, 2012; Juliens, 2013; McCann, 2008).

Florida (2005) counters Friedman’s (2005) claims, noting that The United States continues to be the dominant economic and political player in the world, with the exception of a handful of geographically diminutive, less culturally diverse nations capable of competing at any level in isolated vertical markets. Indeed, as Nobel-prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz (2007) has argued, “the world is much flatter than it

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has ever been, with those in various parts of the world being more connected than they have ever been, but the world is not flat ... Not only is the world not flat: in many ways it has been getting less flat” (p. 56-7). Indeed, the United States continues to create more jobs than other G8 members (Council of Economic Advisors, 1996; Sorrentino & Moy, 2002), has enjoyed a record 60 straight months of private sector growth job (US Department of Labor, 2015), enjoys a higher GDP than other G8 members (World Bank, 2013; Office for National Statistics, 2004), holds an unemployment rate lower than most nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2005b), boasts the seventh highest per capita income of any nation, and the sixth highest GDP in the OECD - this despite owning the highest total poverty rate, the highest child poverty rate, the third-highest elderly poverty rate of all OECD countries (Mishel, Bernstein, & Allegretto, 2007), one of the slowest growing minimum wages in the G20 (OECD, 2014), and failing to be ranked in the top 10 most connected countries in the world, 9 of which are European nations (Ghemawat & Altman, 2012). Brisbois’s (2003) research indicates that workers in the United States are also content with their work hours and family/social commitments, are very satisfied with their working conditions, and receive considerably more employer-sponsored training than workers in Canada and fifteen European nations, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark. Economically speaking, according to Florida (2005), “if U.S. metropolitan areas were countries, they’d make up forty-seven of the biggest 100 economies in the world” (p. 49); indeed, New York City is currently the 13th largest economy in the world (Florida, 2011b), and the state of California is currently the 8th largest, eclipsing Russia’s and only slightly trailing Brasil’s (Garosi & Sisney, 2014).

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Cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., and Houston will continue to become increasingly important economic hubs in the future, effectively functioning as “megaregions that will drive the development of new industries, jobs and a whole new way of life” (Florida, 2011a). To that point, the OECD (2005) remarks, “the worst of the fears about the impact of globalized labour [*sic*] markets on workers are unlikely to be realized, since growing international trade and foreign direct investment also create jobs via exports and tend to raise overall productivity” (p. 1).

Moreover, economic activity, scientific innovations, and research citations in peer-reviewed journals are highly concentrated in the United States (Florida, 2005). If one considers recipients of the Nobel Prize over the last twenty years, for instance, one also observes a preponderance of Americans amongst the winners and co-winners: of the 54 prizes awarded for Physics, 33 went to Americans (61%); of the 49 prizes awarded for Chemistry, 29 went to Americans (59%); of the 42 prizes awarded for Economics, 35 went to Americans (83%); and of the 49 prizes awarded for Physiology or Medicine, 29 went to Americans (56%). In sum, Americans have taken 126 of the 194 Nobel Prizes in these fields over the past two decades, an astounding 65 percent for a nation comprising less than 4.5% of the world’s population. It is also worth noting that an American has not won the Nobel Prize for literature since 1993 when Toni Morrison received the honor, a span of 22 years.

The primary reason for this economic and intellectual resiliency is the opportunity afforded to individuals here in the United States – opportunities which attract intellectual talent from around the world, creating the “brain drain” that is rarely discussed outside of conversations related to war and the flight of intellectuals who fear for their lives. In this

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respect, it is not only fear that leads many intellectuals to leave their homelands, but the financial opportunities, as well as the social and personal freedoms, they stand to enjoy in the United States.

Consequently, as Florida (2005) notes, “the innovative, talent-attracting ‘have’ regions seem increasingly remote from the talent-exporting ‘have-not’ regions” (p. 51). The United States, it appears, is the primary destination for the world’s intellectual elite. These points are made not to suggest that globalization is altogether a charade; indeed, in certain market spaces it is a force to be reckoned with, accelerating in recent decades thanks largely to the proliferation of information technologies (amongst other innovations) and the corporate world’s insatiable quest for cheap labor and economically favorable working conditions. But, the rhetoric of globalization, promulgated by business and neoliberal interests, is always shrouded in a discourse of fear and competitiveness, a tactic gleaned from the unlikely ideological alliance of neoliberals and neoconservatives (Brown, 2006). To that end, as Harvey (2005) points out, “the nation is depicted as besieged and threatened by enemies from within and without” (p. 82), even when there is scant cause or evidence to make such assertions. Thus, the fear of future unemployment which the Florida legislature has promulgated through not only the rhetoric of the A++ Plan, but also its public portrayal through press conferences and press releases, and supporting publications such as the *Parent Primer*, coupled with the fanning of flames around a larger American economic decline - which is amplified through the patriotic and American-centric curricular moves discussed previously - seems factually tenuous. Further, The fear neoliberals are stirring with respect to the fall of American economic preeminence in the world purposefully

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sidelines and deflects discussion of lingering, historic issues such as poverty, racism, and income inequality that continue to fester and re/produce societal divisions along socioeconomic and racial lines (see Carnevale & Strohl, 2010), a reality that is very present in Florida as discussed previously (Trigaux, 2014).

As such, the argument for increased career-centric academic programming, and a broader program of educational privatization, set forth by neoliberals is not one of *necessity*, but one first of *principle* vis-à-vis that belief that private, for-profit competitive markets invariably, even naturally produce a better product than non-profit public services, and second of *profit*, wherein the \$2.5 trillion global market in education represents one of the last remaining public institutions that has yet to be privatized en masse (Lipman, 2011).

Despite the profoundly powerful economic position the United States presently occupies, it is likely that the skills mastered through the Ready-to-Work Certification Program and Career and Professional Academies will serve students in limited ways for finite periods of time whereupon new methods and technologies come to replace dated modes and models of production. Consequently, newly certified “ready-to-work” graduates, credentialed in these skill areas, can be hired at entry level salaries, displacing previous employees who now need to re-educate themselves, allaying costly professional development and on-the-job training that saps productivity and profitability. The jobs taken by students completing a CPA - or the Ready-to-Work Program - and ostensibly the students who fill them, may well be expendable in nature, as the ephemeral nature of many such jobs, especially technical positions - recalling the internet boom of the 1990's - will provide companies with a steady stream of custom-

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trained workers capable of filling their immediate or near-term business needs. At the same time, the creation of a reserve and constantly renewed entry level labor force through these neoliberal-inspired programs will keep wages under control via the manipulation of both the labor force and the skills of those within it. The permanent threat of unemployment created by management strategies such as these, Bourdieu (1998) warns, creates a work environment riddled with “insecurity, suffering, and stress,” realized in part through the establishment of a “reserve army of employees rendered docile by these social processes” (§ 9) who are ready to take over at a moment’s notice for workers not fitting the mold of corporate expectations relative to skills, attitudes, or dispositions. Indeed, the only instruction offered through CPAs will be in careers “designated as high growth, high demand, and high pay” (lines 1699-1700) according to the A++ Plan. The neoliberal expansion of the underclass of “disposable workers” (Bales, 2000) seems a plausible end-result of this endeavor, as the targeting of students already identified as being at-risk due to their reading difficulties seems decidedly purposeful. This explicit emphasis on the instrumental and economic ends of education comes at a social cost to our country, illustrated through the re/production of existing class divides wherein income inequality, amongst other outcomes, not only persists, but expands.

Such moves are meant to cement in place the preeminent economic position the US now holds, producing record profits as a result of low labor costs (Indiviglio & Thompson, 2010; Lynch, 2013) and a shifting of the onus of responsibility for training employees to public schools programs, as evidenced in Florida’s Ready-Work Certification Program, Career and Professional Academies, and Major Areas of Interest.

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Indeed, despite living in times of economic downturn as was the case during the Recession of 2008, companies including 3M, ExxonMobil, Agilent, United Technologies, New York Life, and each of the five largest for-profit health insurers - CIGNA, Wellpoint, United Health, Humana, and Aetna - all reported record profits while working class employees struggled with the housing crisis, stagnant wages, and ballooning unemployment (Schwartz, 2013; see also Sum et. al., 2011; Thurm, 2012; Walker, 2010). Indeed, as Dean Maki, Chief United States economist at Barclays asserts, “Corporate earnings have risen at an annualized rate of 20.1 percent since the end of 2008, but disposable income inched ahead by 1.4 percent annually over the same period, after adjusting for inflation” (Schwartz, 2013, ¶ 12). Staggeringly, in the two-year period immediately following the Recession of 2008, researchers at the Center for Labor Market Studies report that “corporate profits captured 88% of the growth in real national income while aggregate wages and salaries accounted for only slightly more than 1% of the growth in real national income” (Sum et. al., 2011). As the corporate world gains further political influence over educational policymaking, as has been the case in Florida, one can and should expect the curricula and assessment protocols they influence to reflect the requisite skills and values necessary for attaining profit-oriented corporate goals. To that prognostication, Apple (2006) warns that,

giving primary responsibility over the definition of important ‘work skills’ to the private sector - an act that evacuates the possibility of criticism of the ways work is actually constructed, controlled, and paid - enables a definition of work both as a ‘private’ matter and as purely a technical choice to go unchallenged. (p. 38)

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In order to leverage this political influence over the definition of essential work skills with the public, markets are positioned as the commonsense solution to the ills of public schools, enabling the wheat to rise above the chaff, the latter of which are thereafter discarded.

In order to accomplish this objective of casting neoliberal maxims as commonsense, “Neo-liberal governments must adopt discourses that convince the public of the necessity of these reforms. They, therefore, embed their educational policies within a discourse of fairness and objectivity” (Hursh & Martina, 2003, ¶ 14). This discourse superficially enables markets to be identified as meritocratic and egalitarian, two central mores of American democracy that have been historically attractive to the public. In a sense, according to Apple (2001), “markets are marketed, are made legitimate, by a depoliticizing strategy. They are said to be natural and neutral, and governed by effort and merit. Those opposed to them are by definition, hence, opposed to effort and merit” (p. 413); ergo, markets and the market mentality become the hegemonic means by which American life proceeds. Extending Apple’s thinking here, those opposed to markets are thus seen as being opposed to a triumvirate of the American Creed’s axioms: liberty, individualism, and egalitarianism.

The ideas and alternatives put forth by those opposed to markets as a mediator of human affairs (Chomsky, 1999; see also Brown & Baker, 2012) do not resonate as “common sense” with the “habitualized” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) practices of American citizens. That is, the general idea of employing “markets” and the choices they engender is well-established in American culture; as such, the notion of a competitive marketplace *not* serving an individual or community’s best interests likely

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strikes many as peculiar. As a result, these ideas gain little traction amongst policymakers who are often beholden to the corporate world of “common sense” market values. But as Harvey (2005) warns, the embracing of what is portrayed as common sense by neoliberals “can be profoundly misleading, obfuscating or disguising [of] real problems” (p. 39). The ritualized practices that common sense beliefs and dispositions engender, what Bourdieu (1990) terms the *habitus*, dynamically shape the boundaries of what is and is not acceptable discourse in society.

The Ready-to-Work Certification Program is carefully positioned as commonsense through the rhetoric of global free market capitalism and workplace opportunity, and will in fact lead to more entrenched social stratification along class power lines, the gentrification of high-value neighborhoods (see Lipman, 2004), and the further commodification of labor and human beings vis-à-vis systemic business-controlled credentialing akin to what Collins (1979, 2002) discusses, and is expanded upon through the *market mobility system*. The intrusion of the market into the scope of what will be taught in schools advances the neoliberal agenda of preparing students to be not only champions of free market capitalism, but to also perceive human relationships through the lens of the marketplace itself, which *in situ* positions an individual's value around her or his contribution to the economic well-being of her or his employer. As students come to live these ideas, they unwittingly make choices that help to perpetuate a competitive social and economic system that benefits corporations while not only concurrently harming individuals and communities, but also perpetuating a narrative of how inequality is the natural outcome of individual failings.

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Thomas Hine, in his intriguing book, *I Want That! How We all Became Shoppers* (2002), refers to this consumerist culture as the “buyosphere,” which he contends, “is not a civic space, but it is our chief arena for expression, the place where we learn most about who we are, both as a people and as individuals” (2002, p. xv). This startling assertion – that our manner of participation in the marketplace is how we best and most clearly define our identity – speaks volumes to the role of markets and the increasingly influential (and judicially defended) corporate culture in our schools and society writ large (see *AT&T v. Hulteen*, 2009; *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 2010; *Exxon Shipping Co. v. Baker*, 2008; *Gross v. FBL Financial Services*, 2009; *Hoffman Plastic Compounds v. NLRB*, 2002; *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*, 2007; *14 Penn Plaza LLC v. Pyett*, 2009). Robertson (2005) extends this thinking, linking it to political decisions that marginalize many students, astutely describing how a corporate model, typified by the Ready-to-Work Certification Program, the Major Area of Interest statute, and the CPAs created through HB7087, is employed to serve the interests of business:

...an appropriate education program under this model proposes that teachers of lower socio-economic class children should begin where the child is in terms of his/her own interests rather than from the distanced interests of an academic subject. Because the child’s interests, already predetermined by corporate technocratic culture, will undoubtedly lie in a utilitarian framework concerning work, making a living, technology, and corporate routine, the interests of business are served. (§ 69)

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As Neil Postman (1995) puts it, America bows in part before a *God of Economic Utility* that tells us we are what do for a living, and also bows in part before a *God of Consumership* that tells us we are what we accumulate. In tandem, these “gods” come together in a nexus of neoliberal assumptions that make the growth and nourishment of Hine’s “buyosphere” a principal goal of corporatism in our schools, made manifest through Florida’s Ready-to-Work program.

Of added concern is how closely the objectives of the A++ Plan’s Ready-to-Work program match the mission of for-profit higher education institutions such as DeVry, the University of Phoenix, and ITT, whose focus is on providing cadres of custom-prepared workers to the business community. As Rene Champagne, President and CEO of ITT, points out, “we literally contact employers and ask them what level of knowledge and what type of skill sets they would expect a college graduate to have for professional technology employment” (qtd. In Roosevelt, 2006, p. 1405). Based on their responses, according to Roosevelt (2006), “the college then proceeds to hire the faculty, develop the curriculum, and teach the material that will satisfy the market’s demand” (p. 1405). Undergirding such moves as these, however, is always a profit imperative that must be pursued which, consequently, places the company’s financial interests over those of students. The Ready-to-Work Certification Program, aimed at providing markets with an unending supply of pliable and docile labor, aligns neatly with this for-profit mentality. As is the case with for-profit higher education institutions, the end result of an education within the Ready-to-Work Certification Program is a temporized credential that neatly summarizes one’s skills and abilities for prospective employers.

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The relevance of Collins' (1979) work to today's educational milieu is critical. "In general," according to Collins (1979), "the emerging pattern is to build restrictive credentialing in new sectors where the traditional school credentials [have] not penetrated" (p. 193). In short, Collins (1979) is warning readers that the trend in education is towards schools churning out students as disposable commodities to be leveraged by the business community in an increasingly competitive national and global economy. Indeed, as noted in the Florida House of Representatives' Staff Analysis of the Ready-to-Work Certification Program (2006), "Employers using the Work Readiness Credential will reduce recruitment cost, improve productivity, and lower on-the-job training costs" (§ 16), all of which advance the profitability and competitiveness of a business.

More specifically, Florida's A++ Plan sets in motion a *market mobility system* wherein school curricula, pedagogy, and means of assessment are made responsive to the visceral and temporal needs of business and industry, as opposed to the intrinsic needs of students. Further, any corporate failings, then, are the *de facto* results of failed schools, not the company itself, as the company will bear a significantly diminished responsibility for the preparation and professional development of its employees - something businesses very much desire (Capelli, 2014; see Wainwright et. al., 2011). As such, the failings of business become the failings of school, giving credence to the notion that public schools must be dramatically reformed or closed in favor of choice-based, for-profit charter schools and voucher programs in order to better serve the needs of the market - a distinctly neoliberal orientation towards school reform. Indeed, neoliberal forces have historically and histrionically blamed public schools for failing to

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produce a workforce that was skilled, flexible, and adaptive enough to meet corporate needs (Apple, 1996). The market mobility system, exemplified through the Ready-to-Work Certification Program and the “work credential” one receives upon completing it, creates a revolving door of employment that values the corporate agenda of control, profit, and efficiency linked to individual responsibility, success, and accountability.

Instead of championing teamwork and the cooperative spirit, the market mobility system - through mechanisms such as standardized testing and ability-based tracking - champions individual responsibility, success, and accountability. The competitiveness reinforced by the market mobility system is evident in schools that purposefully callout students in front of one another (Kozol, 2005) with the intent of shaming into shape students performing worse than their peers, a method further actualized in both the state of Florida’s public reporting mandate and the federal No Child Left Behind Act’s shaming of schools not achieving Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). The *raison d’être* at work here, it would seem, is to make students (and schools) feel so badly about themselves that they will be motivated to study harder and longer in order to overcome - through effort alone - the social, cultural, political, and historical obstacles they face on an everyday basis in their homes and communities to perform on standardized assessments posed to them by for-profit testing companies. Such a championing of individual responsibility is the embodiment of neoliberalism, and further advances the ideological contention that schools, unions, and individuals - including teachers, parents, and students - are to blame for the economic problems of the United States (Hursh, 2013). By contrast, the championing of individual responsibility in such a fashion obfuscates the role of businesses and corporations whose efforts in the arenas of wage

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stagnation and the elevation of low wage employment, for example, undergird the neoliberal influence permeating public education (Harvey, 2005). This masked steering of schools by neoliberal ideology is also seen in the curriculum sanctified in the A++ Plan.

The (in)visible hand of the free market at work in Florida. At the level of curriculum, the A++ plan baldly anoints free market enterprise - capitalism - as the preeminent and most desirable form of economy, maintaining it as a “truth” that students are to be inculcated with through Florida schools as an underlying premise related to the purposes of education. No other specific requirements for the teaching of Economics appear in the legislation, making this singular clause that much more powerful as an ordained expectation of the State. It also extends the broader, state-wide shift from an academic orientation to one of workforce readiness. In the context of the ideological imperative of workforce readiness, the treatment of capitalism as the modus operandi of American and global economics encourages a mindset of instrumentalism. There is, as Ball (2001) points out, an ever-increasing “side-lining” of the social purposes of education in favor of stringently market-based purposes. When one considers the Major Areas of Interest provision in light of the neoliberal aims of policymakers in Florida, we see what Jill Blackmore (2000) describes as a shift, “from the liberal to the vocational, from education’s intrinsic value to its instrumental value, and from qualitative to quantitative measures of success” (p. 134). The instrumental value to which Blackmore is referring is the essential market worth of an education, or that which an education is able to procure for the individual in terms of financial security and material goods. Education, in this sense, becomes not only a means to the

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business end of property accumulation and possession, but also a vital lifeline for the development of shareholder value.

This requirement functions to maintain what Althusser (1971) argues are, “the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploiters to exploited” (143) insofar as the very tenets of capitalism hold that there must be winners and losers, have’s and have not’s in such an economic arrangement. Should students not question the nature and long-term viability of an economic system that deliberately creates class divisions for the express purpose of exploiting cheap labor and maintaining the status quo stratification of society (Brown, 2006; Harvey, 2005)? Income inequality continues to grow wider, as the have’s and the have not’s shift further apart on almost every meaningful measure of economic security, social mobility, and long-term economic prosperity (Snellman, Silva, Frederick, & Putnam, 2015; Putnam, Frederick, & Snellman, 2012; Hacker & Pierson, 2010).

Alternatively, and in the intrinsic sense Blackmore (2000) mentions, education can and should be an intellectual end serving both the individual as well as our democratic society through intensified advocacy for social justice, increased political participation, and broader equity across lines of ethnicity/culture, class, gender, and language.

Clearly, *who* has access to *what* knowledge is critical in our society, and is largely dependent upon those who control and dictate the scope and sequence of the curriculum, the methods of instruction, and the means of assessment in our educational institutions. When we stop to consider that certain kids from certain backgrounds who possess (and whose parents possess) social, political, and cultural capital receive an elite education, whereas those lacking such characteristics are disproportionately

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counseled, tracked, or pushed into less rigorous, more highly-scripted instructional environments that stress neither higher order nor critical thinking (Anyon, 1980; Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2005; Kozol, 2005; Lee & Ekstrom, 1987; Lipman, 2004; Oakes, 1985), we should not be surprised to see the continued widening of income inequality (American Political Science Association Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Harvey, 2005). Indeed, as Richard Florida (Lindsay, 2010) notes, “The world is increasingly unequal, and that inequality [is] reflected and reinforced by the geography of class” (§ 13) an observation that puts the educational disparities made manifest by Florida’s A++ Plan in stark relief, publicly positioned through a system of increased standardization and accountability.

The Neoliberal Advancement of Standards and Accountability

The A++ Plan’s statutory commitment to cultivating and fostering a burgeoning system of standards and accountability is aimed at systematizing the assessment of students and holding them, and the schools of which are a part, publicly accountable. In so doing, the system of public reporting feeds another system, that of school choice, as the “customers” of the reporting - parents - are influenced to oftentimes opt-out of their respective public schools in favor of for-profit charter schools, private schools, and voucher programs that support religious education. The growing system of standards and accountability begins with the A++ Plan’s four-fold vision of success, laid out in the law’s plain language:

1. Student learning gains at all levels (line 2776)
2. Progression, readiness, and access by targeted groups of students (lines 2784-2785)

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3. A skilled workforce and economic development, as measured by employment and earnings (lines 2798-2799)
4. Quality efficient services, as measured by return on investment (line 2807)

The specific protocol for determining whether or not Florida schools and students have achieved the above objectives was culled from the Enrolled version of the legislation that was signed by then-Governor Bush; however, the final Engrossed iteration of the bill, which was the draft version amended by the Florida House and Senate to eliminate the specific protocol in question, makes plain a predilection towards business interests and standardization. In addition, in order to more readily facilitate comparisons to students and schools across Florida, throughout the US, and around the world, and to inform the practical moves that advance this policy imperative, Florida has made a staunch commitment to utilizing scientifically-based research as its gold standard. An examination of the limitations and dangers of such a move, along with its links to standards and accountability, follows the examination of the A++ Plan's vision of success.

Student learning gains, school choice, and the profit-motive. The first measure of the legislation's success, "Student learning gains at all levels" (line 2776) which seems focused innocuously enough on student achievement, is tied to the neoliberal objectives of standardization and choice through the open reporting of data - data that facilitates the comparison of schools across similar measures and, consequently, school choice. The very first descriptor in the final Engrossed version of the bill articulates what successful attainment of this objective would be premised upon, reading, "measured by student FCAT performance" (lines 2776-2777). This suggests

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that a singular assessment administered to all Florida public school students serves as the “gatekeeper” and foremost means of both assessing student learning gains and distinguishing between the capabilities and readiness of graduates. As a standardized test, the FCAT enables snap comparisons to be made between students, schools, districts, and counties, promoting a climate of competition and school choice.

Standardization is thus a desirable element of a neoliberally-inspired program of educational reform, the likes of which we see in the A++ Plan.

In the word count alone, while modest increases were noted for such terms as “Accountability” and “Standardized,” references explicitly to “Standards” grew from 55 instances in the original casting of the bill - a significant number in and of itself - to 99 instances in the final, enrolled version that was signed into law. The commitment to standards present in the language of the A++ Plan envisages a time when Florida students are quickly compared across a series of data points as a means of gauging their workplace performance potential. And while the FCAT has historically and will continue to serve as a signpost of student performance in the state, it has fast become the primary means by which Florida schools are evaluated as well. It is also noteworthy, and in keeping with neoliberal practices, that low-wage workers are employed by CTB/McGraw-Hill to score the FCAT, elevating the contentiousness of using the FCAT as a determiner of so much in schools.

The State of Florida relies entirely upon educational assessment giant CTB/McGraw-Hill, a for-profit company with close family ties to the Bush family (Metcalf, 2002), to design and score the FCAT annually, yet the legislature has historically been privy only to limited information about who, specifically, is scoring the high stakes

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assessments - assessments which bear considerable consequence for students, teachers, and schools alike. Until pressured heavily by the public to disclose the information, CTB/McGraw-Hill had been unwilling to identify the hundreds of \$10/hourly temporary FCAT scorers as they were, "a trade secret" (Troxler, 4/20/2006; Winchester, 4/20/2006). Asked whether CTB/McGraw-Hill was living up to its obligations of properly vetting and preparing its scorers at the time, Florida Department of Education spokeswoman Cathy Schroeder noted, "we trust that they are living up to their contractual agreement" (Troxler, 4/20/2006), which is to say that the state was not independently confirming this, despite the monumental significance of the assessment. Only when two Democratic state senators sued to force CTB/McGraw-Hill to relent and make more information available was it learned that, "Some temporary workers hired to grade essay questions on the state's standardized tests apparently lacked degrees or college course work related to the subjects they were scoring," a fact confirmed by then Florida Education Commissioner John Winn (Associated Press, 2006a). At the same time as this admission, however, Winn downplayed the finding, noting, "Even on political fishing expeditions sometimes you catch a few fish. So, I think a few fish were caught here. Fortunately, they weren't big ones" (Associated Press, 2006a). That all Florida students are to be held accountable by means of a singular, high stakes, standardized test bespeaks this measure's neoliberal underbelly. Moreover, the lack of administrative oversight, coupled with Winn's insouciance, suggests a cavaliness on the part of the State regarding its responsibility to its students, teachers, and schools whose academic and professional futures are shaped through this measure. With so much on the line, especially for students, profit-making ventures have arisen all over the state, ranging

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from tutoring services and organizational strategies programs, to test prep courses and summer programs, leveraging the high stakes significance of the state exam for private, profit-making purposes (Freeman, 2010; Lankes, 2008; see also Koyama, 2010).

The purposeful steering of target groups. The second measure of the legislation's success, "Progression, readiness, and access by targeted groups of students" (lines 2784-2785), seems a laudable enough objective as it purposefully draws attention to populations who have historically struggled in Florida schools. Nevertheless, the neoliberal doctrines of standardization and workforce readiness are present here, too, in that the FCAT is utilized as the primary means by which to gauge student progress and readiness, and the measurement of "readiness" itself is linked directly to an individual's preparedness to enter not only the next sequential level of schooling, but also the individual's readiness to enter "into the workforce" (line 2788). Superficially, the measure seems to advance progressive concerns about the qualitatively different education students receive based upon their racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic makeup; however, it cannot be ignored that a primary means of discerning success on the measure is linked to workforce readiness. Moreover, the final metric of this measure - that of "access" - is linked to the neoliberal goal of facilitating choice as a means of creating a competitive educational marketplace in which for-profit schooling in its various forms is made to thrive.

Workforce and economic development as measures of success. The third measure of success, "A skilled workforce and economic development, as measured by employment and earnings" (lines 2798-2799) is as patently neoliberal as can be

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imagined. It is worth quoting the final Engrossed version of the bill's means of measuring the success of this objective in full:

The number and percentage of graduates employed in their areas of preparation; the percentage of Floridians with high school diplomas and postsecondary education credentials; the percentage of business and community members who find that Florida's graduates possess the skills they need; national rankings; and other measures identified in law or rule. (lines 2799-2805)

The attention to credentialing herein again speaks to Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) notion of an expanding *credential society*. Further, the reliance upon the business community to report its level of satisfaction with the skill levels of Florida graduates starkly situates the success of public schools upon the observations of the business community - a tactic that harkens back to the words of Rene Champagne, President and CEO of ITT, who "contact[s] employers and ask[s] them what level of knowledge and what type of skill sets they would expect" (qtd. In Roosevelt, 2006, p. 1405) their graduates to possess. Additionally, measures such as this tacitly shift the onus of responsibility for the well-being of the economy explicitly onto schools, which are consequently blamed when the economy does not perform to desired metrics. This is a decades-spanning trend, beginning with the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE) report which links our nation's economic and national security to the quality of our system of public education, pejoratively described therein as graduating a "rising tide of mediocrity." The same narrative was advanced in 1990 with the National Council on Education and the Economy's (NCEE) report *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, the 2007 *Tough Choices or Tough Times* report, and most recently with the Council on Foreign Relations

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Committee's recent report, *U.S. Education Reform and National Security* (2012), chaired by Joel Klein and Condoleezza Rice, which endeavors to tie public schools directly to "grave national security threats" (p. 4), militaristic and economic, alike. As Mishel (2007) propounds, however, our schools are not the only factors influencing the productivity of American businesses:

Rising workforce skills can indeed make American firms more competitive. But better skills, while essential, are not the only source of productivity growth. The honesty of our capital markets, the accountability of our corporations, our fiscal-policy and currency management, our national investment in R&D and infrastructure, and the fair-play of the trading system (or its absence), also influence whether the U.S. economy reaps the gains of Americans' diligence and ingenuity. The singular obsession with schools deflects political attention from policy failures in those other realms. (¶ 23)

The accountability of Florida schools to the whims and will of corporate culture and economic demands speaks volumes to the underlying ideological position of the A++ Plan. These economic demands, in fact, explicitly govern the final measure of the A++ Plan's success.

Running the numbers: Return on investment and schooling. The final measure of the A++ Plan's success, "Quality efficient services, as measured by return on investment" (line 2807) quite literary recasts "students" as "education customers" (line 2810), codifying a neoliberally-inspired change to Florida's educational lexicon. Moreover, success on this measure is also gauged by explicitly considering the costs associated with "completers" and "noncompleters" (line 2811) at each educational

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level. Doing so economically quantifies a graduate's or dropout's cost of production and opportunity cost, and spurs standardization in the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment methods as cost-cutting measures. That Florida legislators have adopted language that repositions students in these ways, with an eye on utilizing "return on investment" as a gauge of school success, is decidedly neoliberal, and speaks to the law's commitment to a corporatist system of accountability. Students themselves thus become a quantifiable commodity on an educational exchange, the benefactors of which are businesses and corporations. It is certainly within the realm of possibility that aggregate costs associated with "completers" and "noncompleters" could be used as a measure of school and district success or failure, as well, though the present system champions the existing model of standardized testing in Florida.

As Chapter Four pointed out, Florida students' performance on the state's standardized tests has great bearing not only on a school's public perception, as results are publicly reported, but also on its level of state funding (HB7087, lines 2906-2925). The public reporting of school-level data, and the incumbent public shaming that results from underperformance or failure, has the effect of undermining public education and the public's confidence in their respective schools. Public shaming further encourages families to opt out of the district in favor of other nearby public or for-profit private educational programs, which may well be the point ideologically. These deliberate efforts to reshape public education into a model more recognizable as a business than a school community are at the heart of what neoliberalism espouses. If a school does not re-imagine itself to meet the State's ideological expectations of performance, it will be punished in various tangible ways, including increased reporting that puts a strain on

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limited personnel, the replacement of teaching and administrative staff, and being shamed to the point of seeing its constituents opt out of attending, amongst other possibilities. Of course, this adversely affects high-poverty schools more than others, who consequently and more frequently will fall short of expectations, and thus funding, in a model such as the A++ Plan puts in place.

In addition to HB7087 holding the institution of the school more accountable, teachers are also held increasingly accountable. Of great primacy here are the performance incentives available to teachers based upon their performance appraisal which, again, is largely a function of standardized test scores and an assessment of the individual teacher's ability to maintain discipline. Such foci have their ideological basis in the neoliberal maxim of competition, pitting teachers against other teachers (Chamberlain et. al., 2002; Jabbar, 2013; see also Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), further illustrating how deeply ensconced neoliberal ideology is in Florida educational politics.

In support of the various moves discussed above, Florida has also elected to employ scientifically-based research as its most trusted resource for what works with students and for schools.

Scientifically-based research and the A++ Plan. The ascent and contested status of scientifically-based research and practice in educational milieus in recent years has been well-documented (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Hess & Henig, 2008; Howe, 2009; Lagemann, 2000; Lather, 2004; National Research Council, 2002, 2004). Lauded by many as the “gold standard” of educational research, scientifically-based research - best positioned as an experimental design based on the medical model - seeks to causally tie an intervention to an outcome, devoid of, or at best “controlling for” any

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possible conflating factors such as the context of the research, poverty, student health, family life, motivation, and other sociocultural factors. Putting aside for a moment the debate about methodologically controlling for such factors, Baez and Boyles (2009) point out that educational research is inherently linked to the political dynamic in which it is conducted, and that scientific research undertaken through the positivist epistemology not only views facts and values as separable, but also that such partitioning is in fact desirable. More bluntly, positivist doctrine would have us believe that true scientific research is not only atheoretical, value-neutral, and free of naked self-interest, but also wholly uninfluenced by politics, power, and ideology. To the greatest extent possible, Howe (2009) explains, positivist notions impel researchers to, “purge their work of values and declare any that remain as *biases*” (p. 430).

Howe (2009) critiques this position as untenable, however, arguing that theories and values simultaneously buttress and inform all research, framing which questions are considered *worth asking*, which are formally *asked*, *how* they are asked, *which methods* are selected to study the phenomenon, and *how* the analysis of data proceeds. Such concerns about the genesis and nature of research are not new to the field (Apple, 1990; Bourdieu, 1973; Cochran-Smith, 2002; Lather, 2004), but the positivist argument that values can be wholly separated from research establishes a legitimacy and rhetorical confidence in the objectivity of quantitative methods and its resultant data. However, Howe (2009) postulates that facts and data have no meaning when decontextualized, giving credence to the notion that the analysis of said facts and data takes place in a given temporal and sociopolitical milieu. Moreover, decisions about the scope and specificity of research, Howe (2009) contends, are neither value-

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neutral nor atheoretical. Shulman (1997) would agree, arguing that choosing methods is not primarily a technical endeavor, but rather one that it is associated with underlying theoretical, political, or social purposes. Further, and in response to the question about which methods to use when conducting research, Desimone (2009) unequivocally states, “the answer, true of all types of research...is that *research questions* should drive methods” (p. 164), ostensibly because different types of research questions are best investigated utilizing different sets of methods. As Howe (2009) puts it, “whatever the methods employed, decisions about what factors to fix in the design and conduct of social research are unavoidable – and are unavoidably political (p. 430).

At that, the Florida legislature’s move to champion scientifically-based educational research as the foundation of its practice - and deliberately conduct novel research of this sort at the newly established Florida Center for Reading Research (HB7087, line 144) - underscores a decidedly political and ideological stance that advances a narrowly-construed vision of educational research, resulting - inexorably - in a limited range of interventions that by their positivist nature do not take into account the individual child in a novel context. Moreover, a positivist orientation to educational research naturally errs toward the standardization and commodification of curricula, making pre-packaged, more highly-scripted forms curricula easy to produce, market, and implement. Thus, the prizing of a positivist vision of educational research, with its incumbent limitations, implicitly treats all students alike, reshaping schools into factories meant to systematically produce measurable and easily comparable outcomes desired by the business community that - when failing to do so - jettison the “product” in favor of another that *does* as a means of “quality control.” This instrumentalist approach to

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student and education embraces the neoliberal tenet of *standardization*, wherein children are treated as decontextualized, indistinguishable, interchangeable widgets being prepared for a singular purpose: contribution to the economy.

Standards, accountability, and its beneficiaries. Who benefits from these various outcomes, of course, are for-profit charter schools and voucher programs that provide subsidies for parents to send their children to unregulated private schools, and oftentimes exist outside the legal frameworks governing public schools, including, but not limited to, measures of accountability, selection and dismissal criteria, and public reporting of outcomes (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010; Welner, 2013). Consequently, and not surprisingly, this enriches not only for-profit charter schools and voucher initiatives that students may elect to attend of their volition, but also private schools, as the potential exists for Florida's tax dollars to be siphoned off to enroll hitherto public school students in profit-minded private schools through "opportunity scholarships" (HB7087, lines 2863-2876; see also National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013). The A++ Plan's commitments to workforce readiness, standardization, and strict accountability along a narrowly-construed series of factors stands to have myriad effects on schools, classrooms, teachers, and students. At the same time, these starkly neoliberal axioms are advanced through the A++ Plan, so, too, are traditional values and a commitment to nationalism that overtly mark neoconservatism.

The Effects of Elevating Traditional Values and Nationalism

History and character development are closely aligned in neoconservative circles. Indeed, while Florida's A++ Plan does not always treat them as overtly linked, there is an undercurrent that binds the two together, largely around a perceived

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“common culture” and collective memory that unite seemingly disparate peoples around common, or core, beliefs and understandings. What is at issue, however, are just what those common beliefs and understandings are, and how they came to be the defining elements of our culture.

The manipulation of history and our collective memory - and its toll. While the General Requirements for high school graduation (Statute 1003.428) include the typical credits in Science, English, Mathematics, and the like, only the disciplines of Social Studies, Health, and Economics apparently rise to the level of being addressed at the classroom level within the legislation, with Social Studies bearing the greatest attention in both the legislation and this analysis.

The deliberateness of the rhetoric in the A++ Plan suggests a trajectory of attempting to manipulate our collective memory and understanding of our past as a means of defining who we are in the present, and what we can - or should - be in the future. Given over to ideologically-driven memes, much is put at risk in a neoconservative-minded, fact-driven curriculum. Saying that History is merely factual, as the A++ Plan does, may lead students to believe, as University of Central Florida History professor Robert Cassanello (2006) prognosticates, that history is “just facts, and...is unchanging and not interpretive in nature” (p. 17). University of Texas professor Robert Jensen (2006) further postulates that, “Florida’s lawmakers are not only prescribing a specific view of US history that must be taught...but they are trying to legislate out of existence any ideas to the contrary. They are not just saying that their history is the best history, but that it is beyond interpretation” (§ 5). Indeed, A factual approach to the teaching of history such as Florida has adopted through HB7087 is both

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reductionist and myopic, and is not only condescending to history teachers, but is entirely at odds with the stance of the Organization of American Historians (2004), the American Historical Association (2005), the National Council for the Social Studies (1994), the National Assessment Governing Board (2006) which produces the history standards for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and countless historians who see history and the larger field of social studies as highly interpretive (Cassanello, 2006; Jensen, 2006). The OAH (2004) goes so far as to say, “no history is ‘objective’—it never has been, it never will be, and it should not pretend to be” (§ 30), and the Council of the American Historical Association (2007), in response to the HB7807 statute in question, professes “it is simply wrong to tell [students] that any single account of history is simply ‘factual’” (§ 11), stripping away any semblance of critical thinking by students.

Such a paucity of critical thinking and analysis in the History curriculum will feed into both neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies by debilitating students’ ability to think outside the dominant discourse – a discourse shaped by the values and visions of those in power shilling a litany of “facts” that deliberately limit students’ understanding of the American nation, its people, and our collective history. Under the A++ Plan, students stand to be taught to uncritically and unquestioningly accept history as it is presented to them – traits businesses will no doubt find desirable at many levels – leading to a more docile, compliant, and obedient workforce that knows not how to question, but how to memorize, walk lockstep, and reproduce. It is also worth noting that such realities, Anyon (1997, 1981, 1980) points out, have historically and more commonly come to fruition for racial minorities and the lower and working classes.

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Moreover, the very choosing of facts - as the Florida legislature has seen fit to do, and which will be taken up shortly - is an act of interpretation and ideologically-driven choice of which events, perspectives, voices, and visions merit inclusion in Florida's curricula, and which do not, leaving the latter marginalized and silenced. As Taylor (2013) reminds us, History education in a neoconservative mindset functions "as an agent of assimilation into a culture," that sanctifies "celebratory forms of commemoration [as] obligatory replacements for open-ended investigation and explanation" (p. 236). In essence, the move makes manifest what Chimamanda Adichie (2009) labels "the danger of a single story," which exhibits a particularly pernicious effect upon children because of how "impressionable and vulnerable [they] are in the face of a story." Openness to alternative truths, dissent, an appreciation of a multiplicity of viewpoints, and the belief that truth cannot exist separate from power, are hallmarks of postmodern American democracy, yet the Florida legislature has curtailed these positions in schools in what might be construed as an effort to codify a singular, ahistorical, legitimized truth about historical events. Jensen (2006) posits an example and astute critique, asking

Has U.S. intervention in the Middle East been aimed at supporting democracy or controlling the region's crucial energy resources? Would anyone in a free society want students to be taught that there is only one way to construct an answer to that question?(¶ 9)

Cassanello (2006) poses a similar challenge:

Tucked into the law are proclamations to teach the contributions of African Americans, women, and Native Americans. What are the plans to address how

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and why these groups were systematically left out of the freedoms guaranteed by the founding documents? Will mere facts satiate the questions of bright young students? (p. 17)

Such a curricular and pedagogical posture as Jensen and Cassanello suggest above, which will limit students' ability to think critically in myriad ways, is perfectly in-line with the ideological position of the statute's primary architect, conservative Republican State Senate Majority Whip Mike Fasano, who cast the aspersion that the language pertaining to teaching history as strictly a factual subject, "just prevents [teachers] from throwing a liberal opinion into class discussion" (Albers, 2007). Fasano is suggesting that history teachers writ large embrace a patently liberal ideological stance towards the field that is ostensibly meant to be silenced by the legislative position taken in HB7087. Noted is the fact that Fasano makes no mention of conservative and neoconservatively-minded history teachers whose own ideological prevarications could have the same effect.

All this said, rather than merely a throng of immutable facts handed down by those in positions of power, History is a series of events in time that cannot be taught and learned independent of the imprecision of causality, as mediated by power, ideology, culture, and economics. Perhaps most importantly, History cannot be partitioned from the complexity of *contingency*, or what the American Historical Association describes in its piece *What Does it Mean to Think Historically?* as the way in which "every historical outcome depends upon a number of prior conditions; [and] that each of these prior conditions depends, in turn, upon still other conditions" (Andrews & Burke, 2007). Florida's legislators would have its constituents

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believe that history is, in fact, *ahistorical*. As University Robert Cassanello asserts, “It is important that a student understand when the Declaration of Independence was signed, but if they don't understand the debate behind it, it is not going to mean anything to them” (Albers, 2007).

Ultimately, not permitting students to apply a critical or interpretive lens to the study of History will dramatically impede their ability to critically assess not only historical events and the contexts in which they transpired, but also current events that hold future import. The abandonment of such lenses also promotes the neoconservative agenda of ennobling our national history in our collective memory, encouraging a sense of ardent patriotism. It is ironic, also, that in the same legislation advocating for coursework to be made more “interesting” and “relevant” in order to motivate students to graduate (*vis-à-vis* the Major Area of Interest provision), the study of History has in fact regressed to the point of rote memorization and regurgitation of facts, methods harkening back to the scientific management employed by Frederick Taylor in early 20th century factories. Indeed, recent data (Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2010) bears out that, contrary to the rhetoric the public regularly hears from the business community about wanting critical thinking skills developed in schools for eventual application in the workforce, it is all too clear that critical thinking, much less a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), is far from being an objective of policies such as the A++ Plan.

The hegemonic treatment of contested events in history stands to further isolate students from understanding the world through eyes other than their own. More often, students are being prepared to see the world through lenses that are ostensibly dictated to them by political leaders, their partisan appointees, and corporate America. Those

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who value inquiry, debate, and the existence of alternative truths are left to take comfort in the fact that educators and historians see History differently, personified in Jensen's (2006) assertion that, "History is always constructed, no matter how much Florida's elected representatives might resist the notion" (§ 11). Nevertheless, moves legislative such as the move to treat history as a strictly factual subject have not only overt implications, but covert ones as well.

A latent, and more pernicious, result of the "history as fact" legislation Fasano crafted is the chilling effect (*Wieman v. Updegraff*, see also *Shelton v. Tucker*) it will have on teachers' willingness to teach content beyond the US-centric, state-prescribed curriculum, striking at least a modicum of fear into teachers' hearts about the "appropriateness" of teaching historical events that may be complex or highly interpretive. Mathison, Ross, and Vinson (2006) have also observed and reported extensively upon the historic tendency of this effect to impact history and social studies curricula. Indeed, and in keeping with the findings of *Wieman v. Updegraff*, such a legal reality will promote "caution and timidity" amongst teachers, and will quell the, "free play of the spirit which all teachers ought especially to cultivate and practice" (1952). The position taken in the A++ Plan silences the alternative perspectives and interpretations of historical events that teachers of the field have historically addressed, commensurately suppressing such perspectives from reaching student ears.

For example, three social studies teachers at a public charter school in Washington D.C. were just recently forced to resign for what initially has been identified as teaching Black history beyond what is explicitly stipulated in the curriculum (Demby, 2015). Knowing that there are repercussions for teachers leading to one's dismissal no

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doubt provides strong incentive to adhere to state curricular mandates, regardless of whether they represent best practices within the field. Moreover, as a function of its nature, a chilling effect is not geographically fixed; rather, it will spread as word of the potential repercussions gain traction in public discourse, as was the case in a Watertown, Massachusetts elementary school wherein the district removed the book *And Tango Makes Three* from its library because of its storyline of two male penguins raising a baby. The district pulled the text, according to Nima Eshghi, an attorney for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), because they, “just don’t want to be sued like Lexington” (Jacobs & Windows, 2007), a reference to the pending federal lawsuit against the town of Lexington, Massachusetts for its inclusion of LGBT-themed books in its elementary school library and curriculum. Multicultural programs and curriculum, as well as bilingual programs, have faced similar chilling effects historically (Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008).

More broadly, the same appraisal of history teachers Fasano offers drove the historic critiques of the National Standards of History in 1996 (Kelly, Meuwissen, & Vansledright, 2007), dooming them to becoming footnotes, and have since been renewed in more recent critiques of the College Board’s revisions to the Advanced Placement US History curriculum (Hess & Finn, 2014), spearheaded by the Republican National Committee (Tashman, 2014). Oklahoma has gone so far as to submit an “emergency bill” to defund the state’s AP US History program, which has already passed out of the Oklahoma House Education Committee along a straight party line vote, 11 Republicans for and 4 Democrats against, citing the conservative perception that the new course standards are not only unpatriotic, but also deliberately omit the

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jingoistic concept of “American exceptionalism” (Krehbiel, 2015; Legum, 2015). In both instances, moves to present a more accurate, more complete collective memory (Byrne et al., 2014; Nash & Crabtree, 1994, 2000) were and continue to be cast as unpatriotic and anti-American by powerful groups on the political right, making manifest Tocqueville’s (1835/2000) fears of the tyranny of the majority.

In particular, opponents of the National Standards of History and the AP US History changes contend that the revisions make scant reference to critical individuals and events in our nation’s history, and omit a lengthy discussion of an amorphous yet distinctly “American” identity. In lieu of these focal points, it is contended, the changes instead focus too heavily upon the contributions of minorities, and the nation’s history of racism/sexism, while honing in on “less important” events in our history which paint the nation in a less than flattering light, such as the Trail of Tears and the Tulsa race riots. As such, the so-called “common culture” that neoconservatives have long sought to return to (Apple, 2000b) has been threatened, leading to this assault against opponents of such a mythologized, idyllic vision of the past.

Power, Foucault (1981) reminds us, resides only in knowledge that has institutional legitimacy - a claim made more tangible by Adichie (2009) in her contention that, “Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.” When an institution such as the state of Florida sanctions one set of knowledge as the truth, it marginalizes and discredits other truths – truths that may challenge the master narrative and status quo, lifting up voices that have historically been quelled. These other truths may be purposefully kept out of public debate vis-à-vis *discourses of derision* (Ball, 1990) that, as Marshall (1997) points out,

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“displace or debunk alternative truths” (p. 7). Today, these discourses operate in such a way as to convince individuals of the naturalness of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, sedimenting in place a history that helps to define our individual, community, and national identity. In addition to controlling the actual curriculum, the Required Instruction statute tacitly controls the discourse students will use to discuss historical events, and as Gee (1996, 2005) reminds us, the language we use to discuss or describe ideas and events not only *represents* our perspectives, but manifestly *influences* those perspectives. In a sense, students are being taught not only specific events, but specific manners of thinking about those and other such events. Indeed, school is a place to develop complex capacities of thought, reasoning, and critique, and as such one must question the foundations of a curriculum designed in such close concert with the interests of neoliberal and neoconservative doctrine. Of equal concern are the specifics of the twenty-one clauses that more fully delineate what is to be taught as *Required Instruction*.

Required Instruction: What counts as history and what does not. Taken as a whole, and viewed in the context of only a single clause (G) of the fifteen specifically addressing any aspect of world history, it is clear that there is a heavy emphasis on American history, bordering on jingoism, that devalues world history and events, and their connection to, and frequent symbiotic relationship with, the United States. It bears reiterating, also, that the above content is to be taught as “factual...knowable, teachable, and testable” (HB7087, lines 1159-1161) according to the legislation. The intense focus on American history and the preeminence of an American form of government has a

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distinctly neoconservative ring to it, championing our history and way of life while diminishing that of others, if only through their willful exclusion.

The articulation of so many specific events and aspects of American history and government, while purposefully leaving vague and illusory the contributions of historically marginalized or disenfranchised groups, suggests that the former is of much greater value and preeminence than the latter. Further, and relative specifically to required instruction about the Slave Trade (Clause H), the emphasis on “the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery” (lines 1175-1176) and the passage of slaves to America diminishes the roles white Americans played, redirecting blame back on Africans while obfuscating and eliding American responsibility. While it is certainly important to draw attention to the role Africans played in the Atlantic slave trade, an emphasis on these points at the expense of addressing American complicity shifts responsibility for all that transpired.

More tellingly, the language and rhetoric used in positioning Clause G (history of the Holocaust) of the A++ Plan contrasts markedly with the language and rhetoric used in positioning Clause H (history of African-Americans). Relative to the law’s requirements about the teaching of the history of African-Americans, a simple list of content coverage as noted above is provided, accompanied by neither a narrative description nor an impassioned plea for its significance. Yet, Clause G, addressing the Holocaust, is written in a much different tone for a different effect:

The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of

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human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions. (lines 1165-1173)

Putting aside the fact that teaching history as a “factual subject,” not open to interpretation, seems antithetical to the requirements of how the Holocaust and “human behavior” is to be taught based on the law’s language, the differential treatment that the history of the Holocaust receives in the legislation, and that which the history of African-Americans receives, is striking. Without question, the Holocaust should be taught in all its complexities, examined in the way the legislation articulates, aimed at generating the meaningful dialogue between teachers and students that is necessary to our understanding of the events and their moral and ethical ramifications. One must question, however, why centuries of slavery resulting in close to 12 million Africans being forcibly removed from their homes, families, and lives, and shipped across the Atlantic (Mintz, 2012) to be violently enslaved receives such comparatively staid treatment in the legislation.

As neoliberal and neoconservative architects continue to play a more active role in curricular requirements, and consequently the construction of a particular narrative of slavery, through policies such as the A++ Plan, the public should increasingly expect to observe a mix of corporate and conservative values overtly and tacitly reflected in the knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions our students are expected to commit to memory

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and emulate. The same can be said of the A++ Plan's character development program which actively seeks to engineer a neoconservative vision of society.

A narrowly-defined program of character development. Relative to the character development requirement of the A++ Plan, any such character development program - particularly one that must be approved by the State - naturally prizes certain qualities over others which may not mesh culturally and socially with an individual's or group's system of beliefs. As such, any state-sanctioned character development program must be carefully vetted. That criticism aside, few would argue that universally understood qualities such as honesty, collaboration, and kindness, amongst others, are appropriate for a character development program, as they promote an ethic of responsibility and personal conduct that contributes positively to one's community.

Patriotism, however, is altogether different insofar as it is both highly subjective and deeply contested as a term. Wherein one individual might perceive the term to mean an unerring commitment to and backing of both the rightness and righteousness of our government's choices and actions, another individual could perceive the term to mean a devout commitment to quite the opposite: the questioning of all our government's choices and actions to ensure that protections of individuals and groups in our society are not infringed upon. The first iteration of HB7087 did not include a single reference to terms that could be construed as overtly nationalistic. Yet, the enrolled, or final version, expresses instances of "flag education" (3 times), "patriotism" (2 times), and "character" (6 times), all in the Required Instruction statute of the legislation. As such, and in light of the fact that the program must be approved by a politically-appointed Commissioner of Education, the inclusion of patriotism - which

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Irving Kristol (Norton, 2004) identifies as a central tenet of neoconservatism - in a character development program feels distinctly neoconservative in nature (Means & Taylor, 2010), and very much akin to the “conservative restoration” to which Apple (2000b, 2006a) alludes when remarking upon the fear of the “other” relative to immigration, bilingualism, multiculturalism, and cultural blending.

Moreover, such ideological moves in the A++ Plan feel very much like a hopeful restoration of the “common culture” that neoconservatives feel has been lost in recent decades (Caughlan & Beach, 2007; Gabbard, 2007; Hursh, 2005, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003; Joshee, 2009; Taylor, 2013). The very fact that “patriotism” is listed first amongst the myriad elements of the character development program - notably ahead of kindness, charity, tolerance, and others - establishes patriotism as a central tenet of the curricular requirements. More worrisome are the contentions of Jaan Valsiner (2011), whose perception of “patriotism” as a purposeful outcome of schools strikes at the heart of the issue, and speaks to the ideological imperatives at work in the A++ Plan:

What is common is the promotion of the unquestioning, *doubtless*, relation with the identity object [nation]. While much of formal education calls for the development of critical thinking, the efforts to promote patriotism are aimed at the emergence of *enthusiastically noncritical* thinking in the persons under the influence of such social messages. The romantic nature of patriotism - or its relative in the fanship of sports teams - makes a doubtful and critical mindset a very distant and non-desired way of being ... Success in such - deeply personal-cultural - reconstruction of the social demands would be the ultimate success of social control. (p. x)

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The social controls of which Valsiner (2011) speaks are certainly afoot in Florida, which in recent years has continued to shift to the far right in conversations of patriotism which sprang initially from the A++ Plan. Early 2015 witnessed bills being advanced in both the Florida House (HB77) and Senate (SB96) mandating 8th and 11th grade students to watch neoconservative author and filmmaker Dinesh D'Souza's film, "America: Imagine the World Without Her" as a means of combatting "erroneous, dishonest, and insulting" (Hemmer, 2015) information being taught throughout Florida history classes, according to Senate bill sponsor Republican Alan Hays. Notably, Hays' language continues a neoconservative narrative, bearing striking resemblance to that of former Republican State Senate Majority Whip Mike Fasano whose derisive views and commentary about Florida's history teachers led him to incorporate the "history as fact" language into the A++ Plan. Though D'Souza's film has been widely panned and described as a "sprawling celebration of American exceptionalism" (Leydon, 2014), Hays steadfastly defends the mandatory viewing, arguing "Unfortunately, our parents and our school board members have not kept up with the misrepresentation of American history that is being perpetrated in our school system ... students need to see the truth without political favoritism" (Atteberry, 2015). Putting aside the fact that D'Souza has himself described the film as a combination of entertainment and education, and "not a scholarly enterprise" (Givas, 2015), Florida students may nevertheless be forced to view the film twice as part of the required History curriculum.

Such an ardent patriotism as seen here disarms and renders blind our students, actively undermining critical thinking skills while simultaneously inculcating a devout and unquestioning commitment to nation and state. Indeed, its positioning as "a natural and

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healthy sentiment [that] should be encouraged by both private and public institutions” (Kristol, 2003) in the A++ Plan’s Required Instruction seems to have been drawn directly out of the neoconservative playbook.

It is also worth noting the requirement for “respect for authority” in Clause S, which - like the character development program’s mandate for patriotism - subtly reinforces a power dynamic wherein one who is in a position of authority, such as an employer in this case, is deferred to subserviently by employees. Notably, no such character development program requirement exists for the ethical and respectful treatment of employees by those in positions of authority; there is no “respect for the power one possesses” clause, only a clause requiring that individuals show respect for and deference to those in positions of power. To that end, employees are actively discouraged from challenging employers about working conditions, pay and benefits, and job security - a playbook which reads very much like the anti-union agenda that neoliberals have espoused since the time of Reagan, Thatcher, and Volcker in the early 1980’s, the results of which include, amongst other outcomes, the diminution of union membership in the United States and across Europe, heightened income inequality, and a shrinking middle class (Harvey, 2005; Greenhouse, 2011; Jacobs, 2014; Jacobs & Myers, 2014; Western & Rosenfeld, 2012). Such ideologically-oriented outcomes, and the incumbent controversy surrounding them, are not limited to the Florida Social Studies curriculum.

In the discussion of Florida’s Health curriculum, Clause J of the A++ Plan again mandates that “the true effects of all alcoholic and intoxicating liquors and beverages and narcotics upon the human body and mind” (lines 1180-1182) be taught. The choice

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of diction is an interesting one, as the word “true” suggests that there is scientific certainty about the abundant impacts of such substances. While certain physical outcomes have been well-researched, the scientific community is still studying the nuanced effects of even the most well-known of these substances, including alcohol (Marczinski et. al., 2012; Topalli et. al., 2014). Similarly, there is also a growing push to reduce the legal drinking age to 18, as evidenced by the 136 collegiate chancellors and presidents who are signatories to The Amethyst Initiative, a group that recognizes the existing problem of underage drinking on college campuses, and seeks to remedy it through the closer regulation of consumption, as opposed to allowing to clandestinely occur behind closed doors. Further, recent moves legalizing the recreational use of marijuana in Colorado and Washington, coupled with the 21 other states and the District of Columbia that allow for medical marijuana usage, suggests that public opinion on the issue is evolving. Even in Florida, cannabis oil is now legally available to patients in selected medical instances involving cancer, seizures, and severe muscle spasms as a function of the Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act of 2014 (Florida Governor’s Office, 2014b). Thus, Clause J of the legislation seems to embrace a stance on drugs and alcohol that is neither verifiable nor uniformly held, but which seems to express a patently neoconservative tenor of control. Clause N, which again requires that students leave their Health class with “an awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard” (lines 1188-1189), bears similar scrutiny for its neoconservative ideological orientation.

While an examination of sexual abstinence is certainly warranted in discussions of sexuality and health, the casting of it as the “expected standard” as written in the A++

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Plan is patently ideological, illustrating not only the valuation, but the veritable *legitimization* of certain personal choices over others. Ideologically, and to an extent ironically, it represents a stance staunchly held by both neoconservatives relative to sexual abstinence (Spring, 2010; Susser, 2011), and neoliberals relative to their prizing of choice, though arguably the choices students are led to make are derived from a limited set of possibilities arranged by neoconservatives. Further, the prizing of sexual abstinence as the expected standard is decidedly uninformed, as research on the subject illustrates precisely the opposite effect of what is intended. Indeed, as Santelli et. al. (2006) discerned in their review of abstinence and abstinence-only programs across the United States, “abstinence as a sole option for adolescents is scientifically and ethically problematic” (1). They further conclude that, “abstinence-only programs and policies appears to be undermining more comprehensive sexuality education” and “threaten fundamental human rights to health, information, and life” (1). Stanger-Hall and Hall (2011) are even more deeply skeptical of such programs, as their research paradoxically indicates that, “abstinence-only education as a state policy is ineffective in preventing teenage pregnancy and may actually be contributing to the high teenage pregnancy rates in the US” (1). As a mechanism for reducing teenage pregnancy and the transmission of STDs, sexual abstinence education has failed to live up to expectations. Worse yet, abstinence-only programs have been found to be particularly detrimental to young women. In their expansive exploration of the subject, Julie Kay and Ashley Jackson’s conclude the following in their report, *Sex, Lies, and Stereotypes: How Abstinence-Only Programs Harm Women and Girls*, which is worth citing at length:

By using biased and misleading information, employing scare tactics aimed

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at young women, and promoting a view of human sexuality and relationships that presents gender stereotypes as truth and homophobic sentiments as fact, abstinence-only programs particularly target women and girls...abstinence-only curricula frequently employ outdated gender stereotypes, portraying girls as naturally chaste and casting them as the gatekeepers of rampant male sexuality. By making sex education into abstinence education, abstinence-only programs fail to genuinely address critical issues such as sexual behavior, sexual orientation, and sexual violence or coercion. Moreover, abstinence-only programs violate women's and girls' human rights by denying them critical reproductive health information. (p. VIII)

Despite these findings, Florida politicians have seen fit to ignore the research and deem abstinence as the "expected standard" relative to sex education, further advancing the narrative of neoconservatism undergirding this ideological imperative. Relatedly, It is also notable that Section 3 of the *Required Instruction* statute includes an exemption tangentially connected to the teaching of sexual abstinence as the "expected standard" in schools:

Any student whose parent makes written request to the school principal shall be exempted from the teaching of reproductive health or any disease, including HIV/AIDS, its symptoms, development, and treatment. (lines 1225-1229)

Ostensibly, the State of Florida has decided that sexual abstinence is not only the expected standard for its public school students, speaking to the authoritarian, controlling nature of neoconservatism, but that students may be excused from learning

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about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases - how they are passed between partners, their respective symptoms, and how treatment(s) may be effectively administered - the upshot of which may well create a public health concern (Bruess & Greenberg, 2004; Monisola & Oludare, 2009). Interestingly, no such exemption is made for families wishing to avoid the myopic rhetoric of abstinence education as the expected standard of personal behavior. Again, this is the ideological indoctrination of a distinctly neoconservative vision of sex education - one that is politically motivated and which denies an existing and growing body of research on the matter.

A return to years gone by. The various moves described above illustrate a return to traditional values that neoconservatives have espoused since the early days of their ideological movement. In recent years, this neoconservative shift towards a more traditional morality in and through schools historically championed by the Christian Right (Apple, 2006a) has steadily grown, culminating last year in the distribution of bibles in Orange and Collier County school districts in Florida - a practice that ceased only when the prospect of a Satanic coloring book was set to be made available under the same federal consent decree as those used by Christian advocates to distribute the bibles (Roth, 2014). At the prospect of bibles being distributed alongside these coloring books, the districts agreed to suspend the distribution of bibles and all other books by outside groups, ostensibly out of fear that someone might exercise a modicum of critical thought.

To that end, the final ideological imperative at work in the A++ Plan - that of the championing of individual responsibility - balances the neoconservative tenor of the commitment to traditional values and nationalism with a zealous devotion to holding

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individuals increasingly responsibility for the outcomes of their education, a decidedly neoliberal talking point, regardless of the circumstances that might contribute to or detract from that experience.

The Implications of Championing Individual Responsibility

When former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, in discussing the statutory requirements of the A++ Plan, professes, "Our students will now take charge and plan for their future, realizing the decisions they make today shape their tomorrow" (James, Hollis, & Travis, 2006), he is speaking on behalf of the State and its various moves to abdicate responsibility for the educational outcomes of individuals. While individual responsibility has been previously touched upon relative to each of the three prior ideological imperatives, especially relative to the Major Areas of Interest initiative, two realities connected to the A++ Plan bear particular attention because. First, while on the surface there is still a fiduciary commitment to Florida's public schools, the local reality of the State's commitments to its schools and students tells a profoundly different story, one in which the state has slowly relinquished its financial commitment. Second, and a more specific manifestation of the State's diminishing financial role, the targeted deployment of low-overhead technological resources is shifting greater responsibility than ever before onto Florida's students relative to course selection and the unique trajectory of classes a student plans to take, especially in light of the Major Areas of Interest mandate.

Florida's diminishing financial support of education. First, and relative to the Major Areas of Interest mandate levied by the Florida legislature, Chapter Four discussed the differential access that students of affluence and students living in poverty

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have to such a program. Notwithstanding the inequitable and disproportionate volume and types of majors available to these different groups of Florida students, the legislation does leave the door open for individual and collective agency to result in the development of new courses and majors at the local level by students and teachers, to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education for approval. But, even if one assumes that the Commissioner will approve student and teacher-sponsored courses, majors, and minors, their actual creation and offering at the school-level will invariably depend upon the resources available to individual schools, notwithstanding space limitations in already overcrowded schools, the certified teachers who may need to be hired, books and supplementary materials that will need to be purchased, classrooms and facilities that will require preparation and potential reorganization, professional development, and so forth, all of which have historically proven to be significant obstacles for schools serving high-minority/high-poverty communities (Anyon, 1997; Apple, 1995; Clotfelter et. al., 2006; Peske & Haycock, 2006). Consequently, one must ask where the funding for these school and district-level initiatives will come from.

Where said funding is *not* coming from is the state of Florida, which has lagged behind the national average for per pupil spending over the past decade. While the national average for per pupil spending has increased more than 80% since 1997, rising from \$5882 in 1997 to \$10,608 in 2012, per pupil spending in Florida has risen from \$5552 in 1997 to only \$8,372 in 2012, a below-average 51% increase (US Census Bureau, 1997-2012). Only four states (Alaska, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington) have seen smaller percentage increases from 1997-2012, and three of these four currently spend more aggregate dollars per pupil than Florida (Alaska spends \$17,390/pupil, a

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staggering 108% more than Florida; Oregon spends \$9,490/pupil, 13% more than Florida; Washington spends \$9,637/pupil, 15% more than Florida). Overall, Florida has *fallen* in state rankings for per pupil spending from 35th in the 1997-1998 school year to 41st in fiscal year 2012, despite the former Governor Bush's (2006b) loaded public assertion that, "Florida public schools have received historic increases in per student funding" (§ 15). Given the state's gentle abdication of its fiduciary responsibility, the budget shortfalls school districts have had to endure are being shored-up through alternative means that shift responsibility onto communities and individuals.

Since the 1998-1999 school year, local money spent on education in Florida has increased from 40.51% to 49.02% in the 2013-2014 school year (FLDOE, 2013). This percentage difference may not seem of particular consequence until one considers aggregate dollar amounts. The 2013-2014 school budget for Florida is listed at \$22,058,141,504 (FL Governor's Office, 2014a). Had local school districts and communities paid 40.51% of this figure instead of the 49.02% they in fact paid, taxpayers in Florida communities would have saved over \$1.9 billion last year *alone*. Holding this number steady over the course of five years, that amount balloons to a figure approaching \$10 billion in increased local tax assessments that communities have been forced to bear.

This shifting of the onus of financial responsibility away from the state and federal government onto local communities and individuals is another hallmark of neoliberalism: the decentralization of government amidst increased local and individual responsibility, in this case for school financing. Although per pupil spending has indeed increased for Florida's students (though still lagging behind national averages), local school districts

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and communities have been forced to bear greater responsibility for the burden – a *de facto* arrangement that favors more affluent communities over less affluent ones through increased volunteerism that offsets staffing shortages, swelling private donations that serve as a bulwark against reduced state funding, and unique programming and internship opportunities that open doors locked tight in impoverished communities, amongst other advantages (Addonizio, 1998, 2000; Blair, 1998; Goodnough, 1997; Zimmer, Krop, & Brewer, 2003). In effect, the withering of the State's financial role in Florida's public schools has produced many outcomes, all of which are more readily managed in wealthier, more affluent communities whose more abundant resources are leveraged as a means of buttressing the budgetary needs of said schools, helping to both maintain past practices and birth novel opportunities for new generations of students. Meanwhile, poor and working class communities have a much more difficult time bearing such increased financial burdens, exhibiting a discernible impact on social mobility (Snellman, Silva, Frederick, & Putnam, 2015; Putnam, Frederick, & Snellman, 2012). Some of these outcomes include the elimination of academic programming such as Art and Music courses, as well as more progressive educational programming, that is pervasive in schools serving lower-income communities (Bates, 2012), the massive expansion of pay-to-play athletic and music programs that negatively and disproportionately impacts poor and working class students and communities (Snellman, Silva, Frederick, & Putnam, 2015; Wright, 2012), the reduction or outright elimination of transportation services that makes attendance at school more sporadic in poor and working class communities (Reid, 2013; Community Agency for Social Enquiry and Joint Education Trust, 2007), the diminution of benefits plans for both full and part-

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time employees that provides further incentive to eschew employment in poor and working class communities or to remain part of the teaching profession at all, thus creating a revolving door of inexperienced teachers, the reclassification of selected staff positions from 11 to 10 months (Hanover Research, 2011; O'Connor & Gonzalez, 2011), and the laying-off of teachers which consequently weakens teachers unions (Greenhouse, 2011), increases class sizes (Dillon, 2011), and negatively impacts school morale - all quiet victories for neoliberal ideologues who see such cracks as opportunities to facilitate increased parental choice in a competitive educational marketplace.

It should be noted that the disproportionate and pernicious effects of shifting greater financial responsibility for schools to localities is an issue not only for students attending PK-12 schools. More than half of Florida high school graduates who took college placement tests in the 2010-2011 school year, the majority of whom are from poor and working class communities, learned they had to take at least one remedial course in college (O'Connor & Gonzalez, 2012). If that loss of time to take said course(s) were not enough, these remedial courses must be paid for out-of-pocket, and do not count toward one's degree, once again disproportionately impacting poor and working class students. Another group now facing a disproportionately difficult time of things because of the A++ Plan are English Language Learners.

Counseling services: One cost of declining state support. On a more local level, Florida's students are victims of the A++ Plan's neoliberal championing of individual responsibility in that there has been a state-wide diminution of guidance counseling services on the heels of the creation of the FACTS.org website. The website

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provides 24/7 automated guidance services - services especially tailored to the major in which a student might want to enroll. In 2006, when the A++ legislation passed, the student-to-counselor ratio in Florida ranked 29th in the nation at 448-to-1 in 2006 (ASCA, 2006) - nearly twice the ASCA's recommendation of a 250-to-1 ratio. Since the legislation went into effect, Florida's ranking has in fact *fallen* in state rankings to 31st at 491-to-1 in 2011 (FSCA, 2011), a fact that does not bode well considering the body of research on the positive impact of student-to-counselor ratios on academic achievement, college application rates, and the reduction of disciplinary issues, amongst other concerns (Bryan et. al., 2011; Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Lapan et. al., 2012; Lee & Ekstrom, 1987), especially in high-poverty schools (Lapan et. al., 2012). Florida's ratio, like that of other states, is likely higher in low income areas and in schools serving high-minority populations (Lapan et. al., 2012; NCES, 2004), as is the case in Jacksonville, Florida's Crown Point Elementary School wherein a single counselor serves more than 1,100 students (Amos, 2014). Florida, like much of the nation, has become more racially diverse over the past decade, whereas in the 2000 Census some 34.6% of residents identified as non-white (ranking as the 13th most racially diverse state in the country), and in the 2010 Census some 42.1% identified as non-white (moving up to the 11th most racially diverse state in the country), a 21.7% change that outpaces the national average over that time period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Students already situated on the margins because of their income level or race, which is increasingly a consideration in Florida, may be less likely to engage in regular and substantive communications with their guidance counselors, ergo relying more heavily upon the FACTS.org website.

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Moreover, there is a noticeable dearth of Spanish-speaking counselors in Florida (Smith-Adcock et. al., 2006), wherein nearly 28% of the population speaks a first language other than English in their home, 8.3% of homes speak English “not at all” in the home, and where the 3rd largest Hispanic and Latino population in the country lives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This suggests that Spanish-speaking students are already being underserved by counseling services that by and large do not match the academic, cultural, social, and career guidance counseling services English-speaking students receive. This is not a criticism of the counselors themselves, but of a system that has inadequately provided for the needs of generations of students, notably those of minority backgrounds, and which has asked our counseling ranks to bear the burden of providing superior services to overwhelming numbers of an increasingly diverse student body. All this, amid a deliberate alteration of district hiring practices that has seen money diverted from the hiring of already-rare licensed, credentialed *guidance* counselors to the hiring of *career* counselors, as has occurred at Gulf Coast High School in Naples, Florida, to explicitly support students in their exploration of careers (Miguel, 2007).

Considering these gloomy realities, it is conceivable that counselors in Florida will have less opportunity to schedule frequent, regular meetings with students to discuss their choice of Major, especially those at highest risk of dropping out, despite the ironic recommendations from the Florida DOE that, “When a student is selecting a major area of interest, it is important for educators providing academic advisement to the student to review the student’s transcript to advise [them]” (FLDOE, 2007a), and

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that “it is very important for students to work with their guidance counselors, career specialists, and teachers in order to identify and select courses” (FLDOE, 2007b).

Yet, as students receive less guidance from overburdened, de-valued, and now de-skilled guidance counselors (see Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) from whom they would ordinarily receive personalized assistance with their course selection, students will increasingly come to rely upon the FACTS.org website, an ostensibly “blind,” web-based “guidance” system that has a “Degrees & Careers” orientation, and is neither attuned to nor even aware of the unique sociocultural, economic, and political contexts in which individual students live and struggle. Reflecting the core neoliberal principle of individual responsibility, students will be expected to bear greater, if not sole, responsibility for their academic and career planning, relying on the output of computer-based surveys as their primary guide. This approach invariably favors students, families, and communities that possess and are capable of leveraging the financial and social resources so often lacking in less affluent districts, especially urban districts that have disproportionate numbers of poor, minority, and English language learning families (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987). Those most capable of successfully navigating the system and related resources will have advantages the likes of which these others can only dream.

Conclusion

My analysis in this chapter highlights the larger policy arena in which the A++ Plan is situated, and the incumbent dangers associated with the ideologically-inspired moves of the legislation. The A++ Plan’s mutually reinforcing commitments to neoliberal and neoconservative maxims stands to undermine public schools and subject historically marginalized student populations to further obstacles in their path to

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becoming educated and involved critical thinkers. The four ideological imperatives at work in the A++ Plan - an allegiance to workforce readiness, a burgeoning system of standardization and accountability, the elevation of traditional values and nationalism, and the championing of individual responsibility - complement one another in their objectives. As teachers and schools become more standardized in their approach and outcomes, driven by instructional mandates and myopic systems of accountability, students become more easily manipulated by a business-friendly public school system that values and advances their individual, instrumental worth over alternative, intrinsic outcomes.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications for Research, Policy and Practice

The sense of what education is and is for, the nature of the social relationships of schooling, teacher-student, teacher-parent and student-student relationships, are all changed by the forces and micro-practices of the market and their realization in specific localities and institutional settings. (Ball, 2001, p. XXXV)

We are at a tipping point in the history of American education. The schools of tomorrow must begin preparing students for a world increasingly characterized by not only mutual national interests, economic co-dependence, and unbridled globalization in certain vertical sectors, but also exploding income inequality, a re-entrenchment of racial tensions, and growing disparities in educational outcomes based on one's geography, race, socioeconomic status, and proficiency with English, amongst other factors. The growing neoliberal marketization of educational institutions worldwide, coupled with a subtle but deliberate restoration of a devoutly neoconservative curricular moralizing, has led to a narrowing and in some cases scripting of curricula, the widespread standardization of teaching and assessment methods, and the pervasive acceptance of pre-ordained educational outcomes that purposefully facilitate competitive, and oftentimes divisive, comparisons between students, schools, communities, states, and nations. Schools have taken - or rather, been *assigned* by ideologically-oriented, pro-business politicians - a leading role in the espousing and perpetuating of this narrative. Undoubtedly, policy thus represents the leading edge of

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these changes in schools, steering both theory and practice towards ideologically-driven ends.

As a “top down and regulative event” (Woodside-Jiron, 2002), policy is the most tangible manifestation of the dominant ideological discourse governing a geopolitical arena. While agency and compromise are indeed factors in the shaping of such discourse, policy - more than anything else - “reproduces or changes the social world by reproducing or changing people’s representations of it and the principles of classification which underlie them” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 182). Policy is the governing orthodoxy that manipulates and alters both the rules by which participants engage in the daily practice of their lives, and the participants themselves insofar as what is possible or even conceivable. As such, this critical policy analysis was designed to both reveal the ideological foundation of the A++ Plan, and subsequently analyze the implications of the legislation’s ideological orientation for schooling and the reproduction of inequality in Florida, now the 3rd most populous state in the nation (US Census Bureau, 2014), and an increasingly influential milieu in national politics. In this analysis, I have offered an account of the legislation’s most influential statutes, and discerned overarching ideological imperatives evinced therein. In Chapter Four, I analyzed the ways in which Florida’s A++ Plan illustrated distinctly neoliberal and neoconservative ideological orientations in the language and statutory moves of the legislation. Chapter Five situates and presents the statutory moves discussed in Chapter Four in a larger policy arena, while commensurately examining what the larger field of educational research warns us of relative to such ideological stances.

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The language of the A++ Plan, which passed on a straight party line vote in the Florida HoR, 85-35, and near party line vote in the Florida Senate, is deftly arranged to seduce its readers into taking for granted its ideological premises. Herein, the legislation functions to tacitly produce and overtly endorse a state and business-sponsored educational discourse of cultural homogenization more focused on preparing a compliant and customized workforce, imbued with traditional morals, than on preparing a society of critical thinkers and active participants in our democracy. The A++ Plan sanctions an instrumentalist, corporate model of education that exhibits a significant degree of control over the curriculum, methods of instruction, and means of evaluation in Florida's schools – a clean sweep of Bernstein's (1971, 1973, 1975) three message systems of the school: curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. These message systems, as Prunty (1985) points out, are "conduits through which the values institutionalized by the policy process are imposed upon students and perpetuated in society" (p. 136). This dissertation reveals the depth and breadth to which the ideologies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism have - and their practical manifestations - have permeated educational policy and policymaking in Florida. At that, however, the dissertation also aims to resist and interrupt the narrative promulgated by Florida policymakers who are so embracing of these ideological maneuvers, while simultaneously aiming to both make known to and elicit greater resistance from progressive educators and organizations throughout the state and nation. Pockets of resistance to these moves do exist in Florida, but need to be more fully linked to one another in order to more successfully resist these ideological stratagems that are so influencing of Bernstein's messaging systems.

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Control of these message systems and the elimination of alternative discourses, notably through ideological moves such as the A++ Plan's treatment of history as a factual subject, according to Bourdieu (quoted in Hursh, 2001a), "is what gives the dominant discourse its strength – that there is nothing to put forward in opposition to the neoliberal view, that it has succeeded in presenting itself as self-evident" (p. 3) in schools and social institutions. Economist and activist Susan George (1999) concurs, pointing out that neoliberalism is not only commonsensical, but "is made to seem inevitable, like an act of God, the only possible economic and social order available to us" (§ 8). The corporate model of education the A++ Plan endorses, Robertson (2005) further points out, "allows business to structure the rhetoric, to predict the utility, to build the language, and to gain consent in order to control the populace" (§ 69). Policies such as the A++ Plan will not bring about significant social changes that interrupt the master narrative and build a more just and equitable society, acknowledging that the people in charge of writing, implementing, and evaluating the plan are those best served by it. Rather, a systemic and systematic recoding of these moves at the policy level is necessary in order to openly resist the "commonsense" neoliberal and neoconservative ideological visions of society that have become so pervasive and disarming of the public writ large. As Adichie (2015) compellingly asserts, "to choose to write is to reject silence," which largely reflects the underlying purpose of this dissertation: to expose and confront the dominant ideological narratives driving Florida's A++ Plan, and their respective impact upon Florida's students and citizenry. Undertaking this endeavor is a critically important step in challenging and eventually reversing the ideological current

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moving so swiftly across both Florida and the nation - a current that commodifies people as little more than cogs in an economic machine.

Antithetical to Prunty's (1985) assertion that people should never be treated as a means to an end, neoliberal and neoconservative policies, especially the former when enacted in and through schools such as the A++ Plan, squarely situate the economic interests and prosperity of industry above and at the expense of the individual, despite the fact that it is the individual's (and workers' collective) commodified labor that oftentimes begets such prosperity. As sites of social mobility and social capital development, schools represent the most vital institution our nation possesses for preparing children for life as adults. Turning control of schools over to the invisible hand of the marketplace and "common culture" advocates is tantamount to abandonment by the state of its responsibility to the dynamic sociopolitical fabric of the United States and the very notion of the public good. An education with primarily economic objectives, driven by an economic imperative, commodifies children as human capital, as "disposable workers" (Bales, 2000) filling the temporal needs of business. "Children," Kozol (2005) laments,

are regarded as investments, assets, or productive units – or else, failing that, as pint-sized human deficits who threaten our competitive capacities. The package of skills they learn, or do not learn, is the "product" of the school. (p. 94)

Movement towards a more democratic and just society will not occur if we continue to shift the goals of schooling away from intrinsic, emancipatory ends in favor of the exigent, instrumentalist, and oftentimes ephemeral objectives of the marketplace,

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made manifest through the ideological imperatives discussed in Chapter Four, and unpacked and contextualized in a larger policy arena in Chapter Five.

At that, this study supports what is already well-known from the perspective of critical educational policy analysis: that public schools are becoming increasingly beholden to the interests of business and corporations, while simultaneously experiencing a neoconservative renaissance aimed at reconstituting traditional values in and through our schools. The A++ Plan aims to normalize ideological imperatives espoused by neoliberalism and neoconservatism, setting in motion programs that will see these imperatives to their fruition in schools. In particular, the ideological imperatives of an allegiance to workforce readiness, a burgeoning system of standardization and accountability, the elevation of traditional values and nationalism, and the championing of individual responsibility have substantially altered the direction of Florida public education in ways that reproduce existing social divisions, and which further instantiate neoliberal and neoconservative maxims in the discourse of public education, endeavoring to make them appear commonsensical.

Florida's moves in these directions are emblematic of a larger national and arguably global "conservative restoration" (Apple, 2000b, 2006a) seen in many states and nations across the country and world, respectively. In Wisconsin, for instance, one of the most brazen efforts to undermine the public trust was recently attempted by Governor Scott Walker. Walker, who is contemplating a run for President in 2016 and who has a history of ideologically neoliberal moves to his credit (Collins, 2012b; Perkins, 2012), attempted to realign the University of Wisconsin's longstanding mission of "seeking truth" and "educat[ing] people and improv[ing] the human condition" to one

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narrowly and neoliberally concerned with meeting “the state’s work force needs” (New York Times, 2015). Such a pursuit of ideological hegemony, which is but a singular example of a larger contemporary narrative (Harvey, 2005), set in motion by a powerful state whose fiduciary interests are aligned with the interests of the business community - and thus lay outside the scope of the public good - has met with resistance, but powerful forces with significant voices and considerable financial backing represent a rising tide of corporatism and control that threatens the very fabric of public schooling in and beyond the United States.

While Walker’s move in Wisconsin was a patently symbolic one, Florida’s A++ Plan has set in motion a series of neoliberal and neoconservative programs that represent an existential threat to public education in the state as it has historically been known. A brief recapitulation of the key findings of this analysis, as the effects of these ideological moves are legion, will help to weave together the ideological narratives at work in the A++ Plan.

The first key finding of the analysis was that the A++ Plan is imbued with a commitment to the neoliberal tenet of workforce readiness, elevating an economic imperative above all other outcomes. The Major Areas of Interest requirement of the legislation, coupled with the Career and Professional Academies and Ready-to-Work Program established through the legislation, advance a decidedly neoliberal agenda, shifting the purpose of an education from what was once an intrinsic outcome to an instrumental one whose success is a function of one’s market worth and return on investment. Students are commodified by this new marketplace of the school, treated as so-called “education customers” while in the system, and as interchangeable cogs of a

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machine in a corporate world thereafter. Further, the content, concepts, and skills students master while in schools are similarly commodified, recast by the legislation to largely serve economic and corporate ends. Finally, the deliberate elevation of “the nature and importance of free enterprise to the United States economy” (lines 1201-1202) punctuates this ideological imperative, idealizing and institutionalizing a system of economy that favors certain segments of society while re/producing the status quo in ways that diminish the potential for social change.

The second key finding of the analysis was how thoroughly a system of standards and accountability has permeated the state of Florida’s educational system, impacting districts, schools, teachers, and students alike. The nexus of growing a statewide commitment to school choice on the back of ongoing public shaming of Florida’s public schools and school districts via state report card grades, amplified under the A++ Plan, undermines the public’s confidence in our schools in ways that have promoted the explosive growth of charter schools and the rise of a private voucher program that steers public tax dollars to private and religious institutions. Moreover, the legislation’s commitment to producing contributors to the economy, illustrated in its reliance upon the key metrics of a “completer’s” or “noncompleter’s” employment status, earnings, and return on investment, evinces a clear commitment to neoliberal tenets. Finally, the A++ Plan’s championing of scientifically-based research indicates a shift away from the education of students as individuals who possess unique cognitive capabilities and thus require differentiated instruction, to a paradigm in which all students are treated as clones whereupon educational interventions are expected to work identically for all, and whose differences are neither acknowledged nor leveraged

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to their success. That is by no means a diminution or condemnation of the role classroom teachers play, but is rather an expression of how this particular policy's commitment to and holding of scientifically-based research as the gold standard increasingly handcuffs classroom teachers, restricting them from doing all they professionally can to enable and empower their students to achieve their potential (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Presley et al., 2001; see also Cochran-Smith, 2003).

A third key finding of the analysis was that the A++ Plan embraces a position that advances traditional values and an overt nationalism steeped in the ideology of neoconservatism. Most present in the *Required Instruction* statute of the legislation, the character development program's purposeful cultivation of a strident patriotism, the expectation that abstinence be taught as the "expected norm" of personal intimate conduct, and most notably the casting of History as a distinctly factual - not interpretive - subject, thoroughly express the character of neoconservatism. The distribution of bibles in several Florida schools represents the apex of this ideologically-engineered trajectory for Florida schools, marking a clear predilection towards a "common culture" and distinct American identity.

The final key finding of the analysis was that individual responsibility has increasingly come to the fore in Florida as a tacit, yet powerful ideological imperative of the A++ Plan. The state of Florida has slowly abdicated its fiduciary responsibility to schools and students, shifting the onus of financial responsibility onto localities while imposing increased, but selective control over programs and policies that advance neoliberal and neoconservative axioms. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in frequent budget shortfalls that have forced said localities to seek emergency budget remedies

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that involve the diminution of academic programming, the elimination or reclassification of teaching and staff positions, the raising of private capital to offset fiscal shortages, and the luring of increasing numbers of choice students and the tax dollars that follow them into districts. At the school level, Florida students are increasingly expected to take individual responsibility for the direction of their own education, including the selection of a major area of interest spanning a four-year period, with a website - FACTS.org - serving as their primary “counselor” along the way. This is particularly the case for linguistic minority students whose first language is something other than English, and for cultural minorities. Both of these groups have been historically marginalized by a counseling system in Florida that - rather than being bolstered through an investment in human resources that are culturally and linguistically diverse - is being propped-up through an interactive website that produces a response based on survey input from students, as opposed to real, meaningful, informed conversation.

Taken together, these key findings translate into a powerful shifting of educational discourse in Florida, pointedly shaped by the ideological interests of neoliberals and neoconservatives, resulting in the re/production of existing divisions in the State’s sociopolitical fabric.

Implications of This Study

This analysis of Florida’s A++ Plan has significance in and beyond the state. Florida has long been looked at by other states as a signpost of educational reform, and the policy moves made within the A++ Plan will continue to inform the policy and practices of these others. As such, of primary importance is establishing a countervailing narrative at the state and national level that successfully peels back the

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ideological imperatives made manifest through legislation such as the A++ Plan. One successful effort in this regard was just recently achieved when the Florida state legislature, in the face of increasing pressure from various groups in and out of the state - quietly bowed to that pressure, sunsetting the Major Areas of Interest requirement that had hitherto forced all public high school students to declare a major.

Hailed as a win by supporters of the policy shift, such victories bring hope to public education advocates who see schools as sites of struggle and resistance that facilitate the development of critical consciousness, creativity, and meaning. The agency of those involved in this challenge is heartening, but at the same time represents a single victory against an increasingly powerful sociopolitical narrative set in motion by shrewd legislators and corporate elites. Shortly after sunsetting the MAI requirement, the Florida legislature passed two bills circumventing the need for students to declare majors, the first sanctifying career and technology training as a core requirement that exist alongside Mathematics, English, Science and other core disciplines (Cournoyer, 2012), and another, Florida Educational Statutes 1003.429(1)(c), formalizing what had been a small, isolated pilot program into an accelerated 18-credit, 3-year Career Preparation Program that graduates students from high school directly into employment in three years instead of four (FLDOE, 2012a). The Career Preparation Program, it should be noted, requires students to pick a vocational or career/technical certification track to pursue, while hitherto eliminating foreign language, arts, and physical education requirements from a student's high school education. Even more alarmingly, while Florida may well have divested itself of the Major Areas of Interest mandate, South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi, as well as both New York and New Jersey on a

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smaller scale, have taken up the mantle, launching similar programs that require students to declare majors as ninth graders (Cournoyer, 2012; Hu, 2007).

In addition to these legislative moves, Florida public schools continue to actively encourage students to seek out a career-centric course of study over their four years, as well as specific programs that result in workplace certifications and credentials (Wixon, 2012). Collins' (1979, 2000, 2002) fears of a credential society seem to have been fully realized in Florida.

The momentum that neoliberalism and neoconservatism possess, especially the former, reminds us that there is an urgency to the work of progressive educators. In addition, the seemingly incompatible, yet mutually reinforcing relationship between neoliberalism and neoconservatism represents an existential and hegemonic threat to public schools and the forward trajectory of the common good of our nation. When the State purposefully sets in motion machinations that foster a paucity of critical thinking, an overt and blind loyalty to the marketplace, and the dogged pursuit of a "common culture" at the expense of the unique diversity that makes us who we are, we are given pause. As such, and though writing explicitly about modernity writ large, Anthony Giddens' (1990) metaphor of the juggernaut is nevertheless an apt one relative to the tempest that is the alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism in Florida:

...a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder. The juggernaut crushes those who resist it, and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee. (139)

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Moving forward, advocates for progressive education such as myself must look for sites to resist the juggernaut, elevating and championing progressive ideals such as social justice, democracy, political participation, equity, and differentiation. Research into the outcomes of neoliberal and neoconservative educational policymaking and policies must continue and, more importantly, must be made publicly visible as a means of creating a counter-narrative not only in academic circles, but amongst a broader population that has been influenced towards the “commonsense” appeals neoliberal and neoconservative ideologues have made in recent decades. Such advocates would be wise to heed Polanyi’s (1944/2001) remarks that “To allow the market mechanism to be the sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment...would result in the demolition of society” (p. 73). Emphasizing the potential for progressive change, as well as publicly elevating the victories we experience, will encourage increasing numbers of teachers, students, and communities to stand up for an education that is meaningful, just, equitable, and intellectually compelling.

APPENDIX B

CURRENT STATE AND FEDERAL TESTING REQUIREMENTS IN FLORIDA FOR
K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

		State and Federal Testing requirements in Florida for K-12 Public School Students <i>Red highlighting</i> Indicates Assessments Students Must Pass for Promotion or Graduation Compiled by Florida House of Representatives Staff					
		STATE LAW REQUIRES	FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide standardized English language arts (grades 3-11) and math assessments (grades 3-8, Algebra I & Geometry) since 2001; and a science assessment in (grades 5, 8, and Biology I) since 2003. These assessments form the basis of our school accountability system. The Florida Alternate Assessment offered as an alternative to the Florida Standards Assessment for cognitively impaired students. Since 1999, school districts must use local assessments, for each course not assessed under the statewide assessment program, to measure student performance, calculate learning gains, and evaluate instructional personnel. Districts may use statewide assessments, other standardized assessments, industry certification assessments, district-developed or district-selected end-of-course assessments, or teacher-selected or principal-selected assessments. Administration of the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) to 11th graders not meeting college-ready standards on state assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, English language arts and math assessments in grades 3-8 and once in high school; and a science assessment once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. Administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress at a sample of schools in grades 4 and 8, every other year. Administration of the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment to certain students identified as English language learners. 				
Level	Grade	Reading, Writing, Math, and Science	Other Subjects	Math	Science	Social Studies	Courses not measured by Statewide Assessments
Elementary	K	Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener must be administered to each kindergarten student within the first 30 school days	Measurement of student performance based upon grade level standards				
	1	Student performance in reading, writing, math and science must be assessed at each grade level.					
	2						
Middle	3	English Language Arts		Math			
	4	Florida Standards Assessment		Florida Standards Assessment			
	5	Florida Standards Assessment		Florida Standards Assessment	FCAT		
	6	Florida Standards Assessment		Florida Standards Assessment			
	7	Florida Standards Assessment		Florida Standards Assessment			
	8	Florida Standards Assessment		Florida Standards Assessment	FCAT		
	9	Florida Standards Assessment		Algebra I EOC			
	10	Florida Standards Assessment		Geometry EOC and Algebra II EOC also satisfy Federal math requirement.	Biology I EOC satisfies federal science requirement.		
High	11	Florida Standards Assessment/PERT		PERT (11 th)		U.S. History EOC	
	12						
Shading:		Required statewide assessment	Required by state and federal law	Required by state law: locally selected assessment	Abbreviations: EOC-End of Course Assessment FCAT-Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test		

APPENDIX C

WORD COUNT - ENGROSSED (DRAFT) AND ENROLLED (FINAL)

VERSIONS OF HB7087

	Engrossed (Draft Version)	Enrolled (Final Version)	Net Change (Original to Final)
Workforce	8	12	+4
Workplace	7	11	+4
Economic	4	8	+4
School-to-Work	0	1	+1
Business	9	11	+2
Standards	55	99	+44
Standardized	2	5	+3
Accountability/accountable	24	26	+2
Industry	9	9	Even
Employment/Employer	6	7	+1
Scientific/scientifically/ Evidence	9	10	+1
Free Enterprise	0	2	+2
Research-based	12	19	+7
Flag	0	3	+3
Patriotism	0	2	+2
Character (in the context of character development)	0	6	+6
Career	46	79	+33
Job(s)/Occupation(s)	11	28	+17
Democracy/Democratic	0	2	+2

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	Engrossed (Draft Version)	Enrolled (Final Version)	Net Change (Original to Final)
Workforce	8	12	+4
Workplace	7	11	+4
Economic	4	8	+4
School-to-Work	0	1	+1
Business	9	11	+2
Standards	55	99	+44
Standardized	2	5	+3
Accountability/accountable	24	26	+2
Industry	9	9	Even
Employment/Employer	6	7	+1
Scientific/scientifically/ Evidence	9	10	+1
Free Enterprise	0	2	+2
Research-based	12	19	+7
Flag	0	3	+3
Patriotism	0	2	+2
Character (in the context of character development)	0	6	+6
Career	46	79	+33
Job(s)/Occupation(s)	11	28	+17
Democracy/Democratic	0	2	+2
Inclusive	0	0	Even
Diversity	0	1	+1
Differentiated Instruction	0	3	+3

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	Engrossed (Draft Version)	Enrolled (Final Version)	Net Change (Original to Final)
Disadvantaged	1	1	Even

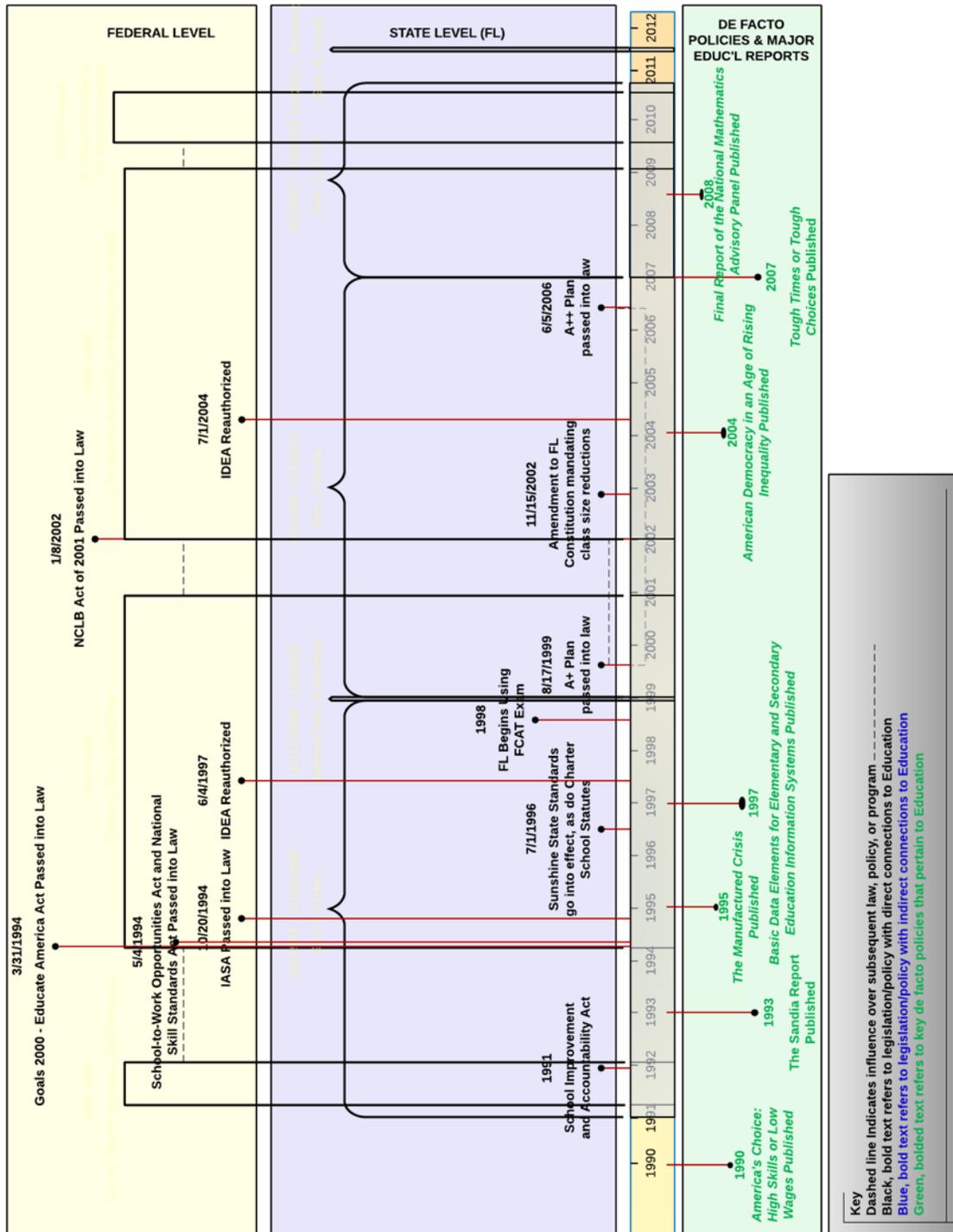
APPENDIX D

INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS MAJORS AT HIGH-POVERTY/HIGH-MINORITY AND
LOW-POVERTY/LOW-MINORITY FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOLS, 2007-2008

The table is a large grid with a yellow header and a yellow vertical line. The header contains school names and other identifying information. The grid contains data for each school, likely representing enrollment numbers for various industrial and business majors. The text in the grid is extremely small and illegible.

APPENDIX E

RECENT FLORIDA AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT



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