

THE GOVERNORS' CLUB:
EXAMINING GUBERNATORIAL POWER, INFLUENCE, AND POLICY-MAKING
IN THE CONTEXT OF STATEWIDE EDUCATION REFORM IN THE SOUTH

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Education.

Chapel Hill
2010

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ABSTRACT

Dallas T. Stallings, III: The Governors' Club: Rethinking Gubernatorial Power, Influence, and Policy-Making in the Context of Statewide Education Reform in the South
(Under the direction of Catherine Marshall)

In a brief span of years in the early 1980s, Southern governors from Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, Arkansas, Florida, and South Carolina spearheaded successful efforts to convince their states to adopt significant education reform. In so doing, they helped to establish the concept of the modern “education governor.” This study considers two central questions related to these events:

1. What contributed to the development of Southern governors into education policy leaders during this critical period? and
2. What lessons from these reform efforts and institutional changes might be applicable to broader questions of gubernatorial power and governor-led policy reform?

The study presents a more fully-realized picture of the integrated parts of an education governorship than exists in current scholarship. It also introduces the concept of the *executive leadership moment* as a lens for situating changes in executive leadership within a broader set of historical forces. Finally, it suggests that future analyses of gubernatorial power will benefit from a consideration of governors not as isolated and independent actors within state contexts who are beholden to prescribed formal powers but instead as networked actors who are able to change their political environments and operate in policy contexts that are not limited by state or regional boundaries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the cases in this study demonstrate, it is unlikely that even the best of governors has the ability to bring about education policy change in her or his state without the aid of a competent and engaged support staff. Without a doubt, the conception, development, and completion of this dissertation would have been impossible without a similar level of commitment from a terrific team.

First thanks go to the public figures who gave generously of their time and patiently answered every question put to them. Special thanks to Governors Alexander, Graham, Hunt, Riley, and Winter, who were an inspiration not only for this study but also for my own career in public service. Several colleagues in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also helped to shape the study. In particular, I would like to thank Aaron Cooley and Julie Keane, who read through the original proposal and provided invaluable feedback. Thanks, also, to Mary Faith Mount-Cors, who insisted on the existence of our dissertation reading group, even though in the end we only managed to recruit two participants.

Many faculty and staff members at UNC and North Carolina State University also worked hard to move this study from idea to reality. The study might not have reached the proposal stage without the early guidance of Dean Thomas James, who also made my interdisciplinary program of study possible. Wendy Borman at UNC and Glenn Kleiman at NCSU made sure that the research was funded via their sponsorship of several relevant

education policy internships. My committee spent many hours not only reading through what turned out to be a rather lengthy narrative but also engaging in discussions throughout its development about methods, theories, and emerging realizations. My advisor, Catherine Marshall, deserves particular thanks for supporting the study from its inception, even when the author himself questioned its feasibility.

Finally, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to my family for their enthusiasm and encouragement at every stage of the process. Ear scratches all around for Buck (1994-2008), Liddy, and Casey, my loyal and faithful writing companions. Fist-bumps to Hutch and Wells for providing timely and stress-relieving Lego breaks and front-yard baseball games. And my deepest thanks of all I reserve for Meb, whose patience, understanding, encouragement, and love made it all worthwhile.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
---------------------	----

LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
----------------------	---

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
----------------------	---

Questions and Policy Significance	2
---	---

The Rise of the Education Governor in the South.....	4
--	---

Contributions to the Literature.....	7
--------------------------------------	---

A Framework for the Research.....	9
-----------------------------------	---

Methods, Data, and Data Collection.....	11
---	----

2. METHODOLOGY, DATA, AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	15
--	----

Overview of Methodological Strategy.....	15
--	----

Methodological Approach.....	16
------------------------------	----

Data.....	21
-----------	----

Data Analysis.....	31
--------------------	----

3. TAKING THE LONG VIEW: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	38
--	----

Lenses for Analyzing the Historical Context.....	38
--	----

Constructing the Executive Leadership Moment: The Historical Context.....	43
---	----

Constructing the Executive Leader: Changes in the Governorship.....	69
---	----

Moving from the Regional Level to Individual Narratives.....	81
--	----

4. GOVERNOR-LED EDUCATION REFORM IN THE SOUTH, 1982-1985.....	82
Moving Beyond Historical Analysis.....	82
The View from the Individual Level: Converting Possibilities into Realities.....	83
Three Cases: Winter, Alexander, and Hunt.....	90
Additional Case Studies.....	127
5. CONSTRUCTING THE EDUCATION GOVERNOR.....	129
A Framework for Understanding Education Governorships.....	129
Evidence and Analysis.....	132
Summary.....	155
6. IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENDING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION GOVERNORSHIPS.....	158
Assessing the Executive Leadership Moment Concept.....	158
Re-Framing the Governorship.....	164
Moving Forward.....	183
APPENDICES.....	190
Appendix A: Additional Theoretical Concepts in More Detail.....	190
Appendix B: Other First-Generation Southern Education Governorships of the 1980s.....	202
Appendix C: A Second-Wave Southern Education Governorship.....	236
Appendix D: Data Sources.....	243
Appendix E: Sample Two-Tiered Interview Question Template.....	248
Appendix F: Summary of Initial and Revised Coding Scheme.....	250

Appendix G: Relevant National and Regional Organizations and Selected Publications.....	252
Appendix H: Evidence in Support of Previously Defined Characteristics of Education Governorships.....	261
Appendix I: The Triumph of Values over Party Identity.....	276
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	279

LIST OF TABLES

Table

3.1 – <i>An Outline of Chapter 3</i>	42
3.2 – <i>Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Source, 1969-1985, in 000s</i>	52
3.3 – <i>State Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in the South, by Source, 1969-1985, in 000s</i>	53
3.4 – <i>Relevant Publications, 1981-1984</i>	78
4.1 – <i>Gubernatorial Power, 1980 (Selected States)</i>	85
5.1 – <i>Education Governorships Re-Conceptualized</i>	156
5.2 – <i>Primary Characteristics of Each Education Governorship (Informal Assessment)</i>	157
A.1 – <i>Political Cultures Typologies</i>	199
G.1 – <i>The Need for Quality and Original Reforms Proposed by Southern Governors</i>	260

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

<i>1.1 – Conceptual Framework.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>6.1 – Southern Accents: A Revised Theoretical Conceptual Framework.....</i>	<i>164</i>

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

On a rainy day in November, 2009, in a formal conference room in the Old Capitol Building in Raleigh, North Carolina, Governor Beverly Perdue gathered together the heads of several of the state's largest and most influential education interest groups to gauge their support for her office's application for a large federal education grant. The governor's application included several policy proposals that traditionally would not sit well with many of the organizations represented at the meeting.

To even a casual observer, it would have been evident that Governor Perdue most likely did not call the meeting to *ask* for each organization's support so much as to politely but firmly *insist* on it. Though the governor framed the meeting with a series of seemingly open-ended questions designed to ascertain each group's stance, she contextualized each question by outlining the negative consequences for the state if any of the attendees' answers implied dissent; in every case, the "correct" answer always was clear. The governor even rearranged the seating at the start of the meeting, as if to imply a connection between each organization's current level of support for her proposal and its resultant relative position of influence with the governor. In deeds and in words, Governor Perdue asserted her position as the state's education policy leader; perhaps more significantly, the subsequent tacit accession of the attendees confirmed it.

Perdue's hands-on involvement and leadership in the formation of education policy in her state are not unique among her gubernatorial contemporaries and immediate

predecessors, many of whom often are referred to as “education governors”; even the requirements of the federal grant under discussion at the meeting described above (with their stipulation that the grant application must originate in the governor’s office) indicate federal awareness that governors are now a key fulcrum-point for education reform in their states. And yet, as recently as a few decades ago, education policy-making and governorships were barely on speaking terms. Indeed, for much of the twentieth century, the governorship was considered to be a weak state-level institution (Thomas, 1992). Words like “modernizer,” “reformer,” and “activist” were practically unheard of in conversations about governors; more likely were terms such as “second rate,” “machine dupe,” “political pipsqueak,” and “good-time Charlie” (Sabato, 1983, pp. 1, 9). Of all of the governorships across the country, those in the South often were considered to be the weakest (*cf.* Beyle, 2007). By the start of the 1980s, however, something changed, and it changed in a particularly noticeable way for Southern governors in the area of education. This study is an investigation of the rapid transformation of governors from education policy also-rans into education reform flag bearers during a brief but critical period in the South. The goal of the study is to develop a theoretical framework that, in helping to explain how those governors’ role in education policymaking was reshaped, also broadens our understanding of changes in gubernatorial power on a wider scale.

Questions and Policy Significance

In a brief span of years in the early 1980s, several Southern states adopted governor-sponsored education legislation that ushered in landmark reforms to what in some instances were education systems that had changed little since the nineteenth

century. But these governors' successful approaches to education policy reform were transformative in broader ways as well. Collectively, these governors (along with a host of contemporary publications like *A Nation at Risk*) helped focus national attention on education policy reform to a degree not seen since Johnson's Great Society programs of the 1960s, and they also set a new course for state-level education policy-making that would inform it for at least a generation afterwards. Perhaps most important, however, was their role in helping to establish not just themselves as effective reformers but also the governorship in general as an important and potent player in the formation of state education policy.

The central question addressed by this study is two-fold:

1. What contributed to the development of Southern governors into education policy leaders during this critical period? and
2. What lessons from these reform efforts and institutional changes might be applicable to broader questions of gubernatorial power and governor-led policy reform?

By investigating the strategies of these reform-minded governors, as well as the historical trends leading up to their critical reform moments, we can enhance our understanding of how these state leaders were able to establish the modern "education governorship."

Through this inquiry, we also may be able to approach a more general understanding of how political actors break into policy arenas into which access has been previously limited, and perhaps even of how these actors can transform institutions like the governorship to such a degree that their successors can continue to exercise influence on a given policy process. The cases upon which the research is based come from the South

during the period cited above, when gubernatorial activism in the region was high but before education was a focus of most governors' agendas.

The Rise of the Education Governor in the South

The term "education governor" entered common usage only relatively recently, most likely as a direct descendent of President Johnson's self-anointment as the "education president," a claim he made based on passage of his Great Society school programs (Berube, 1991; McAndrews, 2006). The concept behind the label, however, as well as its frequent association with the South, are not inventions of the modern era. Gubernatorial leadership in education reform has long been closely associated with the South, perhaps to a degree unparalleled in other regions of the country. Krotseng (1987), Guillory (2005), Hulett (2006), and others suggest that the roots of this association can be traced back to the education work and public presence of two turn-of-the-century governors: North Carolina's Charles B. Aycock (1901-1905) and Georgia's Joseph M. Terrell (1902-1907).¹ Aycock instituted the first state appropriation of tax money for public education and oversaw a boom in school building construction (Guillory, 2005), while Terrell lobbied for new and improved educational institutions, sponsored legislation that made it easier for counties to levy local taxes to support schools, and

¹ Arguments also can be made for christening the turn-of-the-century Southern Progressive governors of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia as "education governors" (Krotseng, 1987). Those governors include: Alabama – Braxton Bragg Comer (1907-1911); Florida – Napoleon B. Broward (1905-1909); Louisiana – William Wright Heard (1900-1904); South Carolina – Miles Benjamin McSweeney (1899-1903); Tennessee – Benton McMillin (1899-1903); and Virginia – Andrew Jackson Montague (1902-1906).

established several vocational schools that served as the model for what would become his state's public school system (Hulett, 2006).²

To this day, lists of claimants to the title of "education governor" continue to "resound[] with a distinctly Southern accent" (Krotseng, 1987, p. 4). Most observers consider the first Great Society education governors to be Terry Sanford of North Carolina (1961-1965; Caldwell, 1985) and Georgia governor Carl Sanders (1963-1967), and they were also the first to whom the label "education governor" was attributed directly (Cook, 2002). Sanford set himself apart from many of his Southern colleagues when he tacitly eschewed resistance to federal desegregation orders; he also increased taxes for education, established the state's community college system, and later helped to establish James Conant's Education Commission of the States (Guillory, 2005). Sanders oversaw the construction of many new public schools, and he also increased the number of teachers hired. In addition, he ushered in an era of minimum standards and established a Governor's Honors Program. Funding for higher education in Georgia dramatically increased as well during his tenure (Cook, 2002).

The efforts of Sanford and Sanders helped to establish the presence of an education plank as part of gubernatorial agendas in the South. It would be until at least the end of the 1970s (when many of the governors highlighted in this study first took office), however, before changes in the governorship and a steady stream of support from multi-state organizations would enable Southern governors as a group to transform education into a prominent and persistent feature of their policy agendas.

² While turn-of-the-century education governorships are associated predominantly with the South, it is important to note that Wisconsin governor Robert M. LaFollette (1901-1906) also is considered to be a seminal education governor. He is remembered as the father of the "Wisconsin Idea," which included increased state spending on public education and heightened involvement from state universities in the formation of education policies (Guillory, 2005).

In the education reform period of the early 1980s, a handful of governors from other parts of the nation joined their Southern colleagues in the pursuit of education reform,³ but the most comprehensive and widespread activity continued to be located in the South, where the majority of states in the region were led by governors who could once again lay claim to the “education governor” title.⁴ One key difference between the events that unfolded during this era and the eras of gubernatorial activism that preceded it makes a focus on the early 1980s particularly intriguing: While the work of previous education-minded Southern governors predominantly impacted education within their own states (if at all), the reform efforts of the Southern governors at the start of the 1980s appear to have set a precedent for gubernatorial involvement in education policy leadership that was both widespread (being at least partially responsible for buoying education activism among governors outside of the region) and lasting (in terms of setting a trend of involvement that was followed by many governors over the succeeding decades). Even today, with easily one-third or more of any state’s annual budget now comprised directly of education expenses, many governors continue to lay claim to the title “education governor” (*cf.* Governor, 1999), and education reforms still appear regularly on governors’ agenda and in their budget and legislative proposals.⁵

³ In particular, Doyle and Finn (1984) single out the governors of Alaska and New Jersey, who at the time were Thomas Kean (New Jersey, 1982-1990) and Bill Sheffield (Arkansas, 1982-1986). They also suggest, however, that, rather than being education leaders, these governors might more accurately be considered followers of the examples set by their Southern peers.

⁴ A list of members of this cohort of modern Southern education governors, broadly and liberally defined, might include Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, William Clinton of Arkansas, Robert Graham of Florida, Joe Frank Harris of Georgia, James Hunt of North Carolina, Richard Riley of South Carolina, Charles Robb of Virginia, Mark White of Texas, and William Winter of Mississippi.

⁵ Even as recently as 2006, every gubernatorial candidate in the thirty-six contests nationwide that year articulated a clear and comprehensive education policy agenda. As former West Virginia governor Bob Wise noted at the time, “Every one of those governors is running on what they’re going to do for education. Every candidate says, ‘I want to be the education governor,’” (quoted in McNeil, 2006).

Contributions to the Literature

There is a rich literature on influence and leadership in the *national* executive branch, including a healthy (and, for this study, applicable) debate about the relative importance of the formal powers embedded in the institution of the presidency versus the impact of the individual personalities in the position, but scholarly inquiry about leadership in *state* executive branches, while insightful, has been more limited in scope. Cheek (1990), Crew (1998), Herzik and Brown (1991), Kirst and Garms (1980) and others have explored various aspects of gubernatorial leadership, but most studies of the governorship tend to focus either on the expansion of the office (*e.g.*, Sabato, 1983) or on comparisons of formal powers across states (*e.g.*, Beyle, 1989, 2004; Dometrius, 1979; Gross, 1989; Morehouse, 1966, 1973; Morehouse & Jewell, 2002; Schlesinger, 1965, 1971). Indeed, most of the proponents of this area of gubernatorial research argue that a governor's ability to pass legislation is based on the extent of her or his constitutionally-granted formal powers, such as length of tenure, appointment power, and control of the budget. But the systemic education reforms enacted in the South – a region characterized predominantly by governors with decidedly weak formal powers – between 1982 and 1985 challenge these notions. With few exceptions (*e.g.*, Bernick, 1979; Ferguson & Barth, 2002), there has been little scholarly conversation about the influence of other factors such as informal powers, individual personalities, and contemporary contexts on the development of the office's leadership and policy formation capacity. This study introduces the concept of an *executive leadership moment* as one way of conceptualizing a means by which seemingly weak governors were able to overcome the limitations of their circumscribed formal powers.

In addition, while most of the cases of Southern gubernatorial education leadership in the 1980s have been the subjects of separate scholarly investigations (*e.g.*, Achilles *et al.*, 1986; K. Alexander, 1986; Allen, 1991; Jenkins & Person, 1991; Johns, 1991; Kearney, 1987; Mullins, 1992; Nash & Taggart, 2006; Osborne, 1992; Srinivasan, 1996), only a few scholars (*e.g.*, Thomas, 1992; Vinovskis, 2008) have studied the *collective* evolution of gubernatorial education leadership during this period, a deficiency to which Jewell (1982) and others have been calling attention for decades; indeed, as Vinovskis (2008) recently observed, “There are some useful case studies of the education involvement of governors in a few states, but we still need more in-depth, comparative studies of governors . . . in K-12 schooling” (p. 202). Finally, there are implications for the emergence of a more comprehensive and precise understanding of the “education governor” concept – a term that has been used with regularity in the media and in biographical writing about these governors, but one that has not been explored in much depth academically (the chief exception being Krottseng’s [1987, 1988] early work on links between gubernatorial promises and higher education policy). In response to these needs, this study attempts to make distinctions between *nominal* education governors (governors who claim to focus on education) and *empirical* education governors (governors who can demonstrate a track record of significant education work), and it introduces the concept of an *education reform governor*, or an empirical education governor who not only promotes a successful package of education reforms but also does so in the face of considerable opposition.

A Framework for the Research

One of the goals of this project is to explain how historical, institutional, economic, social, and cultural conditions and trends made the development of these pivotal modern Southern education governorships possible. A fundamental contention of this study, however, is that it took more than a deterministic sequence of historical developments alone to bring about this transformation of the governorship. It was from the particular choices, maneuvers, and strategies of the governors themselves, acting individually but also (and perhaps most critically) *collectively*, that the longer-term impact on the education leadership influences of the governorships that followed ultimately emerged. In other words, this study contends that, while a convergence of historical circumstances may have made state-level education leadership in the abstract *possible* for any given Southern governor, it was the active and aggressive pursuit of those opportunities on the part of individual actors working alone and in concert that made such leadership potential not only a reality for the actors themselves but also for many of the governors who followed them.

The conceptual framework for this study segments the analysis into three components: The first component is grounded in an historical perspective that helps to explain why the early 1980s was such a critical moment for gubernatorial education leadership; the second focuses on the strategies and decisions of a representative sample of the Southern governors active in education policy in the early 1980s; and the third examines the collective impact of the historical forces and the actions of these governors on the development of the education governorship and on the subsequent course of gubernatorial involvement in education reform.

The initial guiding hypotheses of this investigation are that: 1) historically rooted but independent trends – changes in dominant education values, an evolution in federalism and its impact on state governance of education, specific political and cultural changes in the South, and the growth of the institution of the governorship itself – intersected in the early 1980s to form a unique opportunity, or *moment*, for growth in state-level executive branch leadership; 2) several Southern activist governors seized this moment to simultaneously effect systemic education policy reform and establish the governorship in a leadership role in education policy formation; and 3) their approaches to seizing this particular leadership moment established important patterns for the period that followed, during which education policy formation and reform became fixtures in a majority of governorships from that point forward. This study defines *leadership moments* as periods during which governors or other political leaders have the opportunity to take advantage of contemporary circumstances to claim or expand a leadership role in a policy area.

The conceptual framework for the study and its components are represented graphically below (*Figure 1.1*).

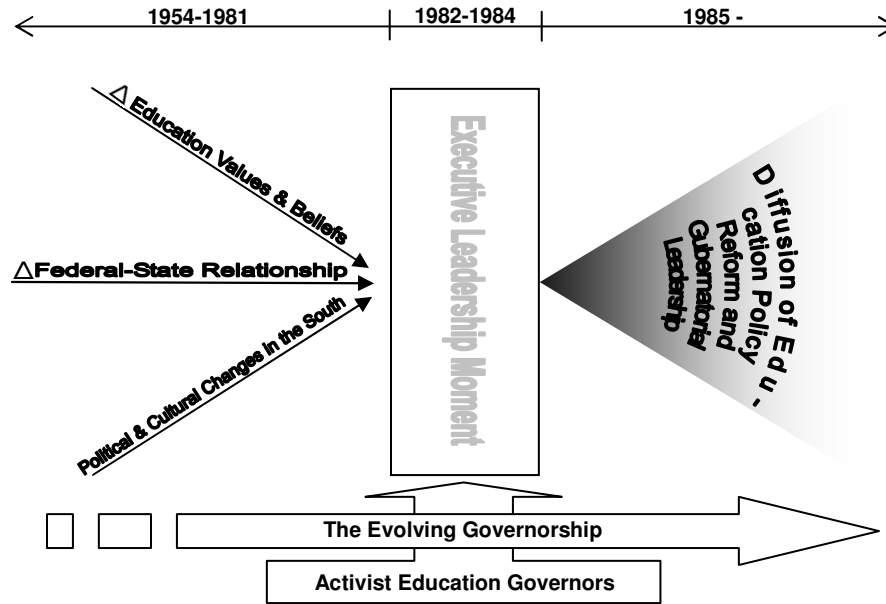


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework

Methods, Data, and Data Collection

Any attempt to fit a study of this nature into a specific disciplinary box runs the risk of gleaning some powerful but ultimately limited insights into certain aspects of the topic at the cost of an opportunity to step back and gain a broader appreciation for the many interlocking elements of the full story. Therefore, every effort has been made to address the questions raised above with an eye toward the interdisciplinary nature of the subject by applying theories, methods, and approaches from a variety of relevant fields, including political science, history, and policy analysis. The general research approach was to conduct an historical analysis of the regional and national trends that set the stage for the unfolding of the events under study, coupled with a multiple-case, comparative case study of a sample of the governorships involved.

As a result of the high level of gubernatorial activity in education reform across the South during the period in question, the list of candidates for case-study examinations is quite long; thus, the sample for this study has been selected in an effort to be as representative of the diversity of the group as possible. The sample includes: William Winter of Mississippi, the first governor of the group to experience success in his education reform efforts; Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the lone Republican in the group and perhaps the keenest supporter of one of the most controversial aspects common to many of the governors' reform packages (merit pay and career ladders for teachers); and James Hunt of North Carolina, who not only is considered by many to be the archetypal modern education governor but also whose recognition as such, unlike most of his peers, was based on more than just passage of legislation.

The research and analyses are guided by the theoretical framework and interdisciplinary mindset outlined above, but the research also benefits from a grounded theory approach, which “put[s] a premium on emergent conceptualizations” and is not beholden exclusively to previous theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37). While there is substantial and growing formal theoretical work on state-level politics and education, such theories, when applied to a specific situation of interest, “can only partially account for what is happening in the researched situation” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 27).

Alternate Explanatory Frames

The advantage of the grounded theory mindset is that the researcher is not only open to consideration of alternative explanations but also in some ways is encouraged to consider them. Theoretical explanations that were not integrated into the original

conceptual framework but that were considered as data were analyzed included (but were not limited to) the following:

- *Other Institutional Factors*: For example, some scholars (Morehouse & Jewell, 2002; Wong & Shen, 2002) suggest that Party strength (or the lack thereof) makes the greatest difference in the adoption of education reform policies. There is also a long history of work on the importance of the relative strength or weakness of a state's legislature (Wirt & Kirst, 2005), implying that it is not so much the governor as it is the resistance (or lack thereof) that she or he fights from the legislature that matters most. Since party strength (typically Democratic Party strength) was high but resistance to education reform from Party-dominated legislatures also was extremely high in the states examined in this study, these explanatory frames were discarded.
- *Path Dependence* (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2004): The framework for this study rejects the notion that the education policy reforms of the early 1980s were the inevitable result of previous history, but other scholars argue otherwise. For example, Fusarelli (2002) has asserted that many of the cases considered in this study were influenced much more by a combination of non-gubernatorial factors: "A series of national and state-level forces – the economy, state constitutional constraints, an emerging elite ideological consensus, and the necessity to drive toward the 'conservative middle' – have created conditions in which partisan gubernatorial control matters less in education reform than previous research suggests" (p. 142). More details about path dependency can be found in Appendix A.
- *Policy Diffusion* (Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1998): Wong and Shen (2002) found little evidence for policy diffusion in their study of the adoption of charter

school legislation, and McDonnell and Fuhrman (1986), writing about the era of education reform analyzed in the present study, argue that the various reform changes across the states were too quick to be explained by traditional policy diffusion. In addition, Henig (2009) argues that, on its own, the diffusion explanation ultimately is too weak to cover the depth and extent of the rise of the education executive in the 1980s, particularly since it does not account for the failure of previous education reforms to lead to the persistent importance of education as a policy issue, as has been the case between the 1980s and the present. These argument notwithstanding, the present study does reserve a role for a modified version of diffusion (chapter 5), and consideration was given to the primacy of diffusion over the presence of activist governors in the process of multiple-state policy adoption, especially given the power of interstate competition (Ikenberry, 1996) and the glut of national and regional reports on education published between 1981 and 1984. More details about policy diffusion and how it might inform the events considered in this study can be found in Appendix A.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY, DATA, AND DATA ANALYSIS

Overview of Methodological Strategy

This study proceeded in four stages, each driven by the two primary research questions. Stage one included an extensive review of a number of applicable literatures, including research on executive leadership at both the presidential and gubernatorial levels, as well as research on the nature of policy change. The second stage involved researching relevant national and Southern historical trends and political and social conditions, with a goal of confirming or modifying the hypothesized roles of shifts in education values and beliefs, the federal-state relationship, and political and social conditions in the South in the development of the education governor. The third and fourth stages continued this line of thought by using the conceptual framework as a starting point for analyzing the roles played by a representative sample of Southern governors in the emergence of governors as education policy reform leaders. For stage three, narratives of critical education policy moments during the tenures of these governors were constructed from media accounts, interviews, and previous research. In the final stage, the events of the stories themselves, pertinent primary-source data (*e.g.*, speeches, archived notes), and original data (primarily in the form of interviews), along with elements from additional supporting case studies of Southern education governors, were analyzed and coded for common themes. The results of these analyses were then used to modify the conceptual framework, propose an initial theoretical construction of

the development and shared characteristics of modern education governorships, and advance an initial assessment of the model's applicability to other questions of gubernatorial power and governor-led policy reform.

Methodological Approach

A Qualitative Framework

In policy and political science studies in general, and in comparative state politics studies in particular, there is often a tendency to apply a positivist, quantitative lens to the analysis (McLendon & Cohen-Vogel, 2008), usually with a focus on economics, positive political theory (Cibulka, 1995; cited in Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005), and quantitative and quasi-quantitative tools and data (surveys, vote count analyses, *etc.*). Such tools sometimes are less useful when attempting to understand the roles of many of the concepts addressed in this study that often defy quantification (Weeks & Schensul, 1993), such as the nature of gubernatorial interactions across political arenas and a governor's use of symbolic language. Even though he has made a career of reporting on the numbers behind governorships, Beyle (1988) notes the difficulties inherent when attempting to introduce a meaningful quantitative governor variable:

Where are the governors in [quantitative] explanations [of policy innovation]?

Perhaps they are not in the equation sufficiently to make them part of the explanation, but more likely they provide a qualitative aspect to an explanation based on quantitative variables. In other words, it is difficult to measure the personal impact of a governor and his or her staff *vis-à-vis* other more easily measured variables. Yet most observers of state government and its processes

understand the critical role a governor plays in the policy process, both good and bad (p. 144).

Furthermore, the case for a qualitative approach is particularly strong for investigations of governors as policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1998), a concept that is applied in chapter 4 to the cases in this study. As McLendon and Cohen-Vogel (2008) contend:

Qualitative techniques may . . . hold promise for . . . research on public policy processes and the reasons some educational policies diffuse. Following Cohen-Vogel and Ingle (forthcoming), for example, educational researchers might interview key policy actors in adopting and non-adopting states to unpack the role of policy entrepreneurs, preferences for tried and tested policy solutions, networks of professional educators, and interest group competition in the innovation diffusion process (no pagination).

It is valid to argue that it could be difficult and perhaps problematic in most instances to “develop generalizations from specific cases which are applicable to other events and developments” (Caputo, 1977, p. 2), but this potential problem can be re-framed by considering that it is *only* by stepping outside of the limitations imposed on a study of this nature by a strictly quantitative methodology that one can nurture a hope of understanding context-specific “politically nuanced decision making” (Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005, p. 60), incorporating analyses of conflicting ideologies and values and symbol manipulation (Ball, 1990, cited in Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Smith, 2004), and reaching generalizable conclusions. While it may take many cases to *confirm*

a general theory, a handful of cases can *indicate* that there is justification for such a theory to exist (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and can provide an important starting point.

This rationale for the predominantly qualitative approach undertaken in this study is not intended to imply that the resulting analyses were lacking in the rigor often associated with quantitative methods. Gross (1989) outlines four components necessary for ensuring rigor in case-study analyses of gubernatorial influence on policy⁶ – clear definition and measurement of the concepts being studied; use of empirical theory to develop hypotheses and explain findings; employment of appropriate methods; and rigorous specification and testing of propositions – each of which is addressed throughout this study.

A Multiple-Case Approach

As indicated above, the general approach was to conduct a multiple-case, comparative case study, or a study in which multiple sites and subjects (in this case, multiple former governors) were investigated with the purpose of comparing, contrasting, and drawing generalizable conclusions (Bogdan and Biklan, 2003). Gross (1989) and others argue for the importance of developing comparative studies of governorships in order to arrive at useful and meaningful conclusions about the governorship in general.

By virtue of examining governorships in a specific region (the South) and during a specific time (the early 1980s), the cases selected meet some of the criteria for what Dean, Eichhorn, and Dean (1967) refer to as *critical cases*, or situations in which all variables except for the one under study are held constant. Even given the similarities of the cases under consideration, there are too many other variables in play to argue that the

⁶ Gross's (1989) components are derived from Edwards's (1981) observations about studies of *presidential* influence.

cases do, in fact, represent true critical cases, but the geographic, temporal, cultural, and political similarities go a long way toward achieving that ideal comparison condition.

One major drawback of the cases at hand is that in each one, the governor's attempts at passing an education reform package or at establishing himself as a viable education reform leader ultimately met with partial if not complete success; there are no unsuccessful governors in the period under study to which they might be contrasted. On the other hand, each of these governors suffered setbacks, sometimes major, in his efforts, including total rejection of reform packages upon first attempt, so the possibility existed for comparing efforts *within* cases but across years. In addition, one primary case – North Carolina governor James Hunt – is distinctly different from the other cases in a number of ways (see **Site and sample selection**, below), which provided the possibility for at least some degree of contrast across cases.

A Grounded Theory Mindset

Because of the initial vagueness and instability of the concept of the education governor – an oft-used but irregularly defined term at best – the research was well-suited to a *grounded theory* research approach, in that such an approach “put[s] a premium on emergent conceptualizations” and is not beholden exclusively to previous theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37). Glaser and Strauss, the original proponents of a grounded approach to theory development, describe two main types of grounded theory – *substantive* and *formal*. Substantive theory is theory that is developed for a specific situation or analysis, while formal theory is more conceptual and broader in scope. There is already substantial and growing formal theoretical work on state-level politics and education from which the substantive aspects of this project draws, but, as Glaser and

Strauss note, such theories, when applied to a specific situation of interest, “can only partially account for what is happening in the researched situation” (p. 27). Relying exclusively on *a priori* formal theory to explain an event often requires the researcher to force data to fit theory and almost certainly will prevent the researcher from discovering the insights that can emerge from a less theory-dependent analysis of the event.

Therefore, the theories and ideas applied throughout this study provided only a starting point for generating the substantive and formal theoretical conclusions that eventually emerged from the study. In a sense, the research project moved inward from the very general (extant and sometimes abstract formal theories) to the specific (a substantive theory about the cases in question) and then out again (to a more formal and generalizable, if incomplete, formulation of the education governor concept and how that concept might be applied to other studies of the governorship).

The construction of the substantive theory required two stages of development, the first stage of which consisted in essence of *telling the story* (Glesne, 2006), or the history, of the reform periods in each state – for example, creating a reconstruction of the development of an omnibus reform package in a given state, up to and including the formal adoption of policies by the legislature. This component included defining the historical background against which the reform effort took place, establishing the immediate political context, and delineating the relative strengths of and influences on the actors and institutions involved. The second stage of the substantive theory construction was the theoretical explanation of the outcomes through a combination of the theories outlined in the previous chapter and theories that emerged during the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Included in this component were analyses of

the mechanisms that made education reform possible, such as problem definition strategies, the establishment and validation of the policy logics evoked by primary actors (Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005), and coalition-building strategies (Cyert & March, 1959; Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The last stage of the project was to make the analytical move from the substantive specifics of each case to the more formal theories (Bogdan & Biklan, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and generalizable conclusions that can help us to better understand education governorships in the abstract (*cf.* Hammersley, 1991; Marshall, 1985). While the substantive theory derived from the cases (discussed in chapter 5) turned out to be relatively well-defined and complete, the more general formal theoretical results (chapter 6) reflect *theory as process*, or theory that is “an ever-developing entity, not . . . a perfected product” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32). Finally, it is important to acknowledge what Glaser and Strauss (1967) remind us about limitations to a researcher’s ability to provide full *coverage*: Though the researcher may feel pressure to “know the concrete situation better than the people involved (p. 30),” the researcher’s job instead is really only to “generate general categories and their properties for general and specific situations and problems [that]. . . . provide theoretical *guides* to the layman’s action” (p. 30, emphasis added).

Data

Data Sources

Because of the historical nature of the research, of the four general types of qualitative data – *participation, direct observation, interviewing, and document analysis*

(Marshall and Rossman, 2006) – only the latter two applied. While many different kinds of data were used for the study, the three chief data sources were *official documents* (speeches, addresses, and legislation), *media accounts*, and *elite interviews*. It should be noted that the relative remoteness of the time period under study, as well as its positioning before the ubiquitous spread of electronic recording of most official data, prevented reliable and consistent access to the same amount of data and the same data sources across all cases. A list of the sources accessed for this study can be found in Appendix D.

Documents. For studies of the gubernatorial role in policy-making, Gross (1989) recommends two sources of document data in particular:

The first is a specification of policy themes as expressed in the governor's state-of-the-state address. Such data can be most helpful in the determination of the degree to which the governor's policy concerns receive consideration by the legislature. . . . Another type of data is information on gubernatorial initiatives and/or positions on legislation (pp. 779-780).

In the only comprehensive studies of the education governor concept to date, Krotseng (1987, 1988) relied heavily on textual analyses of inaugural addresses, investigating the number of inaugural address promises that actually were acted upon by governors. Other documents consulted (some official and some not) included personal papers, public papers, and education-specific speeches (Bogdan & Biklan, 2003). In addition to providing information on the development of agendas and proposals, artifacts of this type also can help to reveal values, beliefs, and assumptions (Khademian, 2002). Finally, as Fusarelli (2002) notes, "A major advantage to studying political elites such as governors

is the availability of political biographies and autobiographies – sources that to date have been underused by politics of education researchers” (p. 157).

Media accounts. As detailed in some of the narratives in chapter 4 and Appendices B and C of the education reform events in each state, the media provided ample coverage, particularly of many of the legislative debates, and was a rich source of information and data. It is important to acknowledge, however, that in most cases local and statewide media quickly took sides about the outcome of education reform. Media involvement was most pronounced in Mississippi, where the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* won a Pulitzer Prize for its role in the reform debates (Wickham, 2007). Standard cautions when using secondary sources (in particular, verifying the accuracy of newspaper accounts; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Glesne, 2006) applied for each of the newspapers reviewed (see Appendix D for a complete list), but additional cautions were in order for information derived from opinion editorials in the *Clarion-Ledger* that appeared after that newspaper committed publicly to supporting Governor Winter’s education reform efforts in Mississippi, as detailed in the Mississippi narrative in chapter 4. Though editorials for that period (November and December, 1982) were consulted during the construction of the historical narrative, data from opinion editorials from those months were not included in the formal coding and analysis procedures (detailed below).

Elite interviews. Most critical to both the substantive and the formal theoretical frameworks were the contributions of those interviewed who took part in or observed the events under consideration. One of the primary appeals of this study was the opportunity it provided the researcher to interact with many of the former governors and other participants who were involved in the education reform legislation process in each state.

One concern, however, was the element of increased subjectivity that such “data sources” introduced as each attempted to frame the events in her or his own way. Writing during the height of the state reform movement, Piphio (1986) reminds us to take such interpretations of events with a grain of salt: “Asking the governors to summarize the activity in the states will yield a picture different from the one that emerges from asking state legislators or from asking state boards of education” (p. K4).

But the gains from interviews with these key elite players far outweigh the risks (many of which were partially addressed via *triangulation* and other strategies; see below). As Phillips (1998, no pagination) notes,

One of the most comprehensive justifications is that provided by Fitz & Halpin (1994); they contend that elite interviewing in relation to education policy is useful in order to obtain information not available in documentary form and thus not in the public domain; confirm or adjust existing publicly available accounts of the policy under analysis; identify and understand the networks of individuals and agencies involved in policymaking and the relative influence exercised by each; and familiarize researchers with the ‘assumptive worlds’ (McPherson & Raab, 1988) of policy-makers. They were thus concerned to ‘explore the ideas and values of key actors who were involved in setting the policy in motion and who had influenced its substance and the course of its progress’ (Fitz & Halpin, 1994, p. 33).

He adds further that a “combined, multifaceted approach reveals far more about the policy process than if the research relied upon secondary accounts such as documents

alone. After all, elite interviewing provides ‘real stories’ of what happened and reveals essential information about the discourses” (no pagination).

Interview targets were not limited to publicly recognized elites. An effort was made to include “non-standard” informants who were in a position to provide more data than those more formally associated with the reform processes under study: *outsiders* (or *recent outsiders who used to be insiders*; Marshall, 1984); *rookies* who were more aware of what for veterans might have been taken-for-granted (*assumptive world*; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989) situations; the *nouveau statused*, for similar reasons; *frustrated people* who did not have positive experiences during the various reform periods; and *outsiders* who lost power for reasons other than the passage of time (Dean, Eichhorn, & Dean, 1967). Efforts were made to identify and interview representatives of each of these groups, but many of the interview candidates who might fall into the categories of frustrated people and outsiders – typically legislative leaders who opposed the governors’ proposals – were deceased by the start of the study (see notes, Appendix D).

Data Collection Considerations

Site and sample selection. For the most part, site selection for this study was, in Glesne’s words, “built into the problem” (2006, p. 33). With a few key exceptions (most notably policy events that include federal involvement, such as desegregation efforts), education policy efforts at the time primarily took place in-state, and the politics and maneuvering involved in orchestrating statewide reforms most often took place in the respective capitals.

As a result of the high level of gubernatorial activity in education reform across the South during the period in question, the list of candidates for case-study examinations

was quite long and diverse; thus, the sample for this study was selected in an effort to be as representative of the diversity of the group as possible. Based on previous research and media accounts, several governors originally were selected as possible case-study candidates, including William Clinton of Arkansas, Robert Graham of Florida, Joe Frank Harris of Georgia, William Winter of Mississippi, James Hunt of North Carolina, Richard Riley of South Carolina, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Mark White of Texas, and Charles Robb of Virginia.⁷ The final sample was selected to maximize the diversity of the group along a number of axes. Governor Winter was chosen because he was the first governor of the group to experience success in his education reform efforts. Governor Alexander was chosen because he was the lone Republican in the group and was also perhaps the keenest supporter of one of the most controversial aspects common to many of the governors' reform packages (merit pay and career ladders for teachers). The final selection was Governor Hunt, who not only is considered by many to be the archetypal modern education governor but also whose recognition as such, unlike most of his peers, is based on more than just passage of legislation. Hunt remained at the helm of education reform efforts in the state for a considerably longer time than did his colleagues, working as an elected official on education reform from 1973 through 1985, and again from 1993 through 2001, and, while North Carolina did pass two omnibus education reform packages (one in 1985, shortly after the end of Hunt's first two terms, and another in 1997, during Hunt's third term), these bills were not the only significant reforms adopted

⁷ Gubernatorial activity in other Southern states between 1981 and 1984 was much more limited. While there was notable education reform activity in Alabama in the early 1980s (Olson, 1985, March 6; Rudder, 1991), the state's Education Reform Act of 1984 was initiated by the State Department of Education and not by the governor, and it appeared to do little more than create a task force for beginning the process of school reform. In addition, many of the efforts were cut short by Governor Guy B. Hunt (who was elected in 1986 and who shepherded a total repeal of the act through the legislature in 1988; Rudder, 1991). Louisiana, the only other Southeastern state not represented in this research, does not appear to have made any significant, system-changing reforms in the early 1980s.

by the state but were instead part of a larger progression of education reforms big and small that had been evolving since Hunt's term as Lieutenant Governor in the 1970s. Thus, Hunt's education reform leadership during the period under investigation in this study was part of a much larger and slower-developing leadership cycle than was the case for most of the other members of his cohort of education governors.⁸

Though they were not subjected to the same level of scrutiny as their peers, the governorships of three of the other Southern education governors identified in the initial list – Clinton, Graham, and Riley – served as sources of secondary data that were drawn upon to supplement and strengthen the primary analysis, and narratives of their involvement in state education reform are included in Appendix B.⁹

Other potential interviewees for each case were identified based on their direct and public involvement in the events under study, and are listed in Appendix D (interviewees who would have been good candidates for interviews but who are now deceased also are noted). While it was relatively easy to identify most public actors in each of the target states during the 1981-1984 time period, others arose only as a result of “snowballing” – that is, they were identified by other interviewees as good sources of information – or of serendipitous encounters (Patton, 2002, cited in Glesne, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Almost all interviews were conducted face-to-face, the lone exception being a telephone interview with former Governor Robert Graham of Florida.

⁸ Governors Harris, Robb, and White arguably can be classified as second-generation or “second order reform” period education governors (Cuban, 1988, quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 35), since they started their gubernatorial education reform careers after the seminal years in the late 1970s when the six governors highlighted in this study were working toward the first wave of systemic reforms. Also, in the case of Governor Harris, more than one subject interview for this study indicated (off the record) that Harris's direct role in education reform in the South as a whole and in Georgia in particular was limited.

⁹ In addition, Appendix C includes a narrative of Georgia governor Joe Frank Harris's education reform efforts in the mid-1980s.

As noted above, to mitigate possible problems with interview bias (both on the part of the researcher and the interviewees), it was important to secure interviews with a variety of sources who represented more than one side of the policy issue. The interview subjects in Appendix D were identified with an eye toward striking a balance between those who could serve as “confirming” and as “disconfirming” sources for the purpose of cross-validation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Especially when interviewing elites, there is a temptation to succumb to the oratorical skills of the interviewee (Welch *et al.*, 2002), so this arrangement of potentially counter-factual interviews was critical. Interestingly, the governors themselves often provided useful cross-validations of each other’s recollections of their own involvement in regional and national education reform efforts. In most cases, the governors’ overlapping versions of certain events in which more than one participated were consistent; on only a few occasions were some governors’ versions of their own involvement in certain episodes tempered slightly by the recollections of their peers. Additional concerns about bias are addressed later in this chapter.

It is important to acknowledge that there were some barriers that were not surmountable. Sometimes, there is no amount of trust that one can build up that will ever win one entry into certain doors; in other words, trust will not provide some bureaucrats with currency that they can, in Piotrkowski’s (1979) terms, “use . . . for their private purposes” (p. 299). Thus, the research for this study was completed without access to two of the interview targets listed in Appendix D: Governors Clinton and Harris. In addition, six interview targets were deceased, and a seventh was incarcerated (also noted in Appendix D). Finally, because of the number of interviews conducted, the extensive travel requirements, and the relative difficulty associated with interacting with many of

the interview targets, the researcher was not able to schedule interviews with two other interview targets. The end result perhaps is neither as compelling nor as comprehensive as hoped, had the researcher been able to secure interviews with all targets.

Historical background and primary source data collection. With the aid of research librarians and digital searches, the repositories noted in Appendix D were combed to gather materials that contributed to the development of the history leading up to the reform periods and the stories of the passage of specific reforms. As Lutz and Iannacone (1969, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006) observe, historical analysis and document review are good methods for documenting major events and for providing contextual information of this type. Furthermore, these resources can help to verify the not-always-reliable information sometimes provided by interviewees (Zelditch, 1962, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Interview strategies. The interview process required careful planning and strategizing to maximize information gained and to encourage elite participation, and therefore exhibited sensitivity to the interview environment, the nature of the questions, and other special considerations recommended for interviewing elites.

The interview environment. Establishing an effective interview environment has as much to do with the knowledge about the interviewees and their cultures that the researcher brings with him to the research setting (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Marshall, 1984; Phillips, 1998) as it does with the actual physical environment. In addition to ensuring that the physical interview space was conducive for interviews (*e.g.*, interviews took place at locations selected by the interviewees, and permission to use recording equipment was solicited before the interview began; Piotrkowski, 1979), each

interview also was preceded by brief background research about the interviewees to help the researcher to establish rapport and to contextualize interviewee comments. Finally, each interview began with a simple and concise (Marshall, 1984) but complete explanation of the research project to further instill trust.

Interview questions. A major advantage of gathering data through interviewing is the sometimes unexpected and surprising avenues down which the interviews might progress (Dean, Eichhorn, & Dean, 1967). To encourage these digressions, many scholars prefer an open-ended questioning approach with follow-up probe questions (or at the least a semi-structured questioning approach) when interviewing elites (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Bogdan & Biklan, 2003; Kezar, 2003). Among other things, these types of interviews favor the *emic* perspective (the interviewee's perspective) over the *etic* perspective (the researcher's perspective; Marshall and Rossman, 2006) by giving the researcher an "opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand" (Bogdan & Biklan, 2003, p. 96) and allowing the interviewee to "stress his or her definition of, structure, and relevant data related to a situation" (Kezar, 2003, p. 397, citing Dexter, 1970, and Odendahl & Shaw, 2002).

Secondary interview questions that addressed the specifics of the case were prepared and brought to each interview in case the interview stalled or the interviewee was somewhat reluctant, but the primary interview questions were limited in number and broad in scope in an effort to encourage interviewees to share their observations in a manner of their choosing (see Appendix E for the baseline two-tiered interview instrument from which each interview protocol was developed; *cf.* Piotrkowski, 1979). Elites in particular "do not like being put in the straightjacket of close-ended questions"

(Aberbach & Rockman, 2002) or being backed into a corner by a limiting or pointed series of questions (Kezar, 2003).

Data recording strategies. Similar to the interview process itself, considerations about data recording during interviews focused on unobtrusiveness first (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and convenience second. Thus, though a digital audio recorder was the preferred method for collecting interview data, materials for manual interview transcription also were always on hand. Transfer of data from recording devices or from handwritten notes took place as soon after the interview as possible to avoid losing additional impressions of digitally non-recordable events, such as mood and setting. Also, analog and digital back-ups of all data (including primary document and historical data, when permitted) were made on a monthly basis.

Data Analysis

The researcher acknowledges that there are multiple ways of knowing, which is why the analysis was governed by the multiple-frames approach described earlier, considering data from a variety of theoretical perspectives and leaving room for multiple but potentially equally valid interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Marshall, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As acknowledged above, the analysis operated from a standpoint of *theory as process* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); the goal was not to derive a definitive understanding of education governorships and gubernatorial leadership but rather to provide a base from which such an understanding can emerge.

The primary-source and interview data were subjected to content analyses (*e.g.*, coding for common themes and connections to extant formal theory; Bogdan & Biklan,

2003; Glesne, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Questions that guided this process included:

- How directly involved were the governors in the proposal and/or passage of reform legislation? What is the evidence of this involvement, and what did the governors actually *do* during that process?
- How did the governors frame the education reform debate?
- What other actors, interest groups, or institutions appear to have been important players in education reform in the state? Was this involvement consistent across all cases, or specific to one or two cases? Did the governors acknowledge the importance of these players?
- Did the governors actively work to create coalitions? If so, what form(s) did they take?
- Did the governors experience significant or minor resistance, either to their reforms or to their efforts to increase the role of the governor in the education policy-making process? What form(s) did that resistance take? What actors, interest groups, and institutions were most resistant? Was this resistance consistent across all cases, or specific to one or two cases?
- Does it appear that the institution of the governorship (the office, as opposed to the individual) contributed in ways that another institution or individual could not? How? Is there any counter-factual evidence that suggests that policy reform proposals and passage would have happened at this time, even without gubernatorial efforts?
- Does there appear to be anything in particular about the regional or state-level context that contributed to either education reform or changes in the governorship?

- In what ways does it appear that the institution of the governorship in each state transformed, either formally or informally, immediately before, during, or immediately after each governor's term?

Rather than allowing the entire coding scheme to emerge from the analysis, some codes were developed beforehand and were based on the various theoretical lenses and approaches outlined in the conceptual framework, as well as those developed in the historical background and case studies chapters and from other relevant literatures (such as the relatively thin literature on education governorships). As intended, the analysis process helped to determine the relative importance of these codes and themes in the context of the cases under study, and it also revealed evidence for the existence of novel codes and themes. The results of this process are explored in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6, and a brief summary of the initial coding scheme, as well as additions and alterations to the scheme that emerged during the analysis, is located in Appendix F.

Comparing across Governorships

Finally, as emphasized in Glaser and Strauss's (1967) conceptualization of the grounded theory approach and as dictated by the very nature of the research project, data for each case were subjected to a comparative analysis with data from the other cases. The framework, including an initial, working hypothetical definition of an education governor (from which initial codes were derived; detailed in chapter 5), was revisited after analysis of the data generated for each case, with an eye for confirming and disconfirming evidence. The framework then was revised to reflect the results of this comparison, but only after completion of all analyses. Discarding the original framework outright after the first case analysis would have given undue weight and value to a single

case and could have led to premature rejection or modification of initial theories without sufficient evidence from a number of confirming cases. With each successive case, the evidence was compared both to the original framework and to the more fluid modified version. Cases analyzed at the beginning of the process were re-analyzed and re-coded as the elements of the final framework became more stable. The end product was an argument for the retention, modification, or rejection of each element of the initial framework, plus an emerging new formal-theory proposal.

Thus, the analytical process for this project was not linear; just as interviews and contacts led to other interviews, so, too, did preliminary analysis of the data lead to new avenues of analytical thought and the discovery of new patterns, themes, and categories (Patton, 2002, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006), as well as reasons to revisit previously-analyzed case data. Such is the nature of a qualitative and grounded theory approach. In an effort to manage the seemingly overwhelming influx of data and ideas, the researcher periodically generated methodological and analytical memoranda (Bogdan & Biklan, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glesne, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Memo-writing aided not only in the mechanical processes of transforming ideas and realizations into words but also in the more analytical process of making connections between data and ideas. By the time all of the data were gathered and processed, these memos already had moved the research to a point at which emerging statements of the substantive, case-specific theories and also of the formal theories were well under way. In addition, the researcher subjected the results of his analyses to an *external audit* (Glesne, 2006) by submitting data both in raw and post-analysis formats, as well as drafts of

analytical write-ups, to a third party who works in the field of education policy and politics for review and critique.

Addressing Bias and Validating Data

Due to the largely definitional and explanatory nature of the research questions, there was little risk of the analyses or conclusions of the study being biased by preconceived normative or reformist recommendations (Burlingame & Geske, 1979). However, the conceptual framework and goals for the project still suggest a number of other biases (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) that, if left unchallenged, might have prevented the analysis from uncovering key aspects of the events analyzed and subsequently might have led to incomplete or inadequate formal theoretical results. The framework leans toward a traditional political analysis approach that tends to overlook feminist, critical theorist, and other often marginalized perspectives (Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005), and the researcher himself is trained in traditional policy analysis methodology. Furthermore, there is an implied assumption that education policy and policy reform take place only in the realm of elites. Finally, bias also may be a by-product of the relationships (Dean, Eichhorn and Dean, 1967) or feelings of empathy (Geer, 1964) formed in the field during the interviews themselves.

Triangulation: Cross-validating via multiple interviews and multiple sources.

These concerns notwithstanding, the approach to analysis described above, with its incorporation of a multiple-frame perspective¹⁰ and of efforts to conduct interviews with participants and observers with varying viewpoints – so-called “critical friends” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Glesne, 2006) who had firsthand experience either with the

¹⁰ As Young (1999) notes, “using more than one frame will increase the trustworthiness of research findings because each frame serves as a check on the other” (p. 679).

reform episodes under study or with some of the principal actors and who could help to question, verify, refute, and otherwise counter-interpret the researcher's ongoing analysis of the events under scrutiny – for the purposes of cross-validation and cross-checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), helped to address some of these biases

Glesne (2006) prioritizes primary over secondary sources in her assessment of best practices for conducting historical analysis, but as noted earlier, a key source of primary data for this project – interviews with elites who were involved directly in the events under study – is often subject to inaccuracy (Dean, Eichhorn, & Dean, 1967; Zelditch 1962, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006), sometimes unintentionally, but sometimes intended. Phillips (1998) describes this problem as the “truthfulness” question: In elite interviewing situations in particular, an interviewee may be tempted to bolster or downplay her or his role in a public event. Asking a politician about the ways in which she was involved in the passage of complex legislation may elicit a response that paints the interviewee in a more favorable light than facts or events might suggest otherwise. In addition, the problem of non-respondents – either within a state or in the same position across states – exacerbates the issues of representativeness and generalizability. Thus, cross-validation or triangulation of data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Glesne, 2006; Bogdan & Biklan, 2003;¹¹ Richards, 2005, and Rossman & Wilson, 1994, both cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006) by means of multiple interviews about the same subject from multiple perspectives and comparison to primary source and historical document data was a key component of the research. Also, the relative uniformity of the interviews helped to control interview situations with elites, who are often used to turning conversation to suit their own needs (Burlingame & Geske, 1979).

¹¹ Interestingly, Bogdan and Biklan (2003) argue against use of the term “triangulation.”

Given the remoteness (by policy analysis standards) of the time period of this study, it was important to take special care to validate the data in this way. This historical analysis incorporated observations and conclusions drawn from primary and secondary sources, both of which likely included intentional and unintentional errors (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Thus, a healthy dose of skepticism about *all* data was important, as well as a conscious and conscientious effort to verify data accuracy.

CHAPTER 3 – TAKING THE LONG VIEW: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

“Revolutions happen not suddenly but after a long accumulation of grievances and awareness of defects.”

– Mortimer J. Adler, quoted in McGrath (1983)

Lenses for Analyzing the Historical Context

One glance at the dates of the education reform packages under consideration might lead a reader to assume that the historical event most responsible for reforms in the early 1980s was not the appearance of activist governors but was instead the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the well-known and well-received call-to-arms of the National Commission on Excellence in Education that was released at around the same time. Indeed, as discussed later in this chapter, *Nation* provided many governors and other education policy actors with some of the language and the emotion necessary for turning policy ideas into legislation. But as Tyack and Cuban (1995), Mahoney (2000), Henig (2009), and others advise, there is much to be gained by taking a longer and broader view when considering the process of policy change. In particular, Pierson (2004) argues that approaches to understanding historical or political phenomena often neglect “the role of time in politics” (p. 8) by failing to interweave temporal variables into their explanations:

Contemporary social scientists typically take a ‘snapshot’ view of political life, but there is often a strong case to be made for shifting from snapshots to moving pictures. This means *systematically* situating particular moments (including the present) in a temporal sequence of events and processes stretching over extended periods. Placing politics in time can greatly enrich our understanding of complex

social dynamics [as well as] both the explanations we offer for social outcomes of interest, and the very outcomes that we identify as worth explaining (pp. 1-2, emphasis in original).

Thus, it is important to explore the ways in which the roots of the emergence of the education governors examined in this study extend far back and include a complex and interconnected array of institutional and social forces beyond those brought to bear by events like the release of *Nation* and other contemporary publications. With the conceptual framework as a guide, this chapter attempts to integrate historical data that help to verify, modify, or challenge several hypothesized propositions about the most important national and state-level changes that paved the way for the modern education governors and their reforms.

A Framework for the Chapter

As noted in the introductory chapter, education governorships were not a phenomenon unique to the early 1980s and had indeed arisen in previous decades, often as the result of considerable individual effort. But it would be short-sighted to claim that education governorships in general and the impetus for systemic education reform in particular arise somewhat randomly – the sheer number of education governors who emerged in the 1980s argues against mere coincidence – or as the result of individual effort alone. In Henig’s (2009) words, to depend solely on a localized, situation-specific explanation is to construct a “hypothesis . . . that is so elastic as to be virtually unfalsifiable. Moreover, [such a] situational hypothesis is on shaky grounds in accounting for what seems to be a systematic increase in the emergence of the phenomenon [of executive leadership in education]” (p. 294).

This study is framed by the assumption that the early 1980s is identifiable as an *executive leadership moment*, a key component of the conceptual framework. This study defines an executive leadership moment as *a bounded period of time during which changes in social, cultural, and political landscapes coalesce in a manner that increases the possibility for direct policy leadership from the executive branch*. Henig (2009) hints at the relevance of a concept like this in his contention that explanations of executive-branch education policy leadership typically “understate[] the importance of the broader political institutional landscape, and the ways in which shifts in the views and power of other powerful interests helped to determine whether and when executive muscle could be effectively exercised” (p. 284). An extreme instance of such a period was the Great Depression, during which both the national executive branch and multiple state executive branches were able to capitalize on shifts in social and political landscapes to transform the reach and duties of their offices, sometimes in dramatic ways. As an example, in North Carolina during the Great Depression, Governor O. Maxwell Gardner was able to leverage the powers of his office and his personal relationships with Roosevelt and other federal figures to centralize many state functions, such as transportation and public education (Christensen, 2008).

Because of its emphasis on the importance of the intersection of multiple streams of historical events, the leadership moment concept shares common ground with Kingdon’s (1984, 1994, 1995) *policy window* construct. In his various iterations of the policy window concept, Kingdon proposed that policy problems, ideas (possible policy solutions), and politics constantly evolve, emerge, and recede along parallel streams that flow through a broadly defined governmental arena (*cf.* Mazzoni, 1991). When those

three streams align (that is, when all three emerge or resonate with each other), a *policy window* for making major policy changes opens, often via the influence of a *policy entrepreneur* (Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1998; see chapter 4). McLendon and Cohen-Vogel (2008) note that at this point only a limited number of case studies have been advanced so far to support the usefulness of this theory in explaining education policy-making, but for the purposes of this study, the policy window concept is intended to serve primarily as a metaphor for framing a general understanding of the leadership moment concept. Rather than focusing on the emergence and adoption of particular policies or policy ideas (*à la* Kingdon), the leadership moment concept is more concerned with the opportunities afforded to governors and other political leaders to claim *leadership roles* in a given policy area. Consequently, the various “streams” that coincide to produce the moment are different from Kingdon’s as well: The framework for this study is based on the notion that *changes in dominant education values and beliefs*, *changes in intergovernmental relationships* at the federal and state levels, and political, economic, and social *changes in the South* created a leadership moment during which the modern education governors were able to emerge *en masse*.¹²

The next section begins by exploring the nature and impact of all of these changes in greater detail and in the context of education governorships, as well as the degree to which each change contributed to the possibility for governor-led education reform. The chapter ends with an investigation into the importance of related changes in the

¹² It also should be noted that this executive leadership moment concept, with its emphasis on the *opportunity* for action rather than on the actual actions taken, its broader temporal scale, and its capacity to include multiple leaders simultaneously, is quite different from the “leadership moment” idea often referred to in some business contexts (*e.g.*, Useem, 1999), in which individual leaders are faced with isolated decisions that require immediate action.

governorship itself that were taking place during the years leading up to the period under study. To help with navigation, Table 3.1 provides a detailed outline of the chapter.

Table 3.1
An Outline of Chapter 3

Constructing the Executive Leadership Moment: The Historical Context

- I. Changes in Values and Beliefs – *Changes in dominant national and regional education values and beliefs contributed to the establishment of a leadership moment in the early 1980s.*
 - a. Excellence versus equity
 - i. Excellence, the economy, and business interest groups
 - ii. Big Business supplants traditional education interest groups
 - b. Shifting education values, shifting allies, and shifting approaches
- II. The Rise of the State in Education Policy-Making – *Changes in the federal-state relationship contributed not only to the possibility for education reform but also in particular to the expanded role of the governor in enacting those changes.*
 - a. Trends prior to 1982
 - b. Court-ordered desegregation and financing cases and other legal trends
 - c. The role of New Federalism – New Federalism and the rise of the governors in education policy
- III. Regional Trends: Political and Social Transformation and Education Reform in the South – *Changes in the political, social, and economic landscape of the South between the mid-20th century and the early 1980s played a role in (but did not make redundant) the emergence of education governorships of the early 1980s.*
 - a. The transformation of Southern politics
 - b. Roots of education reform activity in the South

Constructing the Executive Leader: Changes in the Governorship

- I. Changes in the Office at the National Level
 - II. Changes in the Governorship in the South – The role of governor-sponsored multi-state organizations, commissions, and reports
-

Constructing the Executive Leadership Moment: The Historical Context

I. Changes in Values and Beliefs

Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt (1989), Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999), and others long have pointed to the role of *values conflict* in education in the shaping of education policy and in the tacit determination of the proposals that are or are not placed onto an agenda. The four education values that generally are thought to be constantly in conflict are *equity*, *efficiency*, *quality* (or *excellence*), and *choice*, and this section explores the role of changes in the dominant values in the nation as a whole and in the region under study in the opening of the executive leadership moment.¹³

Excellence versus equity. In the decades following the *Sputnik* scare and *Brown v. Board*, the primary education values tug-of-war was between excellence and equity, and the manner in which this struggle most often played out was through national-level education reform. Vold and DeVitis (1991) suggest that education reforms are usually cyclical, with academic content and social and psychological issues changing places from time to time at the head of reformists' lists of concerns. For instance, the post-*Brown* and Great Society-era reforms of the 1960s might be classified as equity-based social reforms, while Vold and DeVitis (1991) identify the reforms of the 1950s and the mid-1970s as excellence-based, "academic content" reforms.

The value of excellence may indeed have been prominent in the 1970s, but it was not entirely dominant, often sharing the stage with other values (such as efficiency, due in part to a shrinking local tax base nationwide; Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983; Wong, 2004). Shor (1986) contends that by the 1980s, however, excellence became the almost

¹³ One theoretical explanation for the manner in which a shift in dominant education values can contribute to policy change, the *assumptive worlds* theory, is discussed in Appendix A.

exclusive operating value,¹⁴ bolstered by the non-education value of *nationalism*, which rose again to prominence after a long hiatus with the arrival of Reagan-era conservatism.

It's the economy, stupid: Excellence, the economy, and business interest groups. Fuhrman (2003) suggests that reports like *A Nation at Risk* (1983) marked the ascension of the era of excellence, and the dominance of that value is perhaps most clearly evident in frequent references to the troubling state of the economy as a motivator for education change. One of the principle theses of Tyack and Cuban's *Tinkering toward Utopia* (1995) is that changes in education policy come about in response to a perceived need for changes in the social fabric; in other words, it is through schooling that we attempt to address social ills. One of the social ills of greatest concern to politicians and the public alike during the 1970s and into the early 1980s was the apparent weakness of the economy, and it was from this concern that the link between education and economic well-being was formed. "Indeed," noted Wright (1988) shortly after the early heyday of this linkage, "many governors who have been active in pushing education reforms, and taxes to fund the reforms, have used the education-economy link as a prime rationale for educational policy change" (p. 411).

The emphasis on the economy and its linkage to education was not just a phenomenon of the 1970s or 1980s, however. According to Black (1972), it had been a theme for several decades before then, too (especially in the South), but the ways in which states acted on the problem varied considerably. Black characterized gubernatorial approaches to the education/economics problem in the 1950s and 1960s as being either *marginalist* (present budgets are tight, so the state can afford no substantial increases in

¹⁴ Rhodes (2009) argues that this value also underpinned *federal* education reform in the period that followed.

government spending on education), *adaptive* (long-range economic growth requires investment in education, but not in social welfare programs; Black lists North Carolina's Sanford among the ranks of the adaptivist governors), *neo-Populist/marginalist* (the emphasis should be on general redistribution through social welfare programs rather than through investment in social institutions like schools), and *neo-Populist/adaptive* (states should invest in schools as well as in social welfare programs; somewhat paradoxically, Alabama's Wallace may fit into this category, despite his views on race). If nothing else, the diversity of these approaches through at least the early years of the 1970s indicates that there was as yet no nationwide consensus on how states should or would address the linkage.

But that would all start to change in the 1970s. The United States' economic slow-down in the 1970s paralleled a decline in many indicators of the quality of education. To be sure, no cause-and-effect relationship is clearly defensible from such a coincidence, but Steller (1986), Thomas (1992), and others contend that the timing alone was enough to make the argument convincing for many, with Osborne (1988) going so far as to assert that the economic crisis was one of the things that made it possible for governors to develop education reform constituencies. Indeed, the link between education and the economy is the main theme of the Education Commission of the States' *Action for Excellence* (1983) and many of the other national education reports of the early 1980s (discussed below). Shor (1986) contends that the popularity of *A Nation at Risk* and similar publications, along with the general interest in school reform in the early 1980s, can be attributed to a framing of the issue that simultaneously blamed schools as the root of the economic crisis and turned to schools as the root of the solution. In addition, many

of the reports of the early 1980s managed to put a foreign (at the time, Japanese) face on the new economic threat (Shor, 1986), and Riley and Peterson (1995) cite the growing awareness of the increase in global economic competition as a prime motivator for education reform for many Southern states in particular that were home to a bevy of low-skill workers.

When interests collide: Big Business supplants traditional education interest groups. One of the most important ways in which this values shift impacted education policy-making was in a redistribution of power among groups with an interest in education. Thomas and Hrebenar (2004) note that teachers' unions in the forms of the NEA and the AFT were still the strongest interest groups operating at the state level in the mid-1980s (out of forty separate interest group categories), in terms of their degree of effectiveness in influencing policy-making in the states, but with growing frequency, they no longer represented the *only* interest group voices at the education lobbying table. Though it had long opposed any form of tax increases, the business community – now sold on the notion that education and the economy were closely linked via the quality of the labor force prepared by the schools – changed gears (Rhodes, 2009) and in some cases even actively supported the tax-based reform efforts. Among other things, businesses were faced with a declining birthrate, and thus a declining pool from which to draw talented individuals, and many could see that the coming digital revolution would require a new type of worker trained in a new set of academic and technical skills. Finally, new pressures from economies across the globe required new language skills. A

former enemy of omnibus (and expensive) school reform became an ally once the picture was painted in economic brushstrokes (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986).¹⁵

Interest group access to policy circles is not instantaneous; just because a group expresses an interest in a policy topic does not mean that it will have the same level of access to policymakers as do other interest groups that have worked in the arena longer. But in the case of the business interests, it is not hard to develop an explanation for how they might have entered the education policy arena quickly and without having to spend time developing a new network. Mawhinney (2001) observes that a full assessment of an interest group's influence includes the more qualitative aspects of the relationships they form with policymakers long before any particular issue gets on the legislative agenda or any vote comes to the floor. She refers to these interactions as "informal agenda-setting influence activities that occur as a result of the long-term relationships that are forged between agency personnel and members of congressional committees" (p. 203). Business-oriented interest groups, no strangers either to the policy-making process or to individual legislators in other situations, probably were well-positioned to take advantage of such previous relationships as they entered the education policy fray.

Concurrent with the rise in interest in education issues among the business community on the heels of the values shift from equity to excellence was a marked shift in the ways in which interest groups organized and operated in many parts of the country, a shift that once again played to the strengths of the business lobby. Cibulka (2001) identifies the emergence of *nationally-focused issue network interest groups* as early as the 1960s, which he contends eventually supplanted the Progressive Era local-level – and

¹⁵ Thomas (1992) points in particular to the involvement of such corporation heads as David Kearns (Xerox), Owen Butler (Proctor and Gamble), H. Ross Perot (Electronic Data Services), William Woodside (Primerica), Robert Lundeen (Dow Chemical), and Lewis Branscomb (IBM).

often insular and autonomous – interest groups of the preceding decades. As state activism expanded, he notes that many non-education-focused state- or national-level organizations added an education “wing,” so to speak, to safeguard their particular interests in public education (*e.g.*, business groups interested in their future workforces). Older, more locally-oriented education interest groups (the Progressive Era insular groups) did not make similar adjustments, he asserts; instead, when faced with competition from these larger, more nebulous, and less insular groups, they relied – unsuccessfully – on many of the same approaches they had used before. As a result, the discussion of education moved away from the local level and toward the state and national levels.

Shifting education values, shifting allies, and shifting approaches. But how does all of this tie in to the rise of the education governorship? A general wariness about the efficacy of the bevy of social programs that had characterized the Great Society approach to education reform in the 1960s cleared the way in the 1970s for a growing emphasis on accountability and test results (Comfort, 1982; Radin & Hawley, 1988; Stickney & Marcus, 1984; Timpane, 1996), and that excellence mindset was a crucial ingredient in the passage of many governors’ education reforms. As will be demonstrated in the narratives of the passage of legislation in each state, the reform packages championed by the Southern governors were unified by an underlying assumed primary value of excellence above all else, and the business community was often the biggest backer of these governors and their packages. At the start of the 1980s, it sometimes seemed that the driving force for reform was a concern about both excellence and equity (Goldberg and Renton, 1995), but as some scholars have observed (*e.g.*, Macmillan,

1991), the path to equity was often paved with excellence-era solutions, with the testing of teachers and students alike leading the way. For instance, Macmillan (1991) posits that the primary motivating factor for Governor Robert Graham of Florida in his bid for omnibus education reform was the belief that educational opportunity was not the same across the state. In other words, the core value, at least behind the intent of his reform package, was equity. But in order to improve equitable opportunities, Graham and other governors pushed reforms that were centered on *excellence* initiatives.

II. The Rise of the State in Education Policy-Making

Trends prior to 1982. The rise of the state in the education policy-making arena paralleled the changes in values described above, and it took place as part of an increase in overall state policy-making power. During the time period examined by this study, the defining moment in federal-state and even state-local policy and budget relations was the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980 and his introduction in the following year of a New Federalist agenda (discussed below) that rapidly devolved many responsibilities to the state level (even if only for a brief time). But the process of state ascendancy began long before that moment. Beginning during the Johnson Administration and continuing for several decades, states strengthened in several ways *vis-à-vis* federal and local governments, including an overall increase in the formal role and strength of the governor (detailed later in this chapter) and a general professionalization of legislatures (Walker, 2000). Nathan (1989) also highlights the long-developing move toward modernization in state government that occurred between the late 1960s and the late 1980s via an increase in technical and managerial capacity, the *Baker v. Carr* (1962) re-apportionment decision (discussed below), integration in the

South and the end of “Southern exceptionalism,” and, after 1982, a strong economic recovery. “The coming together of all these trends,” he contends, “produced a resurgence of the state role in American federalism” (Nathan, 1989, p. 19).

These general patterns also played key roles not only in the states’ approach to education policy but also in opportunities afforded governors to take part in that policy process. Wright (1988) identified four major trends that contributed to greater state involvement in education during the 1970s and early 1980s. The first two trends were addressed in the previous section and included the equity movement, which began in the post-*Brown* days and continued in earnest during the Johnson Administration, reaching full intensity after *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), the U. S. Supreme Court case that initiated a slew of school finance reforms nationwide. As a result of this case and others, many states took on the task of redistributing funds to balance education provision statewide. The second trend noted by Wright – the excellence movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s – was in some ways a reaction to the Johnson-era equity reforms, but it also was linked to emerging concerns about economic viability (as argued above). In order to assure that the “products” being crafted by schools were all of a similar quality, state involvement increased. Closely related was Wright’s third trend, the accountability movement, which introduced formalized state oversight of education via standardized curricula and tests (see also McGrath, 1983; Phipps, 1986). Shor (1986) traces the rise of this movement via, first, the Literacy Crisis, whose existence was announced by those who connected the dots between a decline in SAT scores across the decade and the Whole Language movement of the previous decade¹⁶; followed by the subsequent back-

¹⁶ Shor (1986) claims that those connecting the dots were primarily people associated with the College Board itself who were attempting to deflect growing concerns about the relevance of the test.

to-basics curriculum movement that the assessment of the crisis spawned; and ultimately the first linkages of education outcomes and economic strength noted above, which were embodied in new curricular approaches that supposedly would prepare youth for the needs of the workforce. Finally, Wright (1988) and Kirst and Garms (1980) note that state fiscal support for education long had been on the upswing, and by 1978, state funding for education eclipsed local funding for the first time. This funding increase was part of a broader state tax increase movement throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Van Horn, 1989), and even the general tax revolt period between 1977 and 1980 does not appear to have led to a significant retraction of this increase in education. States again raised taxes between 1981 and 1983 in response to new federal aid cuts¹⁷ and a massive recession (Table 3.2). While there was much variability across states in terms of federal and state spending, the general trend in the South followed the national trend (Table 3.3).

Wright (1988) and Doyle and Finn (1984) note that, from a legal perspective, there was nothing particularly revolutionary about this shift toward state control: States had had this oversight power all along, since local school governing bodies operate at the whim of the state. The revolutionary aspect was more that states finally had started to *exercise* their power. It is not hard to see how the reform ideas of the early 1980s could have evolved from such movements and discussions, and indeed Shor (1986) argues that, while the few scattered reforms of the 1970s often were isolated and limited in scope, they also were borne of the same values that would power the omnibus reform efforts of the next decade.

¹⁷ In addition to altering the overall education funding balance, these cuts also may have directly impacted education reform efforts in some states. For example, Anklam (1982, December 2) anticipated the impact federal aid reduction would have on the Mississippi reforms discussed in Chapter 4.

Table 3.2.

Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Source, 1969-1985, in 000s

School year	Total	Federal	State	Local (including intermediate)*	Percentage distribution		
					Federal	State	Local (including intermediate)*
1969-70	40,266,923	3,219,557	16,062,776	20,984,589	8	39.9	52.1
1970-71	44,511,292	3,753,461	17,409,086	23,348,745	8.4	39.1	52.5
1971-72	50,003,645	4,467,969	19,133,256	26,402,420	8.9	38.3	52.8
1972-73	52,117,930	4,525,000	20,699,752	26,893,180	8.7	39.7	51.6
1973-74	58,230,892	4,930,351	24,113,409	29,187,132	8.5	41.4	50.1
1974-75	64,445,239	5,811,595	27,060,563	31,573,079	9	42	49
1975-76	71,206,073	6,318,345	31,602,885	33,284,840	8.9	44.4	46.7
1976-77	75,332,532	6,629,498	32,526,018	36,177,019	8.8	43.2	48
1977-78	81,443,160	7,694,194	35,013,266	38,735,700	9.4	43	47.6
1978-79	87,994,143	8,600,116	40,132,136	39,261,891	9.8	45.6	44.6
1979-80	96,881,165	9,503,537	45,348,814	42,028,813	9.8	46.8	43.4
1980-81	105,949,087	9,768,262	50,182,659	45,998,166	9.2	47.4	43.4
1981-82	110,191,257	8,186,466	52,436,435	49,568,356	7.4	47.6	45
1982-83	117,497,502	8,339,990	56,282,157	52,875,354	7.1	47.9	45
1983-84	126,055,419	8,576,547	60,232,981	57,245,892	6.8	47.8	45.4
1984-85	137,294,678	9,105,569	67,168,684	61,020,425	6.6	48.9	44.4

* Includes a relatively small amount from nongovernmental private sources (gifts and tuition and transportation fees from patrons).

Note : Beginning in 1980-81, revenues for state education agencies are excluded. Data are not adjusted for changes in the purchasing power of the dollar due to inflation. Columns may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source : IES (2007)

Table 3.3

State Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in the South, by Source, 1969-1985, in 000s

		1969-1970	1974-1975	1979-1980	1984-1985	Change '75-'85
Alabama	Federal	18.4%	18.1%	12.2%	12.4%	-5.68
	State	60.3%	60.3%	63.8%	65.8%	5.58
	Local	21.4%	21.7%	24.1%	21.8%	0.10
Arkansas	Federal	18.9%	17.0%	16.6%	12.0%	-4.98
	State	43.8%	49.2%	48.8%	55.6%	6.43
	Local	37.3%	33.9%	34.6%	32.4%	-1.45
Florida	Federal	10.7%	10.6%	11.3%	7.6%	-2.99
	State	55.0%	54.1%	56.2%	54.3%	0.28
	Local	34.3%	35.3%	32.5%	38.1%	2.71
Georgia	Federal	14.3%	15.0%	14.1%	9.3%	-5.63
	State	53.0%	46.0%	54.0%	55.3%	9.23
	Local	32.7%	39.0%	31.9%	35.4%	-3.60
Kentucky	Federal	17.6%	17.6%	16.0%	12.8%	-4.82
	State	52.2%	52.4%	64.2%	63.7%	11.29
	Local	30.3%	30.0%	19.8%	23.5%	-6.48
Louisiana	Federal	12.0%	13.8%	14.6%	10.7%	-3.13
	State	56.2%	57.4%	54.8%	54.7%	-2.73
	Local	31.8%	28.8%	30.6%	34.7%	5.86
Mississippi	Federal	20.9%	22.9%	25.1%	16.5%	-6.40
	State	52.7%	51.9%	56.0%	59.3%	7.37
	Local	26.4%	25.2%	18.9%	24.3%	-0.97
North Carolina	Federal	16.2%	14.7%	13.8%	9.2%	-5.58
	State	59.4%	61.1%	60.5%	64.6%	3.49
	Local	24.3%	24.1%	25.7%	26.2%	2.09
South Carolina	Federal	15.2%	16.0%	17.8%	10.1%	-5.92
	State	59.7%	57.5%	45.0%	58.4%	0.92
	Local	25.1%	26.5%	37.1%	31.5%	5.00
Tennessee	Federal	14.6%	12.3%	15.4%	11.6%	-0.73
	State	46.1%	49.8%	42.2%	42.4%	-7.42
	Local	39.3%	37.9%	42.4%	46.1%	8.16
Texas	Federal	11.5%	12.7%	11.6%	7.4%	-5.29
	State	46.1%	46.2%	49.1%	49.0%	2.86
	Local	42.3%	41.1%	39.3%	43.6%	2.43
Virginia	Federal	14.1%	12.0%	11.0%	7.0%	-5.03
	State	35.2%	33.7%	39.6%	32.4%	-1.30
	Local	50.7%	54.3%	49.4%	60.6%	6.34
West Virginia	Federal	13.6%	13.4%	11.1%	7.9%	-5.47
	State	52.9%	51.9%	58.9%	66.0%	14.13
	Local	33.5%	34.7%	30.0%	26.1%	-8.66

Source : Snyder, Hoffman, & Geddes (1998).

Despite this major strengthening of states' *presence* in education, on the surface the early 1980s did not look like propitious years for state-led school *reform*. On the eve of these reform movements, little action across the states was apparent, much less predictable. Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983) characterize this period as one of general state government retrenchment, when the state government growth boom of the early 1970s gave way to budget realities imposed by the general economic downturn of the late 1970s. Reagan-era federal devolution meant that federal aid continued to drop, and, while (as noted above) state support grew to cover the federal decrease, tight state budgets due to recession and limitations on taxes further curtailed interest in any type of reform that would require *additional* spending (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986; Walker, 2000). Commitment of public resources to public schools declined from 4.2 percent of personal income in 1970 to 3.7 percent in 1980 (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986). The real income of teachers was also on the decline, dropping 12.2 percent between 1973 and 1983 (K. Alexander, 1986). Finally, according to McDonnell and Fuhrman (1986), legislatures and governors (on the whole) did not appear to be engaged on the issue of reform.

But by the time the economic crisis of the early 1980s hit, the role of the state as education policy maker was on the upswing: "Education policy development at the state level, while not an entirely new phenomenon, ha[d] taken on a new character as state responsibility for financing schools ha[d] grown and pressures for state-initiated school accountability measures . . . increased" (Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983, p. 31). In other words, a state bureaucracy's *role* in education policy-making did not recede (in fact, it continued to grow), even though its ability to follow through on that role was

somewhat hampered by budget constraints. In addition, the general retrenchment may very well have *strengthened* governors' bids for control of the education policy arena. The reduction in the size and scope of many states' bureaucracies, coupled with the power uncertainties introduced by the federal Omnibus Budget Reallocation Act of 1981 (OBRA, discussed below), created a perfect opportunity for politically neutered governors to wrest policy control from their states' erstwhile leading education policy agencies. As Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983) noted at the time: "Most of the states . . . had instituted or were in the process of undertaking tax reform [in 1982]. These reforms – and budgetary concerns in general – have contributed to the growing importance of legislative budget and appropriations committees *and executive branch budget offices* in the policymaking process" (pp. 34-35, emphasis added).

Court-ordered desegregation and financing cases and other legal trends.

Another ingredient in the steady transition of education policy power to the state level was the string of state- and federal-level court cases in the 1960s and 1970s that challenged segregation practices and locally-controlled financing of schools (Conley, 2003; James, 1991; McGrath, 1983; Pipho, 1986; Wirt & Kirst, 2005; Wong, 2004). Though some of these cases took states to task and were often regulatory in nature (Wirt & Kirst, 2005), in general they established a leading role for the state in overseeing local administration of education and in providing equitable financial support for all school systems (McGrath, 1983). Along with that oversight and support came changes (in varying degrees by state) in education and education policy. *Brown v. Board* is perhaps the best-known of the cases heard by the United States Supreme Court, but several of the

cases that followed it helped to clarify and bolster the state role in education policy-making:

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) – “Separate but equal” state school arrangements do not provide equal education opportunities for all students, and the practice must be ended “with all deliberate speed.”
- *Alexander v. Holmes* (1969) – “With all deliberate speed” was ruled to be no longer good enough; dual school systems were ordered ended immediately.
- *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* (1971) – The Court held that busing was an appropriate remedy for the problem of racial imbalance among schools.
- *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) – *Serrano* was the first school finance case, and it initiated the school finance reform movement.
- *San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez* (1973) – While the case specifically led to the ruling that a school-financing system based on local property taxes is not an unconstitutional violation of the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause, the broader result of the case was the establishment of the standard that the right to education is not a fundamental right under the federal Constitution.

It is worth considering whether court cases in the states under investigation in this study might have supplanted the importance of the governor (or of any other actor) in the education reform process. For example, in 1983 the Arkansas Supreme Court found the state’s school funding system unconstitutional in *Dupree v. Alma School District No. 30*, and after the decision, the state revised its funding statutes.¹⁸ With the exception of Arkansas, however, the states in this study were largely untouched in the courts during the period under investigation. South Carolina was one of the four states involved in the

¹⁸ See Appendix B for more details about this landmark decision.

original *Brown* case, which was in actuality a consolidation of four cases, one of which was the South Carolina-based *Briggs v. Elliot*, but no school finance case was brought against the state until 1988. A successful financing case brought against Georgia in 1981 was later overturned (*McDaniel v. Thomas*, 285 S.E. 2d 156), Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee did not have financing cases brought against them before the mid-1990s, and Mississippi remains unchallenged to this day.

The role of New Federalism. The final and perhaps most critical ingredient in the transfer of the dominant role in education policy-making to the states in general, but also to individual actors such as governors in particular, was the advent of the Reagan Administration's version of federalism in 1981, New Federalism. Though it is sometimes assumed that New Federalism and its concomitant devolution of decision-making to the state level was the catalyst for the renaissance in state policy-making, it should be clear from the preceding discussion that such a renaissance was already well underway. Rather than being the instigator for increases in state power, New Federalism acted more like the official sanctioning of this progression. As Walker (2000) put it, "As a partial result of the [Reagan revolution], the states *continued* to revitalize their historic roles of serving as independent centers of policy initiatives. The renaissance of state governing systems began in the late 1960s and continued unabated through the 1970s" (p. 150, emphasis added).

At its heart, the New Federalism agenda "was characterized by the belief that the federal government had amassed too much power and interceded in governmental areas that should be left to the states. Through [its] Economic Recovery Program, the New Federalism initiatives sought to shrink the size of the federal government and to give

substantial power back to the states” (Mitchell, 2000, p. 24). It was described at the time as being a mix of “decentralization, simplification, and increased flexibility” (Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983, p. ix), as well as “substantial spending cuts, program consolidation, and federal deregulation,” (Stickney & Marcus, 1984, p. 89). Veasey (1988) identifies Reagan’s New Federalism as belonging to what he calls a *Local Right* (or *Local Responsibility*)-*National Interest* version of federalism, or an approach to federalism that assumes that funding should reflect a balance between local, state, and federal interests. But the best characterization may be that of Astuto and Clark (1988): *decentralization* (returning authority over federal programs to states), *deregulation* (reducing federal oversight and control of federal programs; *e.g.*, block grants), and *diminution* (reducing federal outlays for programs, thus forcing lower levels of government to either fund or end certain programs).¹⁹

The physical embodiment of New Federalism was the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (OBRA), which reduced 67 categorical aid programs to nine federal block grant programs and ultimately affected 250 federal programs and the \$36 billion they oversaw annually. In education, the federal government’s new approach was embodied in the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA), a partial reauthorization of a dramatically transformed Johnson-era Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In both cases, the key changes were the advent of block grants and a turnover of at least partial control of these grants to the states.

Block grants had long been high on the wish-list of politicians who were interested in seeing change to the Johnson-era federal approach to education policy (*cf.*

¹⁹ How these changes might have impacted the ways in which states approached education policy reform perhaps can be best understood through a *cooperative federalism* lens (Elazar, 1984), which is explored in greater detail in Appendix A.

Sabato, 1983). Representative Albert Quie of Minnesota first proposed them in 1967 as replacements for the ESEA categorical grants. North Carolina governor – and symbolic father of modern education governors – Terry Sanford also called upon Johnson in the same year to move from categorical to block grants (McAndrews, 2006). But the block grant idea did not gain much support early on, even during a Nixon administration that actively pursued them, and it remained unrealized throughout the 1970s (Anton, 1989; Sabato, 1983).

The Reagan Administration succeeded where Nixon had failed, Anton (1989) argues, in part because Reagan the Great Orator was able to characterize the “return” to federalism as a return to a lost utopian existence of sorts. Also important were the victories, scattered and weak though they were, that Nixon was able to win under his own New Federalism banner between 1971 and 1974. More important, however, may have been a general public assessment by 1980 that the federal government was in even worse shape than it had been when Nixon held office and that now, definitely, “something” had to be done. The generally poor state of the economy, standing in stark contrast to the economic hubris of the late 1960s, made a change in approach much more palatable, as did the overall weakening of the Democratic Party after nearly fifty years of New Deal policies. Finally, rather than allowing each block grant decision to be debated individually in a series of bills, the Reagan administration cobbled them all into the OBRA: “In the process the fundamental legislative issue was transformed from ‘Does each specific program change make sense to program specialists and supporters?’ to ‘Do you support the economic recovery plan of a highly popular president?’” (Conlan, 1998, p. 159).

Equally as important as the block grant idea was the mechanism by which those block grants were to be administered. The critical difference for the rise of the prominence of the governors was the fact that Reagan-era block grants, unlike their Nixon-era predecessors, went to the states and not to the local levels (Anton, 1989). “Although some of Reagan’s proposals required the states to ‘pass through’ some revenues to local governments, they sent no funds directly to local governments, even in program areas of principally local concerns. Instead, they sent all the block grants – and their attendant cuts – to the states, greatly ‘upping the ante’ on the governors’ prior offer to accept modest reductions in federal aid in exchange for greater administrative flexibility” (p. 156). Most governors, sensing that poor economic conditions would lead to some degree of revenue decrease from Washington, had volunteered in 1981 to take a ten percent cut in federal aid²⁰ in exchange for more state-level control of the resulting budget outlays (Conlan, 1998).

Aiding the impact of this change in the decision-making venue for disbursement of federal dollars was a reaction in most states to the overall reduction in available federal funds by increasing state taxes to offset these reductions (as demonstrated above), as well as state-level takeovers of formerly local-level governmental functions. In the first instance, states did not pass on federal funding devolution responsibilities to localities; in other words, states appear to have taken on at least some of the funding responsibilities shirked by the federal government during the devolution period, supplying revenue to support localities, which made localities beholden to state governments instead of to the federal government (Stonecash, 1990).

²⁰ Ten percent eventually transformed into a hefty 25 percent in the final Reagan plan; see Table 3.2, above.

The impact of these changes was felt long after the technical aspects of the changes disappeared, which was not long after their passage; in fact, many of the affected programs were small in stature, and many more were restored entirely, and even increased in some cases, in post-Reagan years (Walker, 2000). But Cibulka (2001) notes that Reagan-era New Federalism was as much about symbolism as it was about impact, if not more so. Federal financial involvement in education soon returned to its pre-Reagan levels under Reagan himself, but the *attitude* of new federalism left a powerful aftertaste.

New Federalism and the rise of the governors in education policy. Astuto and Clark (1988) conclude that all of the changes related to Reagan’s New Federalism, coupled with state-level initiatives, directly contributed to the movement of education policy formation from Washington to the states. Stickney and Marcus (1984) agree, noting that, had Carter won in 1980, “it is likely that educators would have lethargically accepted an expanding federal role with little serious questioning of what that role should be” (p. 89). Instead, by 1990 “state outlays for primary and secondary education reached \$187 billion, double the 1980 figure, and this made the states the senior financiers of this fundamental governmental responsibility (the Federal contribution in 1990 was \$13 billion)” (Walker, 2000, p. 153).²¹

But the baton was passed in more than just financial ways. The ECIA, the 1981 embodiment of the ESEA,²² removed program prescription from many of the provisions of Chapter 1 (Title I), and Chapter 3 of the Act clearly delimited the powers of the

²¹ The importance of this shift was perhaps felt most painfully in Mississippi, which up to that point had received a higher proportion of federal education aid – nearly 25 percent – than had any other state. Governors Hunt (North Carolina), Winter (Mississippi), and Riley (South Carolina), through the auspices of the Southern Governors’ Association, petitioned in the early 1980s for the preservation of proposed Title I cuts (Mullins, 1992).

²² Stickney and Marcus (1984) go so far as to categorize the Act as a full-scale repeal of ESEA (p. 90).

Secretary of Education, establishing states and localities as the policy setters, while also giving the Secretary the power to withhold funds from those entities. In their early findings just after implementation, Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983) found that many state government actors “saw the ECIA as an opportunity for the state board of education or the legislature (or both) to gain more control over educational decisionmaking” (p. vii); evidence from the cases in this study suggest that governors, too, saw a way to become major beneficiaries of federal devolution as a result of the Act. For example, one clause in the ECIA gave governors the power to appoint oversight boards to monitor the use of federal money, a formal power that some governors used as leverage for elevating their roles as education policy players. In addition, the growth in the importance of governors in the disbursement process led many to increase the number of educational specialists on their staffs, which further strengthened their ability to play in the education policy sandbox (Astuto & Clark, 1988; Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983).

In essence, Reagan’s ECIA created something of an education power vacuum at the state level: “[S]tates and localities do not know what degree of authority they have to set their own policies and standards” (Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983, p. x). Instead of the promised *de-regulation*, ECIA brought what might better be termed definition-free *non-regulation*. Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983) quote one state education agency official thus: “‘The Consolidation Act has become a political football. The governor thinks he has the power because he appoints the advisory committee, the state education agency says they have the power over the block grant, and the state legislature wants to reappropriate all federal money’” (p. 23). Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983) also note that the relative speed of passage of the bill, with little in the way of a historical trail of

Congressional debate, left states uncertain with respect to Congressional intent, perhaps representing yet another power vacuum into which the governors were able to step. And step into it they did. As Governor Charles Robb of Virginia noted in 1982 at a gathering of Southern governors:

Let me just take issue with the premise . . . that we're necessarily fighting the concept of federalism, or the "new federalism." I think all of us [Southern governors] are obviously willing to attempt to work with the federal government. . . . [I]t's clear to us that we ought to make some attempt to define what it is that government should do at each level of government, and to try to provide those services at the most economical and efficient level. This obviously involves considerable increase in the responsibilities that the states are going to assume. . . . We are doing a lot right now in Virginia to upgrade educational opportunities. We think the federal government clearly has a responsibility to guarantee equal access and certainly to provide for certain types of research that will have a national impact. Beyond that, we are willing to wrestle with the basics and to provide a more stimulating atmosphere (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 60).

Added Governor James Hunt of North Carolina, "Although some of us disagree with some of the approaches President Reagan has taken, I think as we've cut back in some areas we are now doing more for ourselves in a way I have never seen before" (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 63). And Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee concluded, "Washington must either raise the taxes, or cut spending, but balance the budget and pay that bill, and then let us have major or all of the responsibility [in education] for these other things that we do best" (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 64).

III. Regional Trends: Political and Social Transformation and Education Reform in the South

The preceding discussion offers some evidence that, at the start of the 1980s, dominant education values, aided by growing concerns about the economy and global competition, were moving away from equity concerns in favor of support for the excellence movement, and several aspects of the Reagan Administration's New Federalism provided opportunities for various state actors across the country to seize control of education agendas. In the South, a third stream of political and social changes made the time particularly ripe for the ascension of states in general, and of governors in particular, to the top of the education policy reform heap.

The transformation of Southern politics. In his seminal work on politics in the South, V. O. Key (1950) identified four institutional forces in the South that historically had maintained the antebellum political and social *status quo*: a *de facto* one-Party system in the guise of the typically conservative, "solid South" Democratic Party; disenfranchisement; the barring of most African-Americans from the political sphere in any way other than merely as a symbol or pawn; and apportionment schemes that focused legislative power in the hands of rural conservatives. By the 1970s, however, Bass and DeVries (1976) argue that the firm foundations of these institutions largely were gone, and their at least partial dismantling contributed to changes in the ways in which education was handled in the Southern states. In addition, between 1950 and the mid-1970s, most Southern states either adopted new constitutions or substantially revised existing ones, reformed judicial and local governments, lifted restrictions on state financing, made moves to strengthen public education, and, on occasion, even made some guarantees of personal liberty (Bass & DeVries, 1976).

Some changes were imposed externally, and one that had a profound impact on the South in particular was the judicially-mandated overhaul of voting procedures, from the re-apportionment of districts to the establishment of voting rights for minorities under the Voting Rights Act²³ (Derthick, 2001; Sabato, 1983). Rulings such as the 1962 United States Supreme Court *Baker v. Carr* decision, which required state legislature reapportionment reflective of the concept of “one person, one vote” and effectively required redistricting for greater representative balance (Van Horn, 1989), dramatically affected not only the make-up but also the behavior of and balance of power within legislatures (Rosenthal, 1990; Sabato, 1983). In Mississippi, such decisions had been preceded by a state-level case that led to the first reapportionment and single-member redistricting in that state’s history (Nash & Taggart, 2006).

Most of these changes, whether internally or externally imposed, impacted African-Americans in particular, and in turn re-shaped Southern politics. Bass and DeVries (1976) emphasize that “the emergence of southern blacks into the mainstream of political participation and the development of the Republican Party and its challenge to a one-party political system [after World War II, were] forces that [were] creating progressive tendencies among the region’s Democrats” (p. 3). They reiterate the deep importance of the 1965 Voting Act, which not only established the rights of an entire sub-population but also opened the doors for the complete re-definition of political leadership in the South, even though that transformation would be largely unrealized by the beginning of the education reform movements of the early 1980s; by 1975, though nearly 20 percent of the voting population was black, still only 2 percent of all elected officials

²³ Technically, the Voting Rights Act covered only Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, and part of North Carolina (expanding to take in Texas in 1975), but the symbolism of the Act was more important and more powerful than the specific details.

in the region were black. Rather than impacting candidate demographics, the emergence of Southern blacks in politics was perhaps more pronounced in terms of their recognition by white candidates as being a voting constituency with real needs that must be addressed (Bass & DeVries, 1976).

Another important trend was the “reddening” of the South – the end of decades of Democratic Party control in most Southern states and the subsequent rise of the Republican Party. Though it is perhaps more solidly a post-1976 phenomenon, its roots are traceable decades earlier to the defection of Strom Thurmond of South Carolina from the Democratic Party and the steady growth of an already-present Republican base in parts of Tennessee: “Republican party growth began in the 1950s, accelerated during the 1960s, and peaked in 1972” (Bass & DeVries, 1976, p. 402). Bass and DeVries (1976) identify in particular a speech made by Barry Goldwater in Atlanta in 1961, in which he made the case for a states-rights approach to handling school integration, as a defining, if over-the-top, moment in the creation of a Republican “Southern strategy,” which tended to draw in conservative whites and drive off quickly-registering blacks. If nothing else, they observe, the gains made by the Republican Party in the South contributed at least indirectly to the strengthening of the organization of the Democratic Party, faced for the first time with a real challenger, in states in which the Republicans made genuine inroads. These changes eventually affected gubernatorial races, paving the way for the election of a spate of Populist governors – both Republican and Democratic – in the South. Education also would feel the impact of these changes in the social and political landscape of the South, though the impact was somewhat delayed.

Roots of education reform activity in the South. For the better part of the century, the South had been no stranger to education reform; even at the turn of the twentieth century, Progressive education reformers forged a connection between schooling and the economy through the symbolism of something often referred to as the “farm problem.” The equation contended that poor schooling in the rural South led farmers to leave their farms for the educational advantages associated with urban areas; tenant farmers who managed the abandoned farms were reluctant to diversify or explore new techniques, further crippling the Southern agrarian economy; therefore, the only way out was to improve the educational opportunities in the rural South, keeping owner-farmers on their farms and simultaneously raising the level of education of the vast sea of tenant farmers.²⁴

Typically, the Progressive reform ideas were broad and sweeping rather than targeted, much as would be the reform ideas of the governors in the 1980s. Neufeldt and Allison (1981) list the major tenets of this early education Progressivism, many of which will sound familiar to anyone acquainted with the reform era of the 1980s: “the necessity of having appointed rather than elected school officials . . . professionally trained teachers, graded classrooms, and school consolidation” (p. 266). Also in these reforms could be found the germs of *state support* for the purpose of equalizing educational opportunity, *state Boards of Education* and *school consolidation* for the purpose of unifying schools, and even *state-level testing bureaus* for the purpose of measuring the impact of the various reforms (Maxcy, 1981).

²⁴ Among the list of notable Southern leaders on this issue were: Charles W. Dabney, president of the University of Tennessee; Walter Hines Page, Edwin A. Alderman, Charles D. McIver, and Governor Charles B. Aycock of North Carolina; Clarence Ives and T. H. Harris of Louisiana; M. V. O’Shea in Mississippi; and Edgar Gardner Murphy in Arkansas (Maxcy, 1981).

But despite this rich and deep history of education reform, during the 1970s and into the 1980s, Southern states typically lagged behind other states in education funding per capita, education standards, and teacher competency. At the time of the first major reform passage in Mississippi in 1982, every Southern state spent less on education than states in other regions, and in Mississippi the rate was nearly half the national average (\$1,090 vs. \$2,010; Harris, 1982, December 13). Among the states ranking lowest on innovation indicators, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina were almost always toward the bottom. Also, there was no apparent recognition of any new crises in Southern education that had not been identified already: Concerns about student achievement dated to the 1960s, achievement scores were already trending slightly upward by the early 1980s, teacher quality had been declining, and shortages in certain subject areas had been a concern for years (McDonnell & Furhman, 1986).

And yet, by the 1980s, Southern states were leading the way nationally in education reform. By the 1985-1986 school year, elementary and secondary school spending in twelve Southern states reached \$1.37 billion, nearly 16 percent higher than the previous year's figure (Veasey, 1988). Soon after the beginning of the modern-era education reform period, Olson (1985, March 6), Veasey (1988), and others all made note of the "sweeping school-reform bills" in the Southern states that form the core of this study.

What happened to encourage this change? This study contends that a chief component of the sudden swing in the South in the early 1980s toward education reform was the emergence of education-minded governors, but there were other motivating forces in play as well. Vold and DeVitis (1991) note that the South had been particularly

burdened by the persistent image of being well behind other areas in terms of the education it provided, and that this “educational ignominy” (p. 2) made the region particularly ripe for the development of public support for education reform. They associate this drive with “southern discomfort with the role of perennial underachiever” (p. 2). Combine these forces with the general mood of education reform that was swelling at the beginning of the 1980s, and one is left with a powerful recipe for not merely reform but also the potential for transformative education reform *leadership*.

Vold and DeVitis (1991) further contend that the South has been historically more likely than other regions to embrace the notion of independence from a watchful government – a dogged insistence on doing things without federal government intervention may have loosened the states up to the idea of tackling reforms that the federal government otherwise might have imposed eventually anyway. They cite Southern secession in the nineteenth century as a prime example, but in the context of this study, education also might be viewed as being an individual, personal matter and not a “social concern” (p. 3). Perhaps this attitude also made the promise of New Federalism and the opportunities for state-level control even more inspiring to Southern governments than it was to governments in other states

Constructing the Executive Leader: Changes in the Governorship

All else being equal, a governor would be perhaps no more inclined than any other government figure to respond to the changes outlined above, but all else was not equal in the development of the governorship. The office of the governor also was undergoing significant changes in the years leading up to the reform movement of the

early 1980s, many of which better positioned the governors for taking advantage of the emerging executive leadership moment, seizing the policy reins, and promoting systemic education reform. Between changes in the institution of the governorship, both nationwide and in the South, and the emergence of a host of governor-supported organizations, time and timing coincided at the start of the 1980s to open opportunities for many governors to take a leading role in education policy setting, and indeed, many of them did.

Changes in the Office at the National Level

Concurrent with the centralization of governmental control at the state level during the 1970s was an increase in the breadth and depth of many formally prescribed gubernatorial powers that took place just before and even during the education reform period. Gross (1989) refers to the 1980s as the state-level “executive era,” during which the governorship grew in both stature and power, and the quality of candidates also spiked upward, but the trend toward a stronger executive branch began much earlier. Van Horn (1989) and Sabato (1983), for instance, argue that better-qualified individuals were running for the governor’s office by the 1960s, and that their power was increased by the fact that in many states they now enjoyed longer terms, greater appointment powers, and in some cases the opportunity to run for re-election: “Chief executives have consolidated their power over the budget process, expanded planning and personal staffs, and strengthened the National Governors Association to advocate for the collective interests of the states” (Van Horn, 1989, p. 3). Beyle (1989) identified several changes in formal gubernatorial powers in the period leading up to and continuing through the systemic education reform period:

- *Longer terms* – By 1989, the number of states with four-year gubernatorial terms reached 47 – including all Southern states – up from 29 in 1955 (New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont were the hold-outs).
- *Possibility for multiple terms* – Again, by 1989, all but three states (Kentucky, Virginia, and New Mexico) allowed governors to run for additional terms, up from 33 in 1955, and 24 states allowed consecutive terms, up from six. Twenty-two states had no term limits at all.
- *Shorter ballots* – Since 1956, governors have been able to appoint more people to formerly elected positions. While 709 positions were filled by election in 1956, only 514 were filled by election in 1988.
- *Veto power* – Most governors already had this power in the 1950s, but by 1988, all but North Carolina allowed governors to veto legislation. States allowing line-item vetoes rose from 39 to 43, and by 1988 ten governors could cut specific appropriations.
- *State government reorganization* – Governors in only two states had the power to reorganize government (with legislative approval) in 1956, but by 1988, 24 governors had this power.²⁵

In addition, in part for reasons cited earlier, many governors expanded both the size and the capacity of their staffs (moving from an average of 11 staff members in 1956 to a staff over four times as large by 1988, according to Beyle [1989]), which increased

²⁵ However, as suggested earlier, it is important to note that *legislative* power also tended to increase during the gubernatorial formal power renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s, offsetting somewhat the importance of the rise in such powers during that period (Beyle, 1989; Gross, 1989), and Gross (1989) suggests that gubernatorial power is thus better measured by how much a given governor's power has increased *vis-à-vis* other institutions in her or his state, most particularly the legislature. After all, as Fusarelli (2002) cautions, governors were not the only institutions with the opportunity to become powerful state policy makers.

their ability to exert a greater level of influence in many policy areas (Caldwell, 1985, February 6; James, 1991), including education (Astuto & Clark, 1988). Caldwell (1985, February 6) points to the increased burden at the state level of doling out federal dollars generated as a result of a multiplication of federal programs, beginning in 1958 and reaching a zenith in the 1980s, as another reason for this professionalization and expansion. Of particular note for this study, several scholars also have pointed to growing public concern about education as a factor in the rise of governors' involvement in education policy (Caldwell, 1985, February 6; Conley, 2003). Conley (2003) argues that part of that perception included the idea that someone needed to be held responsible for school performance, and that identification of a responsible party is easier when the party takes the form of a single person (as opposed to an entire legislature or bureaucratic organization).

Finally, as suggested earlier, changes in federal-state relations also played a role. President Reagan's ECIA (1981) required "the governor to appoint a statewide advisory committee to consult with the SEA [state education agency] on the use of the state's Chapter 2 allocation, the development and implementation of state programs financed by Chapter 2, and the formula for allocating Chapter 2 funds to local educational agencies" (Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983, p. 36) – a clause that Astuto and Clark (1988) believe to have been critical in the increased role of some governors in education policy formation. Simultaneously, ECIA reduced the role of other players, namely parents and community members, who had previously played more integral roles as a result of Johnson's original ESEA language (Astuto & Clark, 1988). These changes were coupled with the gradual movement of state planning responsibilities to the governor's office:

While only three of a total of 37 state planning agencies were located in governors' offices in 1960, by 1971, every state had such an agency, and 29 were located in governors' offices. Similarly, by 1989, 45 states had created policy planning offices, and 40 of those were located in governors' offices, in budget offices, or in departments of administration or finance (Beyle, 1989). "More than any other state actor, [governors] had the institutional authority, organizational resources, and media access to dramatize need, frame issues, and set agendas" (Mazzoni, 1995, p. 61).

Changes in the Governorship in the South

But the opportunities alluded to above that allowed for growth in the governor's office were not universally shared by all governors, and it is in the differences across states that the root reason for the rapid rise of the Southern governors in this policy area may dwell. For example, Astuto and Clark (1988) suggest that the ultimate result of federal devolution was an increase in "the variability among the states relative to political influence systems, the ability and willingness to finance education, and local norms and values about education" (p. 372). In other words, devolution may have contributed not only to the potential rise of the importance of the governor's office but also to differences across states in terms of the level to which a governor's importance *could* rise: "The unintended derivative effect of devolution is to accentuate the discrepancy among the states in terms of their ability and willingness to respond to their educational needs. While the present impression is one of explosive activity, in fact, the level of activity varies according to the contextual features of each state. Comprehensive school improvement programs are emerging only in states that have the contextual conditions to support such programs" (p. 372).

Ironically, it would not have surprised many contemporary observers if governorships in the South had evolved at a much slower rate than they actually did. Through at least the mid-twentieth century, and despite some beacons of Progressivism, most Southern governors did little to dispel a public reputation for being symbols of the corrupt and callous political machines that were believed to run their states: “[A] picture of repression, and the willingness to snuff out the most elementary freedoms of speech, assembly, voting, petition, and *habeas corpus*. . . . [S]outhern governors fought to preserve segregation, discrimination, and patterns of social and political life that, whether measured against the U. S. Constitution, customarily accepted human rights, or just plain decency, were woefully inadequate” (Houseman, 1986, p. 84). Bass and DeVries (1976) contend, too, that many of the “New South” Democratic governors of the 1970s – Dale Bumpers and David Pryor of Arkansas, Reubin Askew of Florida, Jimmy Carter and George Busbee of Georgia, John West of South Carolina, William Waller of Mississippi, and Edwin Edwards of Louisiana – also generally neglected to take up the causes of blacks and working-class whites: “[F]ew of the new governors dealt openly with the problems that directly affected blacks and that segment of the population – white and black – with incomes below the poverty level” (p. 12). Even with the up-tick in the overall role of the executive branch in most Southern states between 1950 and 1976, the office of the governor in most Southern states remained relatively limited in terms of specific and direct power (Bass & DeVries, 1976). According to Kearney (1987), political scientists even went so far as to rate the South Carolina governorship as the weakest of *all* governorships (see Table 4.1, following chapter).

And yet, change *was* occurring in Southern governors' offices by the 1970s. Bass and DeVries (1976) suggest that some of the "New South" governors listed above made an important political-alignment move from conservative to at least moderate via their support of a variety of generic "people" programs, including kindergartens, prison reform, and a general end to the divisive racial politics that had been so common in their states beforehand. In addition, Governor Askew introduced the first corporate income tax in Florida, Governor Bumpers managed to make the income tax in Arkansas more progressive, and Governor Edwards increased the severance tax on oil and gas two-fold while also getting approval for a constitutional amendment to make it possible to increase corporate income taxes. The cohort that followed them, however, in the end would make the much larger splash. Kearney (1987) was one of the first to note that several of these governors – including three of the governors examined in this study (Winter, Clinton, and Riley) – were able to overcome the institutional weaknesses of their offices to push through significant education reform in the mid-1980s. And Riley and Peterson (1995) add that the South was populated at the time by governors (and legislators) who were not only interested in education but also *articulate* to boot.

The role of governor-sponsored multi-state organizations, commissions, and reports. One reason for this change may have been related to the degree to which Southern governors were willing and able to share ideas across state lines (an idea that will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5). A critical factor in that sharing was the growth of a plethora of multi-state organizations that helped not only to link governors across states but also to give them the tools to produce collectively what they most likely could not produce separately: a unified agenda for education reform in the South. Beyle

(1988) argues that it was the governors themselves between 1974 and 1980 who, under the aegis of a series of publications by the National Governors Association (NGA) that outlined gubernatorial innovation, first promoted the notion that innovations were happening in all fifty states, and that it was the governors who were leading those innovations. Governors in Southern states were more likely to cite education innovations, reflecting, in Beyle's (1988) estimation, the generally poorer condition of education in those states relative to the rest of the nation. Pipho (1986) notes that many state policy makers also started to take up education reform challenges put forward by various regional and national commissions, the most aggressive being the governors. He singles out Governor Hunt of North Carolina as a leader in this respect, with his formation of the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, via the Education Commission of the States (ECS). The Task Force was comprised of governors, business leaders, and educators, and more than anything this body helped to cement the notion that education and economic health walked hand-in-hand. The Task Force also recommended that governors form their own task forces. Indeed, Riley and Peterson (1995), reflecting on the activity of the 1980s, credit national organizations like NGA, ECS, the National Conference of State Legislators, and regional groups like the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) with getting education reform on the agenda. Details about these key organizations and their contributions to the evolution of Southern governors are provided in Appendix G.

Particularly important contributions included the numerous public convenings they hosted over the years, which frequently revolved around public roundtable discussions among leading Southern governors. Of particular note was a 1982 convening

of the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB), at which Governors Winter, Alexander, Riley, Hunt, Graham, and Robb discussed the importance of education reform to progress in economic success in the South. Perhaps even more importantly, however, was their ability to provide governors with reports that contained the *language* and the simplified or streamlined *policy approaches* necessary to help convince resistant state legislatures that the goal of comprehensive education reform was a real possibility (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986). These organizations, along with a host of other national and regional groups, churned out several such reports in the early 1980s (Table 3.4), which, among other things, suggested that, even though education was a national responsibility, education *reform* would require state-level leadership (Caldwell, 1985, February 6). “It’s hard to trace the causal chain on intellectual capital, and how it plays out in the political process, but I think these reports were both inspired by and then were received by this extraordinary group of Southern governors in the ’80s in a way that was almost kind of a unique moment in history” (J. White, personal communication, December 3, 2009). Perhaps most importantly, the reports crystallized an emerging concept noted above that became the rallying cry for many Southern governors: The future of education and the future of the economies of the Southern states were inextricably linked.²⁶

²⁶ Consider, for example, this passage from the final report of SGPB’s Task Force on the Southern Economy (1981): “While the determinants of labor productivity are multiple and complex, a growing body of evidence points to the importance of cognitive capacity. Research is now indicating that ‘poor students frequently make poor workers.’ One study shows that aggregate productivity and organizational efficiency are increased when the capacities of individuals are commensurate with the jobs they hold. The study has also found there is a direct relationship between test scores and economic activity” (p. 8).

Table 3.4.
Relevant Publications, 1981-1984

1980 Commission on the Future of the South. (1982). *The Future of the South*. P. Watters (Ed.). Research Triangle Park, NC: Southern Growth Policies Board.

Adler, M. J. (1982). *The Paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*. New York: Macmillan.

Boyer, E. L. (1983). *High school: A report on secondary education in America*. New York: Harper and Row.

Business-Higher Education Forum (1983). *America's competitive challenge: The need for a national response. A report to the President of the United States from the Business-Higher Education Forum*. Washington, D. C.: Author.

Task Force on Education for Economic Growth. (1983). *Action for excellence: A comprehensive plan to improve our nation's schools*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Goodlad, J. I. (1983). *A place called school: Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

National Assessment for Educational Progress (Rexford Brown). (1982). *National assessment findings and educational policy questions*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology. (1983). *Educating Americans for the 21st century. A report to the American people and the National Science Board*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Sizer, T. R. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Myers, M. M. (1982). *Preparing students for college: The need for quality*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Task Force on Higher Education and Schools. (1981). *The need for quality*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Task Force on Higher Education and the Schools. (1983). *Meeting the need for quality: Action in the South*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education. (1983). *Making the grade*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund.

Task Force on the Southern Economy. (1981). *Final Report of the Southern Growth Policies Board Task Force on the Southern Economy*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Growth Policies Board.

With the exception of the initial SREB documents, however, a cursory glance at the dates for many of these publications reveals that, rather than being catalysts for education reform in the South, most served as supports – though admittedly sometimes critically so – for the work already under way. Timing is particularly important to consider in the case of *A Nation at Risk*, the most famous of the reports, which was officially released in April of 1983 and is often credited with serving as a catalyst for education reform nationwide. However, Fuhrman (2003), Henig (2009), Popho (1986), Thomas (1992), and others remind us that, though the publication was certainly electrifying, many in the South had already been moving toward reform as a result of the work of the ECS and the SREB. McGrath (1983) concurs, citing Ernest Boyer, former Commissioner of Education under Carter before the formation of the federal Department of Education and at the time president of the Carnegie Foundation, who argued that many communities across the country already were working hard to transform schooling. In a similar vein, Thomas (1992) cites former Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary David Matthews, who noted that the education reform movement “was not created by some 30 odd reports” but was instead the work of the public at large. Even in 1980, before he was elected and long before *A Nation at Risk*, Ronald Reagan was arguing for tougher standards and merit pay. McGrath (1983) adds:

While the presidential candidates talk of their plans, the real leadership is coming from the state level: from Governors, from local superintendents, from business people. In a spirit of enlightened self-interest, state officials equate better schools with healthier economies What the NCEE failed to report . . . is that the tide of mediocrity has already begun to ebb. There are plenty of weaknesses still, but

excellence has once again become part of the agenda in hundreds of school districts across the country (no pagination).

Hawley (1988) echoes Fuhrman (2003), McGrath (1983), Popho (1986), and Thompson (1992) in his assertion that the “first reform wave” (as he calls it) started not with the reports but beforehand in the swelling tide of depressing information about test scores and how students in America stacked up against students across the globe, even though many such scores were actually on the rise in the 1970s. “The public mind,” he states, “was not so much shaped as it was mirrored by the hyperbole of the 1983 report of the National Commission on Educational Excellence” (Hawley, 1988, p. 417). For instance, the report was issued well after Governor Winter’s reforms were adopted in Mississippi and only months before Governor Graham’s and Governor Clinton’s were signed into law. Winter said shortly after the report’s release, “We . . . recognized, even before the President’s Commission Report was adopted, that we could not approach [education reform] on a “Band-aid” basis; and last year . . . the people of Mississippi, through their legislature, raised taxes by more than \$100 million. . . . earmarked . . . primarily for education” (*Proceedings*, 1983, p. 50).

What matters most about *Nation* and other reports like it is that the language and the concepts embedded in actual reform legislation are clearly linkable to the language of the major reports (*cf.* Shor, 1986). *A Nation at Risk* and two of the other most influential documents and the roles they played in the emergence of education governorships – *Action for Excellence* and *The Need for Quality* – are explored further in Appendix G.

Moving from the Regional Level to Individual Narratives

This chapter's multiple-frame overview of the historical events and values shifts that informed the reform period of the early 1980s, along with its summary of relevant contemporary changes to the governorship, provides a context for understanding the overall education reform movement in the South, but it is at best a general background only. The next chapter provides a more detailed exploration of the reform strategies of three of the education governors from that critical period – William Winter of Mississippi, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, and James Hunt of North Carolina.

CHAPTER 4 – GOVERNOR-LED EDUCATION REFORM IN THE SOUTH, 1982-1985

“The best leaders . . . have it working on their guts and their hearts. Everybody needs to have a full chance, in [former North Carolina governor] Charles Bradley Aycock’s words, to ‘burgeon out all that is within them’. . . . At the end of four years, at the end of eight years, it isn’t going to be how much more money you put in [to education], it’s going to be about the changes you brought about in schooling.”

– J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009

Moving Beyond Historical Analysis

The historical analysis presented in the preceding chapter outlines the national and regional contexts that made systemic education policy reform and emerging gubernatorial leadership in the South possible. A key premise of this study, however, is that none of the events and trends illuminated by the broad historical lenses was *sufficient* for making such reform or leadership happen (*cf.* Crew, 1998), though they were likely necessary. Another premise is that there was no inevitability to the events that transpired between 1982 and 1985 in the South. Rather, there was instead a tremendous *opportunity* in the form of an executive leadership moment, an opportunity on which a few activist governors were able to capitalize. The heart of this study is really the examination of the second half of the story – the ways in which these activist governors turned the possibilities presented to them by the crossing streams of history into concrete political and policy outcomes and, ultimately, institutional change.

The View from the Individual Level: Converting Possibilities into Realities

Policy Entrepreneurship

As Ferguson and Barth (2002) note, the true challenge of questions like the ones guiding this study is not so much to explain how an outcome might have been possible, but instead, “[t]he challenge is to borrow from the personal model (research that focuses on leaders as individual actors) so that we might have a broad understanding of the *leader himself or herself* while at the same time bringing in the institutional tradition (understanding the institutional, political, and economic constraints that shape the context in which governors operate)” (p. 789, emphasis in the original). There is a well-developed and growing literature on leadership in the *national* executive branch and the influence of the presidency on policy issues (*e.g.*, Edwards, 1981; Hargrove, 1966; Rossiter, 1956; Rozell, 2002), including an ongoing debate about whether such leadership and influence are largely a result of the formal powers embedded in the institution of the presidency (*e.g.*, Moe, 1985; Howell, 2003; Spitzer, 1983) or of the individual personalities who inhabit the office at any given time (*e.g.*, Neustadt, 1990; Skowronek, 1997).²⁷ But scholarly inquiry about leadership in state executive branches, while insightful, has tended to be more limited in scope. Cheek (1990), Crew (1998), Herzik and Brown (1991), Kirst and Garms (1980) and others have explored an array of aspects of gubernatorial leadership, but most studies of the governorship tend to focus either on the expansion of the office (*e.g.* Sabato, 1983) or on comparisons of formal powers across states (*e.g.*, Belye, 1989, 2004; Dometrius, 1979; Gross, 1989; Morehouse, 1966,

²⁷ White (personal communication, December 3, 2009) cautions that such literature may be only of limited use in studying the governorship; while the national executive branch achieves at least a modicum of cohesiveness due to the fact that it is constructed largely via appointments, the executive branch in most Southern states is often “highly fractured,” with a significant number of executive offices filled by election and not by appointment.

1973; Morehouse & Jewell, 2002; Schlesinger, 1965, 1971). With few exceptions (*e.g.*, Bernick, 1979; Ferguson & Barth, 2002; and, to some degree, Rosenthal, 1990), there has been little scholarly conversation about the influence of informal powers and individual personalities on the institutional development of the office's leadership capacity.

For decades, scholars have attempted to measure the strength of governorships relative to each other. One method pioneered by Joseph Schlesinger (1965, 1971) included measurement of four formal gubernatorial powers, and the list has been altered several times since. For example, Kearney (1987), Belye (2004), and others have expanded the list to six powers and strengths: To the original powers of *length of tenure* (number of years per term and possibility for re-election), *veto power* (ability to veto line items and entire bills), *appointment and removal power* (ability to appoint and remove heads of state agencies, boards, and commissions), and *budgetary power* (ability to appoint a chief state budget officer and prepare an executive budget), they added *reorganization power* (authority to reorganize the executive branch) and *staff resource allocation and expansion* (amount of budget and development of professional, administrative, and clerical staffs; Table 4.1). In education in recent years, some governors have attempted actively to change the configuration of key boards and commissions (Conley, 2003), while in other states (*e.g.* Tennessee; Achilles *et al.*, 1986), the governor's power has been reduced in this area.

Though there is a long history of using power rankings to attempt to understand gubernatorial effectiveness, conclusions are often contradictory. For example, in his study of gubernatorial power over agencies, Dometrius (1979) challenged the notion that each of the Schlesinger powers was of equal weight and suggested a refinement that takes

Table 4.1.
Gubernatorial Power, 1980 (Selected States)

State	Beyle (2007) Indices of Gubernatorial Power								Schlesinger (1965, 1971)		Mueller (1985) Update of Schlesinger **		Dometrius (1979) Revision of Schlesinger ***	
	Tenure	Appointment	Budget	Veto	Organizational	Institutional	Unweighted Total	Rank	Method	Rank	Schlesinger **	Rank	Schlesinger ***	Rank
SC	4	1	1	3	1	2	12.0	50	9	50	11	49	2	T49
TX	5	1	1	3	1	2.2	13.2	49	10	T48	12	T46	2	T49
MS	3	2	1	5	1	2.4	14.4	48	11	47	10	50	5	T41
NC	4	5	3	0	2	2.8	16.8	T46	12	46	12	T46	10	T9
NH	2	1	5	2	4	2.8	16.8	T46	10	T48	13	T43	3	T47
NV	4	3	5	2	1	3	18.0	45	14	42	14	42	7	T34
RI	2	4	5	2	3	3.2	19.2	T41	13	T43	12	T46	9	T21
VT	2	4	5	2	3	3.2	19.2	T41	13	T43	13	T43	9	T21
IN	4	5	5	1	1	3.2	19.2	T41	15	T32	15	T33	11	T7
OR	4	1	5	3	3	3.2	19.2	T41	13	T43	15	T33	3	T47
AR	2	4	5	4	2	3.4	20.4	T36	15	T32	15	T33	10	T9
AL	4	3	5	4	1	3.4	20.4	T36	16	T24	16	T23	8	T26
NM	3	4	5	3	2	3.4	20.4	T36	15	T32	16	T23	9	T21
OK	4	2	5	5	1	3.4	20.4	T36	16	T24	16	T23	6	T37
WA	5	2	5	3	2	3.4	20.4	T36	15	T32	16	T23	5	T41
FL	4	1	5	5	3	3.6	21.6	T29	15	T32	15	T33	4	T43
GA	4	2	5	5	2	3.6	21.6	T29	16	T24	15	T33	6	T37
KY	3	4	5	4	2	3.6	21.6	T29	16	T24	15	T33	10	T9
WV	4	3	5	4	2	3.6	21.6	T29	16	T24	15	T33	8	T26
KS	4	2	4	5	3	3.6	21.6	T29	15	T32	16	T23	6	T37
ND	5	1	5	5	2	3.6	21.6	T29	16	T24	16	T23	4	T43
LA	4	4	4	5	1	3.6	21.6	T29	17	T19	17	T17	10	T9
MO	4	1	5	5	4	3.8	22.8	T24	15	T32	15	T33	4	T43
NE	4	4	5	5	1	3.8	22.8	T24	18	T10	16	T23	10	T9
WI	5	3	5	3	3	3.8	22.8	T24	16	T24	16	T23	7	T34
OH	4	3	5	5	2	3.8	22.8	T24	17	T19	18	T12	8	T26
VA	3	4	5	3	4	3.8	22.8	T24	15	T32	18	T12	9	T21
ME	4	4	5	2	5	4	24.0	T20	15	T32	13	T43	9	T21
AK	4	1	5	5	5	4	24.0	T20	15	T32	16	T23	4	T43
TN	4	4	5	4	3	4	24.0	T20	17	T19	18	T12	10	T9
50-State Avg.	4.1	3.2	4.7	4.1	2.9	3.8	22.8		16.1		16.18		8	

Note: A higher number indicates greater gubernatorial power; rankings are from weakest (SC) to strongest (TN) on the Beyle (2007) scale.

■ = States in this Study ■ = Other Southern States

** These numbers are simple updates of the Schlesinger scale, intended to take into account changes in the governorship nationwide in the time since the first calculations.

*** These values are inexact and are for illustrative purposes only. Dometrius argued via regression analysis that Schlesinger's index should weigh the four components of power differently, eliminating entirely the tenure factor, reducing budget and veto measures to dichotomous variables (Schlesinger 1, 2, and 3 = 0; Schlesinger 4 and 5 = 1), and increasing the importance of appointment powers (Schlesinger scale = 1-5; Dometrius scale = 1-10). Dometrius's re-calculation of the appointment variable include information about 16 separate offices, but data for Beyle's index (from which these values are derived) include 46 measures; thus, replicating exactly Dometrius's procedure for achieving his 10-point scale is not possible via Beyle's data. Also note that Dometrius was most interested in gubernatorial power over agencies only, and not necessarily overall gubernatorial power.

Sources: Beyle (2007), Dometrius (1979), Mueller (1985), Schlesinger (1965), Schlesinger (1971)

into account their *relative* importance. He concluded that, in terms of gubernatorial power over agencies, appointment power is by far the most significant of the four, while certain aspects of tenure (length of term, reelection) are the least significant. On the other hand, Gross's (1989) review of the literature seems to indicate the exact opposite in a broader context that is not limited to gubernatorial influence over agencies alone. He concludes that there is *no* clear link between a governor's appointment powers and her or his success as a policy leader. One of the reasons for the discrepancy may be that formal powers alone do not tell the whole story of gubernatorial influence (*cf.* Rosenthal, 1990; Dometrius, 1991; Herzik, 1991). As Sigelman and Dometrius (1988) argue, formal powers represent merely *potential* influence. Indeed, as they note, and as is particularly important when considering the Southern education governors, "a chief executive who possesses only a relatively narrow range of formal powers *can*, at least under certain circumstances, be quite influential" (p. 159, emphasis in the original). For example, Gross (1989, citing Morehouse, 1966, 1973, and 1981) lists the industrialization level of the state and a governor's party leadership capacity (as measured by electoral support in the primary) as factors in influencing the passage of legislation.²⁸ Furthermore, there are critically important *informal* powers that must be taken into consideration when assessing a governor's strength, and therein often lies a key distinction between the larger pool of governors with many formal powers and the smaller pool of governors who also are able

²⁸ Gross acknowledges, however, that other findings may controvert the importance of Party leadership. For instance, writing just prior to the emergence of the education governors, Muchmore and Beyle (1980) identified rapid changes in the Party leadership role typically assigned to the governor. For one thing, and though the sentiment was not universally shared among the fifteen former governors they interviewed, some governors expressed little allegiance to their Party's positions on some issues, following instead what Muchmore and Beyle refer to as "loose pragmatism" when it came to making policy decisions. Similarly, several of the governors discounted the importance of using the official Party platform as a source for policy guidance. The former governors did not sense that they were able to totally abandon Party loyalty, however; after all, they were still required to earn Party support for their own nomination, and Party loyalty could often make the difference in the passage of a partisan issue in the legislature.

to act as policy leaders. Informal powers include access to mass media, influence within a governor's party, patronage, pork barrel options, interpersonal skills, bargaining ability, education, experience, energy, ambition, and the prestige of the office in a given state at a given time. A final informal power – and one that Bernick (1979) considers to be the most important for a formally weak governorship – is sheer popularity. Bernick surveyed state senators from 11 states in 1975 in an attempt to gauge the tools that these legislators believed to be most important to governors who were attempting to get legislation passed. Distinguishing between formal powers and informal powers, Bernick concluded that, while certain formal powers (budget-proposing, veto, and appointment powers) were most important, much of a governor's influence over legislatures could be accounted for by informal powers such as her or his ability to generate popular support (which ranked second overall, and first for governors in states with weak formal executive powers) and media support, as well as the nature of her or his personal interactions with legislators.

By examining the approaches of individual activist governors to the problem of establishing education reform leadership roles for their own governorships, this study begins the process of determining the factors that separate “education governors” in general from not only non-education governors but also from governors who are education governors in name only. Thus, this chapter takes up the second major component of the conceptual framework presented in chapter 1 – that the Southern education governors seized the executive leadership moment described in the preceding chapter to simultaneously effect systemic education policy reform and establish the governorship in a leadership role in education policy formation – by detailing the story of three governors, whose cases will serve as the basis for this study's investigation of the

influence of informal powers and individual personalities on the formation of education governorships.

The entrepreneurship concept. Governors typically are not considered to be part of the so-called legislative “iron triangles” – the tightly-knit and club-like relationships maintained by legislative committees, state agencies, and interest groups – that political scientists (*e.g.*, Mayhew, 1974) often contend dominate the policy-making process. In recent years, however, several scholars have challenged the supremacy of the iron triangle notion and have offered alternate ways of understanding how a non-triangle actor might have an impact. For example, Anton’s (1989) reading of the policy communities (*e.g.*, Kingdon, 1984) and issue networks (*e.g.*, Heclo, 1978) literatures leads him to conclude that the cost of access to participation in the iron triangle of legislative committees, bureaucratic agencies, and client groups is not nearly as high or as prohibitive as once thought and is based more on the level of policy *entrepreneurship* of individuals who are interested in joining the fray. Thus, an entrepreneurial governor with interest and drive may be more capable of slipping into the iron-triangle framework than previously thought.

But what is a policy entrepreneur? Definitions vary, but work by Mintrom (1997) and Mintrom and Vergari (1998) has helped to clarify the concept somewhat, and Rhodes (2009) has even applied it specifically to *education* policy actors. According to Mintrom (1997), policy entrepreneurs are simply “political actors who promote policy ideas” (p. 739). They operate by “identifying problems, networking in policy circles, shaping the terms of policy debates, and building coalitions” (p. 736). They do not, however, have to generate *original* ideas; for the policy entrepreneur, her or his policy innovation need

merely be “a policy that is *new to the state adopting it*” (p. 740, emphasis added). Nor does taking on the role of policy entrepreneur alone guarantee success; successful entrepreneurs also “are able to spot problems, they are prepared to take risks to promote innovative approaches to problem solving, and they have the ability to organize others to help turn policy ideas into government policies” (p. 740). In addition, “policy entrepreneurs who are most adept at manipulating policy networks are more likely than others to attain their policy goals” (Mintrom and Vergari, 1998, p. 127).

It is not hard to see how some governors might fit this definition of policy entrepreneurship. Most governors are well-positioned to take on the roles of networkers in state-level politics, for example, and Houseman (1986, citing Morgan & Brudney, 1984) notes that a key element in a successful governor’s arsenal is her or his ability to act as a “mediator among various interest groups, elites, and power brokers” (p. 98). It is important to keep in mind, however, that entrepreneurship is not automatically a formal or institutionalized characteristic of all governorships; a governor’s ability to operate as an entrepreneur often has as much to do with the influence of informal powers such as personality, individual choice, and personal drive as it does with the exercise of formal power. As a case in point, Ferguson and Barth’s (2002) quasi-experimental study found that governors with high levels of a power motive (defined as a desire for prestige and influence) and high levels of an achievement motive (defined as a desire for excellence) were more likely to reach their policy goals than were governors who depended upon affiliation or intimacy (defined in their study as a desire for close relationships), regardless of their formal powers.²⁹

²⁹ Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt (1989) drew a similar conclusion as part of their qualitative study of the politics of education policy across several states.

With the policy entrepreneurship concept and an eye for the role of informal powers as guides, this chapter presents narrative accounts of the three cases of gubernatorial education reform leadership that are the focus of this study. The accounts are derived from the sources and methodological procedures detailed in chapter 2

Three Cases: Winter, Alexander, and Hunt

“I can remember vividly a meeting, a closed-door meeting of Southern governors in 1982, when one of the governors said to the others, I think it was Bill Clemmons of Texas, he said, ‘When is one of you so-and-sos going to get brave enough to take on the teachers’ unions?’ . . . Wasn’t the spark, but it was prophetic.”

– Lamar Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009

William Winter and the Education Reform Act (ERA) – Mississippi

Mississippi education history background. In the first decades of the twentieth century, education in Mississippi, much like in other Southern states at the time, was largely a local effort, only nominally overseen by the state. In 1953, however, Mississippi moved to reorganize 3,952 school districts into a more reasonable and manageable 151 (Jenkins & Person, 1991), but this move toward more state control of education did not pave the way for education reform progress. During the desegregation period, almost immediately following *Brown v. Board*, in an effort to minimize state responsibility for the education of minorities, Mississippi approved a constitutional amendment that authorized the state legislature to abolish public schooling, if it so chose (Jenkins & Person, 1991). In 1956, the legislature went so far as to use this authority to repeal compulsory school attendance, a law that had been in place only since 1918 (Mississippi was the last state to adopt a compulsory attendance law; Jenkins & Person, 1991). In

addition, the “minimum foundation” program established in 1953 allowed for unequal expenditures on traditionally black and white schools (Krane, 1992).³⁰

Desegregation efforts in Mississippi reached a turning point in October, 1969, with a United States Supreme Court ruling, *Beatrice Alexander v. Holmes County (Miss.) Board of Education*, which declared that the state had failed to meet the “with all deliberate speed” requirement of previous desegregation rulings (Heard, 1985, September 25). Even with this ruling, however, efforts to preserve segregation efforts continued at the state level. Rather than working to fund public schools adequately, in 1970 Governor John Bell Williams supported a plan to fund both public and private schools (Heard, 1985, September 25; Srinivasan, 1996). He stated: “Desegregation will cause serious damage to quality public education in Mississippi – perhaps even destruction of public education itself” (quoted in Heard, 1985, September 25).

Against this backdrop of strong resistance to public school desegregation efforts, other United States Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s effectively required redistricting for greater representative balance in state legislatures, a move that dramatically affected not only the make-up but also the behavior of the Mississippi legislature. Such decisions had been preceded in Mississippi by a state-level case that led to reapportionment and single-member districting. Even so, no African-American legislator was elected until 1979 (Nash & Taggart, 2006).³¹

³⁰ The minimum foundation approach meant that the state provided a baseline per-pupil expenditure level, but localities were able to supplement to any degree, leaving poorer, predominantly African-American, school districts behind.

³¹ Nash and Taggart (2006) do, however, credit the move to single-member districts as crucial to the eventual passage of Winter’s Education Reform Act.

When Governor William Winter took office in 1979, he inherited a relatively weak governorship with few formal powers. The governor of Mississippi has little authority under the Constitution of 1890, and the legislature sets all appropriations (Mullins, 1992). In addition, the governor of Mississippi would not even be able to submit an executive budget proposal to the legislature until 1984 (Beyle, 1989), two years after Winter's successful struggle for passage of ERA. In fact, according to the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*, every governor since Paul Johnson in 1964 had called for education reform, and every one had been denied by the legislature (Nash & Taggart, 2006).

Winter also inherited a state in dire financial straits. Just prior to Winter's election, conditions in Mississippi had been ripe for expensive education reform, as the state's economy expanded much faster than the national average, but by 1980, growth cooled well below the national average and was virtually static. In addition, at the start of the decade, Mississippi ranked last among states in *per capita* income (\$6,500) and educational achievement, and it was first in illiteracy. It also ranked first in infant mortality, teen pregnancy, and birth defects. The economy was also weak and getting weaker, with unemployment at around 11.9 percent (Clynch, 1991; Kanengiser, 1983, January 12; Srinivasan, 1996), and the gap between Mississippi and the surrounding states growing wider. Transfer payments (*e.g.*, social security) were the greatest source of income for residents in 51 of the state's 82 counties (Jenkins & Person, 1991).

The state of the schools was not much better. Mississippi had the nation's highest dropout rate (40 percent), lowest teacher salaries, and near-lowest per-pupil expenditure in the country at the time of the Act's passage, and it was the only state with no public

kindergartens (Heard, 1985, September 25; Kanengiser, 1983, January 12). In addition, the average state teacher's salary in Mississippi in 1982 was \$14,320, almost \$5,000 below the national average (Jenkins & Person, 1991), and spending discrepancies between black and white schools were over \$1,200 per pupil (Krane, 1992).

Governor Winter, himself a former segregationist (Ladd, 2005, August 10; Winter, 2008, November 18), had run in 1979 on a platform that identified public education as the key to turning around the state's economic fortunes (Jenkins & Person, 1991; Thomas, 1992).³² As a result, he won election by a sizeable margin: 61 percent to 39 percent (Mullins, 1992). However, the Mississippi legislature was in a tax reduction phase at the time, having just reduced taxes by nearly \$100 million in 1979, and it was poised to do so again during the 1980 session (Mullins, 1992). The oil severance tax, which Winter later would lobby unsuccessfully to raise during the ensuing Education Reform Act (ERA) debates, had not been raised since 1944 and was one of the lowest in the nation at 6 percent (By comparison, Louisiana's rate in 1982 was 12½ percent; Harris, 1982, December 13). Raising taxes of any kind – even those that presumably would impact consumers in other states – in a climate of economic uncertainty was low on the legislature's list, even among sympathetic legislators (Jenkins & Person, 1991).

Early attempts at education reform. It was into this atmosphere that Winter first attempted to bring radical change to Mississippi education. As Mississippi State political science professor Edward J. Clynch has observed, “Most public policies in Mississippi emerge from an ongoing tug of war between change agents pulling the state into the mainstream of American life and status quo forces resisting a restructuring of the

³² Thomas (1992) contends that Winter's successful bid for the governorship – after two failed attempts in 1967 and 1975 – was due in part to his shift of focus from education writ large to education as a means for improving the economy.

traditional order” (1991, p. 125), and Winter’s struggle to enact systemic education reform followed that script to the letter.

The governor started his quest by outlining several education reform ideas in his first address to the legislature, in which he called for teacher pay raises, a better-financed student transportation system, increased funding overall, and an expanded state school board (Mullins, 1992). Winter first acted on his education reform proposals by convincing the legislature to approve a special education study commission in 1980, chaired by businessman Jack Reed,³³ to look into ways to fund public school reform (Nash & Taggart, 2006; Srinivasan, 1996; Thomas, 1992). The Task Force’s final report – developed with hands-on support from the governor himself (Thomas, 1992) – was full of recommendations for public schooling that went far beyond funding alone and eventually formed the backbone of Winter’s education plan (Srinivasan, 1996). They included (summarized from Mullins, 1992):

1. An appointed lay State Board of Education;
2. Appointment of superintendents;
3. Election of trustees in consolidated school districts;
4. State support for pupil transportation;
5. Easing of school bond issue voting rules;
6. Changes to teacher certification and training;
7. Establishment of teacher in-service training;
8. Changes in textbook purchase rules;
9. Statewide kindergarten;

³³ Winter, Lieutenant Governor Dye, and Speaker of the House Newman each appointed members to what was popularly called the “Blue Ribbon Committee” (Mullins, 1992).

10. Compulsory attendance; and

11. Funding via an oil and gas severance tax.

But Winter's plans met with stiff resistance from the legislature, time and again, most often over the issue of money. Rejections of the first education reform formulations between 1980 and 1982 were due in part to latent racial tensions (Mullins, 1992), but also to a failure to identify funding sources for the new programs (Nash & Taggert, 2006; Srinivasan, 1996) – a lesson learned by some of the governors who followed Winter in other Southern states. In fact, most of the legislators supported the reforms but not the tax increases that would be necessary to implement them (Mullins, 1992; Srinivasan, 1996).³⁴ Speaker of the House C. B. “Buddie” Newman was the leader of that opposition, going so far as to ignore House rules that required a vote on adjournment (rather than allowing the Speaker to simply declare adjournment) when at least a dozen members stood and asked for consideration of the education reform package (Krane, 1992).

Successful reframing. After these initial failures, Winter and his staff changed tactics, answering the charges of critics who had scolded the governor for not playing “hardball” with the legislature (Mullins, 1992). The Governor began giving increased attention to the proposal by drumming up grass-roots support via local clubs and organizations (Srinivasan, 1996). With a public approval rating of 65 percent (well over the legislature's 35 percent rating), Winter instructed his young staff – a group who were sometimes referred to as “the Boys of Spring” (Ladd, 2005, August 10), a label coined by Senate Finance Committee Chair Ellis Bodron, who was frequently frustrated by their persistence and their uncanny ability to uncover information in advance of even the

³⁴ Not all proposed education reform in the state met with failure, however; in the fall of 1982, Mississippi voters approved a constitutional amendment that created the lay State Board of Education (Kanengiser, 1983, January 12; Krane, 1992).

legislators (Nash & Taggert, 2006; Thomas, 1992) – to treat this process of courting public support “as if a governor’s campaign was taking place”³⁵ (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 61). The advertising firm of Maris West & Baker was engaged to develop advertisements (Mullins, 1992), and the staff assembled a sympathetic informal committee of twenty-five people and charged them with the development of a public campaign. His staff began by identifying members of the public who had shown interest in public education reform (Thomas, 1992), and they even went so far as to hand out “support cards,” which were to be mailed in if the holder supported the reforms, creating a database of sorts of citizens who could be called on to support the legislation (Srinivasan, 1996). Leading citizens, public leaders, and professional organizations were among the groups recruited to help spread the word and offer support (Jenkins & Person, 1991), and the staff even formed a nonprofit corporation, Mississippians for Quality Education, to promote general public awareness efforts (Mullins, 1992). In addition, the Governor and his staff relied heavily on the Southern Growth Policy Board’s 1982 publication, *The Future of the South*, for jarring statistics that clearly identified Mississippi as an education backwater (Mullins, 1992).

Perhaps most importantly, Winter anticipated the strategies of his Southern gubernatorial contemporaries by increasing his focus on the connection between education and the economy as a means for courting public support for the reforms (Mullins, 1992). Using the Southern Regional Education Board’s report, *A Need for Quality* (1981), as a guide, Winter continued to draw connections between education and the economy for the legislature, just as he had done to secure his victory in 1978: “I

³⁵ Winter did so at the suggestion of State Research Associates of Lexington, Kentucky, a group that had helped to develop the original reform package (Mullins, 1992).

think it [educational improvement] was parallel to the changing strategy with respect to economic development, that we were not going to be able to be competitive using the same old techniques of attracting industry to the South on the basis of low wages and cheap land and low taxes. That we would be increasingly out of the competition if we did that, so the one place we had [to] turn [to] was in the upgrading of our productive capacity. Which is to say in the upgrading of our processes of educating our people” (quoted in Thomas, 1992, pp. 59-60). There could have been no better proof of this perspective than the timely loss of an electronics manufacturing plant in early 1980, whose parent company decided to locate elsewhere solely on the basis of the quality (or lack thereof) of Mississippi schools (Mullins, 1992). Winter delivered his message via personal meetings held with legislators across the state (Thomas, 1992), but also via public fora sponsored by the Governor’s Office that were dedicated to the topic, such as the April 1981 Governor’s Colloquium on Science, Engineering and Technology, as well as meetings with the state’s business leaders³⁶ (Mullins, 1992).

The first legislative breakthrough occurred when House Bill 936, which authorized universal kindergarten, made it through the Education and Appropriations Committees in early February of 1982; however, Speaker Newman – who later referred to the bill as a “piece of trash” that “wasn’t worth the paper it was written on” – used the tacit rules of the game to subvert its full consideration on the floor: He called for a voice vote for adjournment before consideration of the bill and declared that the “ayes” out-voiced the “nays,” though many in attendance heard otherwise (Mullins, 1992, p. 77;

³⁶ Winter contends that a speech that he gave before the Mississippi Economics Council “launched his administration’s strategy of a continuous effort to focus on education issues” (Mullins, 1992, p. 31). Winter’s assistant for economic development, Charles Deaton, argued that a key component of the struggle for education reform would be the engagement of the business community, and he led the efforts to recruit their support (Mullins, 1992).

Thomas, 1992; Williams, 1982, April 5).³⁷ The Speaker's actions backfired, though, when the press picked up on the snub and turned him into a villain. ABC's *20/20* even covered the story in August of that year and put blame squarely on the legislative Old Guard (Krane, 1992; Nash & Taggert, 2006; Mullins, 1992). Winter's legislative liaison, Charles Deaton, made further in-roads in the legislature over the summer when he convinced Lieutenant Governor and Senate President *pro tem* Dye and Speaker Newman to form special *ad hoc* education committees (Srinivasan, 1996).

In a final push to garner public support statewide, Winter decided to host a series of nine public education reform fora across the state (Srinivasan, 1996), a tactic that would be employed by other Southern governors in the years to come. The governor attended each of the nine fora, and public response was much greater than anyone in Winter's office anticipated:

That series of forums that we had in the fall of 1982, beginning the day after Labor Day, in September, in Oxford . . . [Molpus] and I flew up together for this meeting. I think we printed up maybe 500 brochures and as we flew in over the building where we were meeting, it looked like an Ole Miss-Mississippi State football game. You know, cars just everywhere blocking the exits from the highways. And [Molpus] said, "You know, I believe we've tapped into something." And [we] got to the schoolhouse, and we [had] planned for 500 people, printed, you know, 500 brochures, hoped there'd be half that many there, and we had about 2,500 people that night (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

³⁷ According to Newman and his supporters, the voice vote clearly favored adjournment (Monteith, 1982, August 28).

After a brief presentation on the connection between the economy and education, the governor's address, and his responses to a series of pre-screened questions (Mullins, 1992), the attendees were divided into smaller groups, each charged with wrestling with one of four issues: reorganization of the State Board of Education, early childhood education, education accountability, and compulsory attendance. In all, Winter's staff estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 people attended all nine fora (Thomas, 1992).

Emboldened by his burgeoning army of public supporters (indicated in particular by their vocal support in November for the establishment of a lay State Board of Education), Winter called a special legislative session for consideration of his 46-point plan (Krane, 1992; Thomas, 1992).³⁸ "It was, I remember, a rainy night in November, we had the last [public forum] in Pascagoula, we were sitting on the tarmac, it was pouring down rain, we were waiting for it to stop, and [Winter] said, 'I'm going to call a Special Session, we go . . . we go roll the dice'" (R. Molpus, personal communication, January 21, 2009). The session convened on December 6th, 1982, despite criticism from legislators who balked at the \$300,000 price tag for holding the session (Kanengiser, 1983, January 12). Handy (1992) and Krane (1992) both suggest that the special session created something of a "goldfish bowl" atmosphere, exposing legislators to public pressure from teachers and pro-education interest groups, perhaps due to the fact that in Mississippi, the governor not only has the power to call a special session but also to declare its agenda. In addition, the steady presence of the public on each day of the session helped to keep pressure high: "When I called the special session, the halls were flooding with people who had driven in here from all over the state, and they were

³⁸ The framework for the plan was based on a study conducted by State Research Associates (Heard, 1985, September 25; Mullins, 1992).

button-holing legislators like you wouldn't believe. I'd never seen it like that before" (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009). The session lasted for sixteen days, during which the final bill was approved (Kanengiser, 1983, January 12). Components of the far-reaching Act (compiled from Heard, 1985, September 25; Jenkins & Person, 1991; Kanengiser, 1983, January 12; Nash & Taggert, 2006; Piphoo, 1986; Srinivasan, 1996) included:

1. Universal kindergarten by fall 1986 (or earlier) – at an estimated price tag of \$30 million (Jenkins & Person, 1991);
2. Reading aides for every classroom, grades 1 through 3;
3. Compulsory attendance, and fines of up to \$1,000 and jail time for parents who did not comply – as noted above, compulsory attendance had been abolished since 1956 (Harris, 1982, December 13), and only since 1977 had the state even had an “attendance counseling” program designed to encourage but not force students to attend (Jenkins & Person, 1991);
4. New high school graduation requirements (including testing to determine literacy levels among high school students);
5. Teacher pay raises (\$1,000 across-the-board), plus \$25 increases for each increment received for years of experience;
6. Provisional licensure for first-year teachers and administrators;
7. Classroom performance evaluations for teachers;
8. A school accreditation system – including accreditation of private schools – focused less on head counts and more on performance-based standards;

9. Directions for the State School Board to establish minimum performance standards and to move toward a state testing program (grades 3, 5, 8, and 11);
10. New powers and responsibilities for the lay State School Board (which had been voted on separately in a general election in 1982 and was the nominal motivation for the special December session, according to Nash and Taggart [2006]; see above), including the appointment of the state superintendent (Pipho, 1986);
11. Planning for school district consolidation and reorganization (a component that died in later legislative sessions, according to Heard [1985, September 25]);
12. Requirements for local school systems to create or revise staff development offerings to meet state guidelines;
13. Training programs for administrators; and
14. Creation of a commission to develop programs to raise standards for teacher education programs and for licensure requirements.

Despite the lengthy list of changes, Jenkins and Person (1982) contend that in most respects, the various elements of the Act represented not so much radical reforms as they did institution of the same level of educational services and expectations available in other states at the time.³⁹

Two elements eventually proved critical to passage. The first was the positive and meticulous media coverage from the statewide Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* and *Daily News* (Wickham, 2007), which had just been purchased by Gannett Corporation in April and had a new editor in Charles Overby (Nash & Taggart, 2006). Overby published eight consecutive days of stories about the education reform package in November of 1982, as

³⁹ The same could be said of the reforms in most if not all of the six states in this study, but some leading innovations are mixed in among the less dramatic provisions – provisions such as career ladder systems and statewide curricula with related annual testing.

well as multiple daily articles during the December special session called later that year. One editorial inducted legislators who opposed universal kindergarten into a “Hall of Shame” (Nash & Taggert, 2006). The second critical element was the constant internal legislative maneuvering on the part of Winter’s Boys of Spring. Mullins (1992) contends that it was not so much Winter’s young staff as Winter himself who understood most clearly how important it was in particular to win over Lieutenant Governor Dye and Speaker Newman to his cause: Both men’s political careers had deep roots in past administrations against which Winter had often aligned himself in his own earlier political career, and both had considerable sway in their respective chambers. In the end, it was their *ad hoc* committees appointed earlier in the summer that helped to educate the members of the legislature, according to legislator H. L. “Sonny” Meredith (Srinivasan, 1996), and it was a phone call from Dye to Finance Committee Chair Ellis Bodron (who many saw as a chief obstacle to reform bill passage)⁴⁰ during the Special Session that ensured movement of the bill out of what could have been a damaging veto point (Mullins, 1992).⁴¹

The Education Reform Act – HB 4 (Pipho, 1986) – finally was passed by the legislature on December 21st, 1982 and signed by Winter on the 22nd, at the end of the special session, despite objections on the part of many legislators (Mullins, 1992; Nash & Taggert, 2006; Srinivasan, 1996). Winter allayed part of the resistance by suggesting that passage of education reform would encourage him to call for pay raises for other state employees, which indeed he did after passage (Handy, 1992). The final package weighed

⁴⁰ For example, he often referred to the early-childhood component of the proposal as “goddamn kindergarten” (A. Mullins, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

⁴¹ According to Mullins (personal communication, January 21, 2009), Lieutenant Governor Dye’s role in reining in Bodron was critical throughout the entire process.

in at an estimated \$106 million in reforms (Kanengiser, 1983, January 12) and was comprised of 48 different sections (Jenkins & Person, 1991). Sales and income tax increases followed soon after to finance the provisions of the Act, to the tune of an additional \$110 million (Nash & Taggert, 2006; Pipho, 1986; Srinivasan, 1996). These tax increases included a 0.5 percent boost (to 5.5 percent) in the sales tax, an income tax increase on corporate income over \$10,000 to 5 percent (from 4 percent), an individual income tax increase, and a variety of new “sin” taxes (Mullins, 1992).⁴²

Winter’s oil and gas severance tax measures, however, again were defeated during the special session, mainly due to the efforts of the oil and gas lobby (Kanengiser, 1983, January 12), which led Winter to pull the requests (Krane, 1992). At first glance, it might seem that such a concession was not necessary, given Winter’s increasing influence in legislative matters and given the Mississippi governor’s strong constitutional veto power. While it is true that the governor does wield line-item veto power, which would on the surface appear to have given Winter additional budget muscle, in reality the power is limited by the nature of appropriations, which come in lump sums (as opposed to multiple line items) to agencies. In other words, a governor must be willing to close an entire agency by vetoing that agency’s appropriations line item, which is not often a practical or pragmatic option (Clynch, 1991). In addition, the budget system under which Winter worked, which was instituted in 1955 and consisted of a legislatively-created and legislatively-dominated Commission on Budget and Accounting, included the governor only as a non-voting chairperson. The Lieutenant Governor, also a member, had more formal commission powers. Thus, even though Governor Winter secured a great deal of

⁴² Overby suggests that the events surrounding the passage of ERA included not one but two miracles – passage of the Act itself, but also passage of the largest tax increase in Mississippi history to pay for it (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

influence for his office during the ERA debates, it was still legislative leaders who made most of the formal budget decisions in the state during all stages of the process (formation, approval, and execution; Clynych, 1991).⁴³

As it turns out, the new taxes that did pass were not earmarked for education *per se*, but went into the general fund, along with all other sales and income taxes, which meant that the degree to which the increases were used for education was up to the legislature each year (Heard, 1985, September 25). Representative Simpson, the governor's floor leader, called the final bill "probably the worst as far as taxation and the best as far as education," but Representative Tommy Walman added that the special session "[was] all worth it. This is the single most significant thing to happen in education since 1953" (both quoted in Krane, 1992, p. 217). Passage took three years of steady work on the part of Winter and his team (Srinivasan, 1996).

The slippery slope of success in Mississippi. Some of the reform measures, which were not scheduled to be adopted in some cases until 1986, later were rescinded or crippled once Winter's term was over and Governor William A. Allain took over (Heard, 1985, September 25). One in particular was the mandated reorganization of school districts, which proved to be a financial burden on small, rural districts with small tax bases that were still recovering from the expensive reorganization and consolidation of 1953 (Jenkins & Person, 1991). Nevertheless, supporters and critics alike recognized the tremendous accomplishment that was the Education Reform Act, and in particular they recognized the significant role that Governor Winter's leadership played in its passage. Mullins (1992) quotes key players who, when asked to reflect on Winter and his

⁴³ This system would not change until 1984, by court order (Clynych, 1991), well after Winter's successful education reform struggle was over.

importance, cited his “vision, enthusiasm, and optimism” and called him “the core, the heart and the soul of the thing,” a “unique leader” who was “willing to risk his whole political career” (p. 189) to secure passage.

Lamar Alexander and the Comprehensive Education Reform Act (CERA) – Tennessee

Tennessee education history background. From an outsider’s perspective, conditions in Tennessee at the time of the proposal of the Comprehensive Education Reform Act (CERA) would not have appeared to have been particularly conducive to passage of a government-proposed plan to overhaul the extant education system. Tennessee’s economy was in poor shape: In 1980-1981, unemployment was around 8.5 percent, interest rates were high, and inflation was a sizeable 9.2 percent a year (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). In addition, the state’s education groups historically had been surprisingly and extremely unified, perhaps more so than in any other Southern state (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976), and state-level education policy initiatives had been few and far between since at least the 1950s (Keese & Huffman, 1998). Finally, the state’s Commissioner of Education enjoyed a strong and somewhat independent policy-making presence, despite the fact that the commissioner was appointed by the governor. The commissioner typically came from in-state and was often already well-known, and, not only was he head of the state department of education, but he was also executive officer of the State Board of Education, executive officer of the State Board for Vocational Education, and a fixture in the governor’s cabinet (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). Indeed, the state’s education policy environment exhibited signs overall of existing in what is sometimes called a

“statewide monolithic” political culture (Iannaccone, 1967), or a culture in which state-level actors appear to speak with one unified voice.

Policy developments around the time of the CERA, however, introduced cracks into the otherwise-stable education governance environment, first evident in a schism between, on one side, the state’s education association (TEA) and its adherents, and, on the other side, a group comprised of administrators, school boards, and some higher education groups. As a result, the state’s political culture at the time of CERA’s proposal (at least with respect to education) transitioned into what in Iannaccone’s model is referred to as a “statewide fragmented” phase (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). In addition, Achilles *et al.* (1986) note that many of the background conditions that in another context might have hindered CERA passage – the economic outlook, wars abroad, and the initially lukewarm approval ratings of the new Republican president – all had started to improve by the time CERA was brought up for debate (McGrath, 1983). Also, on-the-ground education conditions at the time of Alexander’s election to his first term argued the need for change: The state had the fourth-highest dropout rate in the country, one in four college freshmen lacked the basic skills necessary to succeed in college, and only a little more than one in ten Tennesseans held a college degree (L. Alexander, 1986b). An added boost was the presence of a governor who was easy to contrast with the state’s previous, rather tumultuous Democratic administration. Finally, in some pockets of the state, the business community already had begun to back local changes in the delivery of public education. For example, before passage of CERA, Memphis schools superintendent W. W. Herenton credited new business involvement in his schools for the return of about

1,400 white students from private schools over the course of two years in the early 1980s (McGrath, 1983).

A first pass at education reform. Though the final version of CERA was proposed and passed in 1984, the reform process actually began as early as 1981, when an Education Task Force was formed by the General Assembly⁴⁴ and sponsored by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House.⁴⁵ The Task Force, charged with conducting a thorough review of all state-sponsored education programs, elementary through higher education, and with producing long-range plans, held meetings across the state and brought in outside education experts as part of their process for completing the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* (TCES), which was finalized in 1983 (Achilles *et al.*, 1986; Keese & Huffman, 1998; Thomas, 1992). It was on the conclusions of this study that Governor Alexander based the prototype version of what would eventually become the CERA, the Basic Skills First Program, which he presented to the legislature in January 1983 as part of his State of Education address (Keese & Huffman, 1998), which also was broadcast across the state by television (Thomas, 1992).

Components of that plan (Achilles *et al.*, 1986) included:

1. *Basic Skills First* - Reading and math competency programs;
2. *Computer Skills Next* - A computer literacy program;
3. *Kindergarten for Every Child*;
4. *More High School Math and Science* - Double the required credits and appropriate money for the extra teachers;

⁴⁴ Senate and House Resolution 56 (1981)

⁴⁵ The Speaker at the time was Ned McWherter, who went on to serve as Governor of Tennessee from 1987 until 1995.

5. *Residential Summer School for Gifted Juniors and Seniors*;
6. *A Redefined High School Vocational Education Curricula*;
7. *Classroom Discipline* - Alternatives for disruptive students and liability insurance for all school personnel;⁴⁶
8. *Adult Job Skill Training Moved under the Board of Regents* – Consolidation of management of community colleges, technical institutes, and area vocational schools;
9. *Centers of Excellence at Universities* – Funding for special higher education programs to stimulate excellence and research; and
10. *Master Teacher and Master Principal Program* - Incentive pay based on performance evaluation and a career ladder.

In addition to benefitting from the guidance of the Task Force's plan, Alexander also was influenced by the work of several of his Southern gubernatorial peers; he had been, for example, a keen observer of Governor Winter in Mississippi and Governor Clinton in Arkansas as they worked to structure similar plans in their states (Thomas, 1992).

Alexander traveled the state in the months that followed in an effort to generate public support for the plan. Echoing a refrain heard across the South, Alexander touted the plan as a way to move Tennesseans toward better skills, better jobs, and higher incomes (Thomas, 1992). The legislature even went so far as to form a bipartisan Select Committee that also crossed the state and held hearings about the plan (Keese & Huffman, 1998). Also like many of his fellow Southern education governors, Alexander was acutely aware of the value of public perception; as a result, he established a Better

⁴⁶ This component of the plan was the only item not present in the TCES; the liability insurance component eventually was dropped as a nod to TEA, which for a long time had offered liability insurance as a carrot for attracting new members.

Schools Task Force team and charged the members with running an election-style campaign to get out his message. By the end, the Task Force met with about 50 different teacher groups and 30 different civic and citizen groups across the state (Thomas, 1992).

The staunchest opposition to the plan came from the TEA, which was particularly opposed to the Master Teacher component. In fact, immediately following Alexander's televised State of Education address, most television stations switched immediately to an address by the Executive Director of the TEA that roundly criticized the plan (Thomas, 1992). TEA was able to delay progress on Basic Skills First that year (O'Hara, 1984, January 11)⁴⁷ – the Senate Education Committee heard the bill in March but passed it on to a study committee in April (Thomas, 1992) – but because of TEA's narrow focus on teacher issues above all else, its traditional strength was weakened considerably in debates the following year (Achilles *et al.*, 1986), when the package presented to the legislature took the form of an omnibus bill that impacted multiple facets of education beyond teacher pay. As a result, TEA eventually went on the defensive, losing momentum and losing an opportunity to maintain a position in which it was able to make counter-proposals (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). By failing to support the entire package because of one particular element, TEA lost credibility as a general education policy player in the debates that followed. In the end, during the special session Alexander called in early 1984 (discussed below), the TEA relented in its opposition to the career-ladder program in a late bid to gain some compromises on the bill (Euchner, 1984, February 22).

Reframing the education reform debate. Since no Basic Skills First elements passed unscathed in 1983, Alexander made a few moves to increase chances for passage

⁴⁷ Alexander has called this defeat his “greatest disappointment as governor,” and he labeled his inability to forge a better relationship with the TEA as his “greatest failure” (L. Alexander, 1986b, p. 80).

in 1984, including appointment of a teacher licensure commission (the Interim Certification Commission), even though there was as yet no legal backing for its existence.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the legislature funded it in 1983, lending legitimacy not only to its existence but also to its actions (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). Like many of his gubernatorial contemporaries, Alexander also continued to draw direct connections between educational opportunity and the Tennessee economy: “[T]he Better Schools Program’s biggest dividend for Tennessee families [will be] better jobs” (L. Alexander, 1986b, p. 136). He had learned in his first term, while negotiating with the Japanese company Nissan to locate a manufacturing plant in Tennessee, just how important a state’s commitment to education was to securing economic success. Next, the Better Schools Task Force was disbanded in favor of a committee comprised of Governor’s Office staffers and some original Task Force members – the Tennesseans for Better Schools group, which eventually became a registered lobbying group – that, with input from Alexander, crafted an approach to garnering support for bill passage that was even more campaign-like than the first effort. This time around, the new committee collected over 40,000 signatures (more signatures than there were members of the TEA), established chapters in every county, and supported a September television appearance for Alexander (Thomas, 1992). Alexander even went so far as to retain the services of the Washington, D. C., public relations firm of Baily, Deardorff, and Associates to help him develop labels and themes for his programs (Rosenthal, 1990).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The Commission was part of the Master Teacher component of the Basic Skills First legislation and was not formally approved by legislative vote.

⁴⁹ Alexander (1986b) emphasized later the power of names and naming: “A good name helps to persuade at least half the people you’re right. Whoever named the ‘Right-to-Work Law’ guaranteed its success. Whoever named the ‘Monitored Retrievable Storage System (MRS)’ helped to guarantee its failure” (p. 145). His own most frequently repeated mantras became “[Currently], not one teacher is paid a penny more

As noted earlier, another key Alexander move was to re-package all of the Basic Skills First education reform components – after various gubernatorial and legislative commissions and committees had made modifications – into an omnibus bill, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act (CERA; Achilles *et al.*, 1986).⁵⁰ In addition, this time around Alexander benefitted from help given by fellow Southern education governors such as Graham and Winter, who would meet with Tennessee delegates at national and regional education meetings, and who both addressed the legislature directly on the matter of supporting education reforms (Thomas, 1992). Efforts like these to work with the Democratic majority in the legislature eventually bore fruit: “Democratic leaders [were asked], ‘What are you going to do with this new young Republican governor?’ and [House Speaker] McWherter said, ‘We’re going to help him, because if he succeeds, our state succeeds.’ . . . Speaker McWherter really provided the decisive amendment in the House of Representatives. . . . [t]hat provided enough Democratic votes to pass the bill in the House, and [Democratic] Senator O’Bryant cast the deciding vote in the Senate” (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009).

Alexander called a special legislative session on January 10th, 1984, an hour before the legislature was scheduled to reconvene anyway. By calling for the special session, the governor was able to force the legislature to consider only his reformulated education reform package and the taxes that would be necessary to fund it (O’Hara, 1984,

for teaching well [in Tennessee]” and “Tennesseans are willing to pay more for better schools, but not more for more of the same” (Thomas, 1992, p. 108).

⁵⁰ Alexander indicated that the new name – with which he was unhappy, because it was less down-to-earth than Better Schools – came from the legislature and not from his office (1986b).

January 11; Pipho, 1986).⁵¹ The final set of provisions in CERA, which included several commission- and committee-added expansions from the original proposal (Achilles *et al.*, 1986; Keese & Huffman, 1998), included:

1. *Teacher Training* – All new teachers must pass the California Achievement Test. Colleges that have 30 percent or more of students fail the test lose state approval;
2. *Beginning Teachers* – All new teachers serve a one-year period of probation;
3. *Apprentice Teachers* – Teachers with one, two, and three years of experience and successful evaluations receive a \$500 supplement;
4. *Career Ladder Program* – Levels I, II, and III are based on evaluation of performance; pay incentives range from \$1,000 to \$7,000 per year. Ten-, eleven-, or twelve-month contracts are options. The local system may grant tenure after the fourth year;
5. *Principal and Supervisor Career Ladder* – A three-rung career ladder with up to \$7,000 in performance-based pay;
6. *Tennessee Principal-Administrator Academy* – The Academy provides training for all school leaders, and attendance is required at least every five years;
7. *Evaluation and Certification* – Five-year certification for career-level teachers, principals, and supervisors;

⁵¹ Alexander (1986b) contends that his first idea was to resign the governorship, hand the reins to Lieutenant Governor Wilder, and then run for governor again in a special election in November solely on an education platform, but he was advised by his campaign lawyer that he would not be able to skirt Tennessee's two-term-limit clause, even though the third "term" essentially would be a continuation of his (abandoned) second term.

8. *State Certification Commission* – Composed of eleven educators and two lay persons. Appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature, the Commission would be responsible for all certification and evaluation, including related issues covered under the Career Ladder Program;
9. *Teacher Aides for Grades 1-3* – Funds to hire one aide for every three teachers in grades 1 through 3 in 1984-85; \$6.5 million for aids in 1984-85, \$13 million in 1985-86, and \$20 million in 1986-87;
10. *In-Service Training* – Five days each year, focused upon skills measured in evaluations;
11. *Longer School Year* – School year increased from 175 to 180 days by converting five in-service days to instructional days;
12. *State Salary Increases* – Across-the-board increase of 10% (1984-85);
13. *Computers* – Nine million dollars appropriated for computers-one for every 30 students in grades 7 and 8;
14. *Math and Science Teachers* – Appropriations of \$3.5 million for math and science teachers; via the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation, college scholarships to education majors who study math and science and promise to teach in Tennessee;
15. *Discipline and Behavior* – Appropriations of \$1.2 million for the creation of state-funded schools for disruptive students;
16. *Basic Skills* – Appropriations for computer equipment to score basic skills tests and aid teacher efficiency;

17. *Gifted Students* – Appropriations of \$450,000 for special residential summer schools for the gifted;
18. *Centers of Excellence at Universities* – Appropriations of \$10 million to encourage quality teaching and research in higher education; and
19. *Textbooks* – Appropriations of \$2.4 million in recurring funds for textbooks and instructional supplies with an additional \$3.4 million appropriated just for the 1984-85 year. The Textbook Commission was placed under the new State Board of Education.

The career ladder program was built on the concept of four career steps: apprenticeship; full professional designation; senior teacher status; and, finally, master teacher. With each level came new responsibilities, as well as greater pay (McGrath, 1983).

CERA was paid for via a one percent sale tax increase, as well as a few other business tax increases. The increases generated about \$400 million a year for education, by Alexander's own estimate (Hayden, 1986; Keese & Huffman, 1998). The most controversial component, the career ladder component, was supported by both the House and the Senate in mid-February (Thomas, 1992). CERA as a whole was passed on February 22nd (Achilles *et al.*, 1986), and it was signed by Governor Alexander on March 6th, 1984 (Keese & Huffman, 1998).

Post-CERA reform efforts. Two months after the passage of the CERA, the legislature passed an Act sponsored by lieutenant governor John Wilder called the Public Education Governance Reform Act (PEGRA), which re-defined (the specific words of the Act say that it "clarified") the duties of the state board and the state CSSO. Lieutenant Governor Wilder sponsored the legislation, and Alexander offered no resistance (Achilles

et al., 1986), despite the fact that PEGRA directly altered the governor's role in the state's education policy-making process.⁵²

After the PEGRA passed, much of the power vested in the position of the state commissioner of education was disbursed. The governor still appointed the commissioner, as well as the members of the State Board of Education, but the Board was reduced in size from 15 to 9 members (Achilles *et al.*, 1986), those members could not be professional educators (Keese & Huffman, 1998), and the Board was given the power to appoint an executive director, who was in charge of policy and who served under the commissioner (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). It is interesting to consider the degree to which the passage of PEGRA, which in some ways *limited* the governor's role in state education policy, might have been made possible by Alexander's gubernatorial victory in 1982 and his subsequent active pursuit of statewide and comprehensive education reform at all levels of school governance.

In the end, Alexander had dedicated over half of his time in office to education reform (Thomas, 1992),⁵³ and it would not be long before Alexander turned his attention away from Tennessee only and began to spread the gospel of education reform. As chair of the National Governors Association between 1985 and 1986, he spearheaded the development of a national education platform for governors, no doubt based on his experiences and those of the other pioneering Southern governors before him (Rosenthal, 1990). He was named U. S. Secretary of Education in 1991 by President George Bush, a

⁵² His tacit support was perhaps as a result of pre-CERA passage horse-trading: "You support my bill, I'll support yours."

⁵³ Bracey Campbell, Special Assistant to Alexander during the CERA debates, reflected: "I think we wouldn't have done one . . . thing about education in Tennessee in these years if Lamar hadn't sensed that education was kind of a bubbling cauldron beneath the surface. I think he sensed it was an opportunity. . . . His horse was education, and he just rode it to victory. . . . [I]t wouldn't have happened if he hadn't decided that this was something that should be done" (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 110).

position he would hold until the election of former Arkansas and fellow education governor William Clinton, who in turn would tab fellow education governor Richard Riley to succeed Alexander.

James Hunt and Education Reform in North Carolina, 1977-1985

Education reform in North Carolina under Governor James Hunt took a decidedly different path than had education reform in the other states highlighted in this study. For one thing, Hunt remained at the helm of education reform efforts in the state for a considerably longer time than did his Southern gubernatorial colleagues, working as an elected official on education reform from 1973 through 1985, and again from 1993 through 2001. For another, while North Carolina did pass two omnibus education reform packages (one in 1985, shortly after the end of Hunt's first two terms, and another in 1997, during Hunt's third term), these bills were not the only significant reform packages adopted by the state but were instead part of a larger progression of education reforms big and small that had been evolving since Hunt's term as Lieutenant Governor in the 1970s. Thus, Hunt's education reform leadership during the period under investigation in this study was part of a much larger and slower-developing leadership cycle than was the case for most of the other members of his cohort of education governors.

North Carolina education history background. Much of modern North Carolina education reform is tied directly to the state's somewhat unusual values landscape, which is characterized by seemingly contradictory but sometimes simultaneous support for Progressive, Centrist, and conservative ideas and ideals (Guillory, 1998; Luebke, 1998). Luebke (1998) has suggested that, rather than relying on the standard "Democratic" and "Republican" Party-label dichotomy, it might be more

accurate to identify three distinct parties in operation in the state: Traditionalists (and here Luebke does not use the term in the same way as did Elazar [1984] and other political scientists), Populists, and Modernists. Traditionalists, Luebke argues, are by-and-large synonymous with Republicans and coastal Democrats, and they typically support legislation that reflects economic and social values grounded in the religious conservatism of the state's Fundamentalist Christian population. Populism is based on an historic opposition to Big Business and its perceived exclusion of individuals and smaller businesses from fair competition in the marketplace. The Modernizer ideology, more common in the state's metropolitan regions, typically is secular in nature and places a high value on personal economic achievement, whether that individual achievement is individual or corporate (Luebke, 1998). The state's Democratic Party redesigned in the 1980s to capture this more centrist Modernist territory, peddling education improvements and support for African-American issues on the one hand, while at the same time parting from the national platform by supporting economic development and hard-line legal issues (such as the death penalty) on the other (Christensen, 2008).

Not surprisingly, then, and as was the case for the other states in this study, one key to understanding most modern education policy reform in the state is appreciating the importance of the norm of economic development (Guillory, 1998; Guillory, 2005). The growing importance of this norm has been fueled in recent decades in part by a desire to refute the state's (perceived) national image as a business backwater that is more closely linked to the rest of the South and the legacy of the "Dixiecrats" (Grimsley, 2003) than to an emerging and healthy world economy. Historical and ongoing evidence of the prevalence of this norm includes the development and expansion of the Research

Triangle Park under Governor Sanford's stewardship in the 1960s,⁵⁴ Governor Hunt's North Carolina Commission on Education for Economic Growth in the early 1980s (discussed below), and the private North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry's "Education is Everybody's Business" campaign of the mid-1990s (Luebke, 1998).

Another key normative influence on education reform in North Carolina is embedded in the recent reinvigoration of the Christian Right (Guillory, 1998; Luebke, 1998) and is connected to its struggles against the state's historically centralized education decision-making process. Unlike many of its Southern peers, North Carolina was a very early adopter of a centralized, state-controlled education system. In 1931, the General Assembly became only the second in the nation to assume control of education (the first being Delaware), along with control of roads and prisons (Luebke, 1998), and the funding scheme for this level of control was first formalized under the 1933 School Machinery Act (Fleer, 1994). Though the heyday of the Christian Right's influence came after the period under study in this project, the values and ideals it champions long have been a part of the state's political cultural stew.⁵⁵

Finally, like most of the states in this study, several education indicators in North Carolina in the 1970s were low relative to the rest of the nation. By 1980, only about 55 percent of North Carolina adults held high school diplomas, compared to over 65 percent nationally, and the gap between African-American and white adults was nearly 20 percentage points (U. S. Census, 2000). SAT scores, while not particularly low compared

⁵⁴ Governor Luther Hodges was the force behind the formation of RTP, but Governor Sanford (who served on Hodges's staff) is credited with securing federal support for the Park, along with landing the first major tenant, IBM (Luebke, 1998; Christensen, 2008).

⁵⁵ Other important interest-group players in the state's education policy history have included the North Carolina Association of Educators, the North Carolina Federation of Teachers, and the North Carolina School Board Association, as well as the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry and the North Carolina Business Committee for Education (Fleer, 1994).

to the rest of the region, still lagged well behind national averages (North Carolina's composite average in 1980 was 929, compared to a national average of 994; NC DPI, 1999). In addition, spending was a mere 76 percent of the national average, a figure that was up from 63 percent a generation earlier, but still low enough for the state's financial efforts to lag behind at least four other Southern states (Christensen, 2008).

Hunt's first experiences working in this education policy landscape came in 1973, when he became Lieutenant Governor and the state's highest-ranking Democrat. During his tenure as Lieutenant Governor, Hunt helped Governor Holshouser to establish mandatory kindergarten and to implement teacher pay raises (Beckwith 2007; Christensen, 2008). In fact, it was Hunt and not Holshouser who had made kindergarten a campaign issue during his run for the Lieutenant post, along with teacher pay raises, bonuses for teachers with advanced degrees, and smaller teacher-pupil ratios. The kindergarten plan reached 15,000 students in its first year (1973), and soon after, it evolved into the first all-day, universal kindergarten program in the country (DiegmueLLer, 1992, December 16; Manzo, 2001, January 10).

Education reform during Hunt's first term. Hunt made the transition from the lieutenant governor's office to the governorship in 1977. Fler (1994) notes that, once there, Hunt "made a major effort to dominate and guide the state legislature during his first two terms in office" (p. 103), and he did so in part by drawing up immediately after his election what he would in later terms refer to as an "Agenda for Action," a short list of action items on which he wanted every member of his administration to focus. The creation of the agenda became a common practice followed by other North Carolina governors in subsequent years (Fler, 2007). He also actively pursued ratification of

significant institutional changes to the office of the governor. It is almost a certainty that none of the Hunt education legacy would have been possible without his successful lobbying for a constitutional amendment that many of his predecessors had supported but that had never passed: an amendment that would allow governors to succeed themselves, which was passed during Hunt's first year in office. Hunt believed that passage was made possible in part by the fact that the amendment would apply to him personally (Fleer, 2007).⁵⁶

Finally, also during his first year, Hunt anticipated a key strategy important to his fellow education governors when he began a steady campaign of creating ways for the general public to be involved in the policy process. His first step was to create an Office of Citizen Affairs, which was charged with promoting citizen awareness and participation in government. He also instituted weekly press conferences during his first two terms.⁵⁷ By the end of his fourth term, Hunt had become the modern-day North Carolina champion for making public appearances, averaging 221 a year during his first term, 369 a year his second term, 291 his third, and a staggering 506 his fourth.⁵⁸ "The most important power of the governor . . . is public leadership, public education, the bully pulpit. . . . When I went out as I did so many times and had town meetings about education in schools, I would talk about our statewide Smart Start initiative. I'd talk about our effort to raise standards for teachers and raise pay to the national average. I

⁵⁶ As Lieutenant Governor, Hunt also had backed a proposed amendment that would have allowed the State Board of Education to choose the State Superintendent, but the House tabled the amendment (Grimsley, 2003).

⁵⁷ By his second two terms, however, he discontinued the practice and focused on communicating via specific events and gatherings (Fleer, 2007).

⁵⁸ Only Hunt's first successor, Governor Martin, came close, with 309 his first term and 231 his second (Fleer, 2007).

would talk about our accountability system and all that. But I would take it right down to that school, to that county, that city. Get people talking about what they were doing, getting them thinking about how they can advance these ideas and move this agenda ahead. . . . People need to know their leaders. They need to feel that they are acting, that they are leading, and, from seeing that happen, participate in some way with it. I believe that gives people a greater sense of purpose and involvement and more ownership of the democratic process” (quoted in Fler, 2007, pp. 170-171).

At the start of his first term as governor, Hunt used his 1977 State of the State address to call for \$15 million for special reading aides, testing in early grades, and minimum graduation standards. All of these proposals passed during the 1977 summer session (Grimsley, 2003; Guillory, 2005; Luebke, 1998). The reading program for grades 1 through 3 – the Primary Reading Program – which had been part of a campaign promise, placed reading aides in every classroom (Beckwith 2007; Christensen, 2008; Grimsley, 2003; Luebke, 1998). His “Raising a New Generation” early childhood program, however, did not gain much traction and would not see the light of day again until its reincarnation as the better-planned Smart Start program during his second two terms. Guillory (2005) notes that the original plan was too centralized for most legislators’ tastes, perhaps crossing the fine line between what the state would and would not allow in terms of state-level control, while its distant relative Smart Start allowed for more local control.

The minimum graduation standards bill serves as a good example of the hands-on approach Hunt often employed to secure passage of education proposals. He personally proposed the legislation, hand-picked the representatives who would sponsor the bill, and

stayed involved with the bill's movement through various committees and hearings. His recruited allies included Democrats and Republicans, educators and non-educators, and representatives from the western and eastern parts of the state. He also benefited from the hard work of the first of many competent legislative liaisons, Charles Winberry (Grimsley, 2003).

Despite the legislative success, however, the program proved to set a standard that was too high for many schools to meet quickly. In April 1978, after abysmal first-year results from the minimum competency tests, Hunt approved a Competency Test Commission, which proceeded to ease the standards (Grimsley 2003; Guillory, 2005). By 1983, however, under Hunt's leadership, North Carolina would again raise graduation requirements and start the North Carolina Scholars Program (NC DPI, 2001).

Hunt's second State of the State address in 1979 called for greater attention to remedial education, a strengthening of vocational education offerings, and the establishment of the North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM).⁵⁹ Bills supporting all of these agenda items were passed during the 1979 session (Beckwith 2007; Christensen, 2008; Grimsley, 2003; Luebke, 1998).

Reframing and expansion during the second term. Hunt's second term (1981-1985) was dominated by what would become his rallying cry in the years that followed: reforming education to ensure economic prosperity. "Why are you doing it? There are two reasons. One is human beings deserve it. What are we put on this earth for? And second, we want to have economic growth and prosperity and an opportunity for our children. Those are the two main driving things" (J. Hunt, personal communication, April

⁵⁹ NCSSM was the first statewide public math and science boarding school in the country (DiegmueLLer, 1992, December 16).

28, 2009). Hunt's linkage of education and the economy was made first during the 1976 campaign; at one point during that campaign, when asked what his economic development plan entailed, Hunt answered simply, "Education" (quoted in Grimsley, 2003, p. 107). Indeed, Grimsley, Hunt's biographer, often characterizes Hunt's emphasis on education reform as solely or primarily a tool for promoting his economic growth plan for the state.⁶⁰

In October 1983, partly in response to a shift in the state's manufacturing sector that required more skilled labor, Hunt formed and chaired the North Carolina Commission on Education and Economic Growth (CEEG),^{61,62} which drew up *An Action Plan for North Carolina* and presented it to the General Assembly. Reflecting not only the Commission's name but also the general thesis of education reform in several Southern states, the report sought "'to ensure that new generations of North Carolinians will reach the higher general level of education *on which sustained economic growth depends*'" (quoted in Heady, 1984, p. 8, emphasis added). The report laid out several general areas for reform – creating broad partnerships committed to reform; improving curricula; raising the status of the teaching profession; increasing the quality of school leadership and management; and addressing the needs of special populations, all with an anticipated price tag of \$300 million (Heady, 1984) – and included such specifics as calls

⁶⁰ Fler (2007) and others, on the other hand, suggest that Hunt's belief in the importance of education predated his economic development ideas, originating with the values instilled in him by his family: "Education was seen [by the Hunt family] as a means of social mobilization and economic advancement. It was at the core of effective citizen participation and a viable democratic government" (p. 123).

⁶¹ Fler (1994) implies that Hunt formed the group in response to *A Nation at Risk*, but Heady (1984) indicates that the move was inspired by ECS's *Action for Excellence* (1983), a document whose creation was overseen by Hunt himself. Further demonstrating the greater influence of ECS, on June 23rd, 1983, Hunt stated that he wanted to form a commission that would mirror the structure and purpose of ECS's Commission on Education for Economic Growth (Poff, 1987).

⁶² Having met its goal, Hunt's CEEG disbanded in 1984. This disbanding would lead the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to fund a new group, the Public School Forum, to fill the gap (Luebke, 1998).

for better teacher training and salaries and the hiring of more teachers to reduce class sizes (Luebke 1998). Like several other Southern governors before and after him (*e.g.*, Winter in Mississippi, Riley in South Carolina), Governor Hunt tasked the Commission with holding four public fora across the state – in Raleigh, Asheville, Greenville, and Charlotte – to elicit input from citizens (Poff, 1987).

The group's plan was transformed in the General Assembly into what would become known as the Basic Education Plan (BEP; Fler, 1994), which included a promise to increase overall state funding for schools by 34 percent over several years, an increase in not only the number of teachers but also of support personnel (like librarians and social workers), class size reduction, and improvements to summer school and vocational education programs (Luebke, 1998). Specific elements of the BEP included (Fler, 1994):

1. Increased public involvement and support for education;
2. Enrichment and improvement of the basic curriculum in every school – a basic course of instruction common to every school and a more rigorous set of standards for promotion and graduation;
3. An increase in the status of teaching, as well as in the (monetary) rewards for teachers and administrators – a Career Development Program also was to be piloted in 16 districts;
4. Improvement of the learning environment in schools – including class size reduction and increased funding for textbooks, supplies, and equipment;
5. Improvements in education leadership – including the development of “model schools”;

6. Enhancements in special needs and gifted programs; and
7. Enhancements in services for underserved populations and potential dropouts.

Overall, the BEP was structured to include an eight-year phase-in (*i.e.*, by 1993) and would involve the addition of over 24,000 new jobs (almost half of which would be teaching jobs), at a cost of about \$870 million (Fleer, 1994).

Though the BEP was clearly a product of the Hunt administration, the omnibus education plan did not pass until Hunt's successor, Republican Governor Jim Martin, was in office.⁶³ The legislature responded favorably to the BEP, increasing operating funds by over 24 percent during the 1985-1986 session (though they did not approve teacher pay raises; Fleer, 1994).

Momentum from eight years of reform. The 1987-1988 legislature continued the funding for BEP and added a School Facilities Construction Act for new buildings and renovations of older ones; funding dropped off, however, during the 1989-1990 and 1991-1992 sessions, mostly due to state revenue shortfalls (Fleer, 1994). In 1988, the Public School Forum, a Raleigh-based education group, released *Thinking for a Living: A Blueprint for Educational Growth*, the development of which was supported in part by the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry. The nearly \$720 million list of almost 80 recommendations – largely centered on accountability measures – received the blessings of both then-Governor Martin and former Governor Hunt (Fleer, 1994). The document was transformed by the state in 1989 into the School Improvement and Accountability Act (Fleer, 1994; NC DPI 2001), which included the Performance Based Accountability Program (PBAP), a voluntary statewide end-of-grade testing program that

⁶³ Hunt's first education advisor, Betty Owen, confirmed in an interview (June 25, 2009) that all of the pieces for the BEP were packaged and ready to go to the legislature before Hunt left office.

provided the framework for what would later (during Hunt's third term) become a mandatory statewide testing program. Every district elected to participate (Fleer, 1994).

Hunt was re-elected governor in 1992 and would go on to serve for another eight years. In Hunt's third and fourth terms, arguably more productive than his first two in terms of education legislation passed, he ushered through: Smart Start (1993), the long-delayed descendent of the Raising a New Generation program from years earlier⁶⁴; the Excellent Schools Act (1997), which included a teacher pay increase, bonuses for advanced degrees, incentive awards based on school performance, and higher standards for teacher certification; and changes to the Standard Course of Study – renamed the ABCs of Public Education – that included a transition from the voluntary PBAP to a required testing program that is still in existence today (Guillory 2005; Luebke, 1998).⁶⁵ Hunt's strategies for getting bipartisan support for his Excellent Schools Act in 1996 and 1997 might be thought of as his graduate thesis on controlling the education reform arena, a thesis developed during his first two terms.

Also during Hunt's third term, a new norm that had been making much headway across the nation over the previous two decades – the importance of equitable distribution of resources for education – became a factor in education reform in North Carolina. Starting with *Serrano v. Priest* (*Serrano I*) in 1971 and reaching an apex with *Rose v. Council for Better Education* (*Rose v. Kentucky*) in 1989, there had been a national push toward more equitable statewide education funding, and this push resulted in North

⁶⁴ Fleer (2007) contends that Hunt's renewed interest in Smart Start was in part inspired by the arrival of his first grandchildren in 1996. He even threatened not to sign off on the budget if it passed without continuing support for Smart Start (Fleer, 2007).

⁶⁵ Hunt actually had included comprehensive standardized testing as part of his gubernatorial platform in 1976 (Grimsley, 2003).

Carolina in the filing of the *Leandro* suit in 1994 (McColl, 2001; Rash Whitman, 1996).⁶⁶

The impact of this emerging norm on Hunt's approach to education reform is perhaps best evidenced by his 1996 re-election platform plank that once again sought to raise the average teacher salary (Guillory, 2005)⁶⁷

Hunt's last major education reform idea while still governor, the "First in America" campaign, which aimed at achieving high rankings for North Carolina on several education issues by 2010, was begun during his final year in office (Fleer, 2007; Guillory, 2005). The governor has continued to be a presence in education reform at both the state and national levels since leaving office in 2001.

Additional Case Studies

Though their education reform efforts were not subjected to the same level of scrutiny as the three above,⁶⁸ the governorships of several other Southern education governors identified in the initial list (Graham [Florida], Riley [South Carolina], and Clinton [Arkansas]) served as sources of secondary data that were drawn upon to supplement and strengthen the analyses in chapters 5 and 6, and outlines of their stories also are included in Appendix B. There are numerous differences among all of these stories, and also between the group of stories in the Appendix and the stories presented above, but the similarities are perhaps even more compelling. A brief overview of

⁶⁶ *Leandro* was only recently settled in favor of the plaintiffs after four major rulings and several appeals by the state, and is still not fully implemented.

⁶⁷ Hunt's politicking strategy to make this increase more acceptable to the long-standing and powerful business lobby was to link it to an accountability measure – his ABCs plan, which was a reworking of the already-extant standard course of study, but now with a clear reward-and-punish measurement twist that was lacking in the original plan (Luebke, 1998, pp. 68-69).

⁶⁸ For instance, only the governors themselves were interviewed; in the case of Clinton, no interview was possible.

Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris's involvement in education reform in his state also is included (Appendix C) as an example of what might be considered a "second-generation" or "second wave" education governorship (a concept discussed in greater detail in chapter 6).

CHAPTER 5 – CONSTRUCTING THE EDUCATION GOVERNOR

“The fact is that the people look to the *governor* to get the job done. In the field of education for instance, the responsibility as well as the authority . . . rest in the elected commissioner of education. But people look to the governor.”

– Reubin Askew, Governor of Florida (1971-1979)⁶⁹

A Framework for Understanding Education Governorships

The narratives presented in chapter 4 were framed by the argument that the individual is just as important as the institution in shaping the outcomes of a given governorship, a notion that is embodied in the idea of policy entrepreneurship. Collectively, the narratives suggest that there are two key elements of the policy entrepreneur concept as presented by Mintrom (1997) and Mintrom and Vergari (1998) that are particularly relevant for understanding the role of the individual in the rise of the modern education governor: *phrasing and framing* (the ability to shape the terms of policy debates and a willingness to promote innovative approaches to solving problems) and *partnerships* (networking in policy circles, building coalitions, and organizing others).⁷⁰ The analyses in this chapter will suggest the importance of two additional elements not included in the standard policy entrepreneur concept: *collaboration*, or a willingness to work with peers outside of traditional (in these cases, state-level) political boundaries, and *alteration of the political landscape*, or the ability to change bureaucratic

⁶⁹ Quoted in Sabato (1983, p. 65, emphasis in original)

⁷⁰ Crew (1998) proposed a similar framework for understanding general gubernatorial leadership that relied on five factors: personality; political skill and experience; political resources; strategies; and political, institutional, and economic contexts.

structures and modify the traditional political “rules of the game.” This chapter combines analyses of the narratives along with analyses of primary sources and interview transcripts to develop a revised model of education governorships that is grounded in current theories related to education governorships (which focus primarily on *phrasing* and *partnerships*), but that also clarifies several proposed additions to current theory in an effort to create a more fully-realized conceptualization of education governorships. The final chapter will discuss how these conclusions illuminate cross-cutting extensions to our understanding of executive leadership at the state level.

Setting the Stage: Previous Research on Education Governors

The review of the relatively thin literature on education governors that was conducted for this study suggested several possible characteristics of such governorships, and those characteristics were used to expand the broad framework outlined above and guide the initial stages of this part of the study. In general, previous research indicated that education governors:

<i>Phrasing & Framing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make education reform a priority early in their tenures by:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making strong policy proposals after re-election or after a clear voter mandate (Beyle, 2004); and 2. Outlining specific education policy proposals in their State of the State and/or inauguration addresses (Krotseng, 1987; Morehouse & Jewell, 2002; Fleer, 2007). • <i>Focus on the Big Picture and actively (re-)frame the debate by:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals (James, 1991); 2. Proposing systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms (Doyle & Finn, 1984; Caldwell, 1985, February 6; Guillory, 2005); and 3. Linking education to other policy areas, particularly the economy (Black, 1972; Doyle & Finn, 1984).
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<i>Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Court allies and create teams</i> (Sabato, 1983) <i>by</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively maneuvering in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high (James, 1991; Rosenthal, 1990); 2. Forming and supporting a large, education-attuned staff in the governor's office (Beyle, 1989; Caldwell, 1985, February 6; Guillory, 2005); and 3. Building broad coalitions (Guillory, 2005).
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Re-Conceptualizing the Education Governor

For the most part, the data gathered for this research supported the inclusion of those characteristics as viable components of an education governorship. Much more compelling than confirmation of previously-defined aspects of the education governorship, however, was evidence for previously unidentified aspects that emerged from the analysis, which suggested that education governors also:

<i>Phrasing & Framing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make education reform a priority early in their tenures by</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Pursuing a limited, focused array of objectives and elevating education as a major policy issue; and 4. Running reform efforts like campaigns
<i>Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Court allies and create teams by</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Building broad <i>citizen</i> coalitions <i>and taking issues directly to the public</i> (cf. Rosenthal, 1990)
<i>Collaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work at both ends of a rapid policy diffusion process by</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following other governors' leads and collaborating with them by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working outside traditional state lines; and b. Identifying and/or following a leader governor who has the political longevity to develop a full reform platform 2. Going national with their own messages
<i>Landscape Alteration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Restructure bureaucracies</i> (cf. Caldwell, 1985, February 6).

Evidence and support for the characteristics identified by previous research is included in Appendix H; this chapter focuses on developing the characteristics revealed by the analysis of the cases highlighted in this study. The chapter concludes with a summary of a proposed new conceptualization of an education governorship.

Evidence and Analysis

Phrasing & Framing: Shaping the Debate and Innovating – A Revised Symbolic Politics Perspective

Mintrom (1997) highlights entrepreneurs' ability to manage policy conversations by shaping the terms of the policy debate, and for governors, such management often is achieved via careful use of words and symbols (James, 1991). A useful lens for putting this strategy in context is the *symbolic politics* (or political spectacle) lens (Edelman, 1985; Stone, 1997; Smith, 2004). One value of the lens is its focus on many of the very public aspects of the political process that often are overlooked by other lenses, such as use of symbolic language, or the use of "ambiguous language to unite a public and create an impression of consensus" (Smith, 2004, p. 13). Other related tactics utilized by the education governors included: casting political actors either as leaders, allies, or enemies in such a way that "story lines are plotted . . . [that] appeal to intuition, emotion, and tacit assumptions rather than to reason" (p. 20); and relying on dramaturgy (staging, plotting, and costuming, including staged pseudo-events and the creation of dramatic narratives) to garner support.

The primary focus of the symbolic politics lens is on the use of language, and due caution is in order when considering some of the ramifications of such a focus, as it tends to lead to the identification of a high degree of disingenuousness in most political actions.

For example, while Smith (2004) does not at first argue that all politics is a staged show (citing times of heightened genuine democratic participation in the 1930s and 1960s), her application of the lens frequently takes on a largely cynical tone that assumes that subterfuge, a creation of the illusion of democratic participation, and distractions from “backstage” maneuvering are the primary motivations for any politician’s careful use of language. To be fair, such intentions sometimes were, indeed, evident in the data analyzed for this study, but by and large, the value of language and symbols for these governors was mainly in their usefulness as tools for gaining control of the arenas in which reforms would live or die (most often the legislature) by framing debates in a manner that would engage and sway the public. An awareness of the importance of language and staging in those contexts offers one method for understanding several previously-identified components of education governorships that emerged in the review of the literature (all of which are elaborated in Appendix H):

Successful education governors make education reform a priority early in their tenures.

- *They make strong policy proposals after re-election or after a clear voter mandate.*
- *They outline specific education policy proposals in their state of the state and/or inauguration addresses.*

Successful education governors focus on the Big Picture and actively re-frame the debate.

- *They use a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals.*
- *They propose systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms.*
- *They link education to other policy areas, particularly the economy.*

The lens also provides a venue for weaving several proposed new components (presented below) into the overall education governor tapestry.

Successful education governors make education reform a priority early in their tenures. The previous literature on education governorships highlights the

importance of language and use of symbols in the passage of governor-sponsored legislation by focusing on the value of major speeches (Krotseng, 1987, 1988) and timing. It pays little attention, however, to the *form* that a governor's policy proposals take and the *approach* that a governor takes to achieving passage, both of which turn out to be significant parts of the story of the success of the Southern education governors.

They pursue a limited, focused array of objectives and elevate education as a major policy issue. A critical characteristic of many of the governorships in this study is that they were *evolving* governorships, with most governors learning through early reform proposal failures that they would have to adjust their approaches to achieving their reform goals. While the coin of the realm for many of them when they were in the legislature had been quantity – “How many bills can I introduce in one session?” – each had to learn that the more productive mindset in the governor's mansion would be one of *focus*.

No Southern education governor appears to have felt the sting of this lesson more sharply than Graham, who admitted that “As a legislator, I believed in the principle that you launch many boats, try to get all of them to their destination, but being satisfied if maybe a third of them do. Now, you typically introduce forty or fifty bills every session, and they were serious proposals. When I got to be governor, I sort of continued that same wanting to be involved in many different issues, and I found out that you can't manage the state as a chief executive is required to do and at the same time try to effectively manage thirty or forty different significant policy initiatives. After the first couple of years, I got the lesson and I started to be much more disciplined and focused, and, I think,

became a significantly more effective governor” (personal communication, August 1, 2009).

The same lesson was learned by many of the other governors as well. Upon losing the governorship after his first term, Clinton sought feedback from the populace about the reasons for his loss, and one of the reasons given was that he had pursued too many reforms. He adjusted his strategy accordingly after re-gaining the governorship in 1982 (Thomas, 1992). “I learned that if you do a lot of things, and you talk about a lot of different things while you’re doing it, the perception may be that you haven’t done anything. You have to be able to give a clearer sense of direction” (quoted in Osborne, 1988, p. 88).

In his 1982 *State of Education* address, Alexander’s education agenda is detailed, but it is also long and somewhat rambling. By contrast, the 1983 speech is more focused, outlining a clearer 10-point plan for education reform. “Lamar really believed that the key was having one or two or three at the most priorities. . . . Lamar really pursued education in his second term single-mindedly. Everything revolved around that education effort. And the undoing of so many leaders and governors is having too many priorities. And . . . I think that was why he was able to get it passed, because he put that ahead of everything else” (C. Overby, personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The development of this particular learning was perhaps less necessary for Hunt. Alley indicated that Hunt came into office already aware of the need for focus: “He had presided in the legislature [as lieutenant governor] for four years. And so he knew how it worked, and he already knew that you couldn’t get involved in everything going on over there, so he did indeed pick out three or four different, or five or six different things that

he wanted to do during the course of a legislative session, and that's what we worked on" (personal communication, September 8, 2009). That focus was translated into his "Agenda for Action," the short list of action items on which he wanted members of his administration to focus (Fleer, 2007). Even so, Hunt's annual addresses exhibit a steady trend toward more focus and clarity, with his 1983 *State of the State* address outlining a concise 10-point plan for education, in contrast to his 1981 address, in which education shared the stage with four other policy areas and did not benefit from a clearly-stated plan.

Not only did the governors consistently promote education as one of their policy areas of greatest concern, but they also worked to raise it to the top of that list. In his 1981 *State of the State* address, even though education is only one of eight policy planks in his speech, Winter singles it out as one of the two most important: "[T]here are two initiatives that are at the base of all of our goals and objectives. I ask you to consider and approve programs that will leap-frog our State in a few short years over other states with less vision than our own. To do that we must develop further those opportunities for all of our citizens that afford them quality education and training as well as worthwhile and satisfactory jobs" (January 13, p. 5). He and his staff also worked hard to get the *Clarion-Ledger* to help in this elevation effort. Overby adds that Alexander, too, worked to get education to the top of the policy agenda statewide: "He was able to step back and try to examine, what are the factors that make a state move ahead or fall behind? And he came to an intellectual conclusion that it's education, and so he really believed it. It wasn't some kind of campaign posturing or gimmick, or 'OK, well, what can we do now that I'm governor?' He believed it with all of his soul, and so that compelled him to really

work [on it] single-mindedly” (personal communication, June 3, 2009). He even credits Alexander’s efforts to make education a primary focus with getting the CERA over the hump: “Education, you know, even though it’s kind of a mother and apple pie issue, really was rarely *the* number one issue. And so Lamar made it that, and that’s how [CERA] got passed” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

They run reform efforts like campaigns. As important as the form and content of each education proposal was each governor’s strategic approach to gaining passage. What is perhaps most striking about most of the reform efforts was how closely they resembled political election campaigns, and that approach appears to have been a difference-maker for many of the governors. Several political strategy documents survive from Alexander’s efforts in Tennessee, and they outline in great detail every step of a coordinated effort to generate the kind of public support typically reserved for election events; the draft of one plan, called the *Better Schools Political Plan*, even includes the following question: “Can we use people from outside county lines to ‘stack’ crowds in difficult counties?” As Alexander himself admitted, “It was as close to a D-Day invasion as I could conjure up” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The story was much the same in the other states. In Mississippi, “the genius to, and probably the key to Winter’s passage of the ’82 act, was treating it almost like a political campaign” (J. White, personal communication, December 3, 2008). Winter’s “Boys of Spring” “ended up giving 600 speeches, and we got really smart – we targeted [Senator] Bodron’s area, and we targeted a guy named Son Rhodes – we targeted our opponents, and I mean they were feeling the heat” (D. Molpus, personal communication, January 21, 2009). “Governor Winter changed his tactics and realized that the only way

he would get this through the legislature is to go straight to the people. And so he ran this like a gubernatorial campaign . . . and really built the grass-roots support and got the media attention” (C. Overby, personal communication, June 3, 2009). In Arkansas, Clinton’s team went all-out: “We bought radio ads, newspaper ads, TV ads; we did a lot of direct mail across the state. We had people doing postcard and letters to their legislators. We had them wearing the blue ribbons that were little manageable ways to be involved and stand up and rallied meetings across the state – all meant to snowball into the beginning of the legislative session so that by the time those legislators convened, each of them had a constituency in their district begging them to raise their taxes for education To get it done was a very well planned campaign” (Betsey Wright, Democratic Party Chairperson, quoted in Allen, 1991, pp. 164-165). Riley’s approach in South Carolina also was characterized by the physical trappings of a campaign: “We had outdoor advertising, we had bumper stickers, we ran it like a political campaign. It started with the date we were going to the legislature, and moved back, and really had all the different parts, just like you would plan a political campaign. We had polling, we had the whole deal” (personal communication, July 2, 2009). Even in North Carolina, where education reform under Hunt took a form different from the one-and-done reform acts proposed in other states, there is some evidence that Hunt and his team also adopted the campaign approach (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009).

Successful education governors focus on the Big Picture and actively re-frame the debate.⁷¹ To a person, the education governors were willing to keep pressing and reformulating their issues, even in the face of resistant and occasionally hostile

⁷¹ Each of the aspects of this component of education governorships, listed at the start of this section, already have been identified by previous literature, and evidence from the cases for each is included in Appendix H.

legislatures. Most of these governors suffered severe and seemingly fatal setbacks early on in their attempts at systemic education reform passage, but none of them dropped the issue as a lost cause; instead, they redoubled their efforts and sought ways to re-frame the issue. For Riley, that meant adopting the education-economics link favored by his colleagues (discussed in Appendix H). For Clinton, it meant framing the issue as “the most important thing I’ve ever tried to do It’s more important to me personally than whatever political consequences will come of it It’s something that’s worth putting myself and whatever career I might have on the line for” (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 155). For Alexander, it meant bringing more people on board via commissions, and repackaging the many separate components of Basic Skills First into one omnibus bill (Achilles *et al.*, 1986). And even Hunt, who was largely successful in all of his attempts, worked hard to keep his education message fresh by more firmly establishing the link between education and the economy with each successive *State of the State* address.

Partnerships: Networking and Building Coalitions – A Benefits Coalition Perspective

A second characteristic of Mintrom’s policy entrepreneur is her or his ability to network effectively and build working coalitions. No matter how publicly prominent a governor may be in the policy process, she or he is in no way the only important actor on the scene and must by necessity bring together other key actors and groups important to the policy-making process. Anton (1989) outlines a broad conceptualization of these working partnerships in his description of *benefits coalitions*. More than just an acknowledgement of the importance of interest groups, the coalition framework suggests that interest groups are formed not only by citizens but also by government officials within the system itself: “As governments have grown larger and assumed more

comprehensive responsibilities, government officials themselves have become important sources of new program ideas, advocates for those ideas, and mobilizers of public support for proposals. It is no longer possible, if it ever really was, to see government officials as passive instruments, waiting for some external group to push them into action” (p. 33).

Wirt and Kirst (2005) add to the coalition-building concept by noting the importance of horse-trading and side payments (such as threats of reprisal, payment of objects that can be converted to money, promises on policy, promises about subsequent decisions, and payments of emotional satisfaction) in strengthening an otherwise loosely-coupled coalition.

The benefits coalition perspective helps to contextualize these previously-identified elements of education governorships:

Successful education governors court allies and create teams.

- *They actively maneuver in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high.*
- *They form and support a large, education-attuned staff in the governor’s office.*
- *They build broad coalitions.*

Evidence from the cases suggests the need for a revision to the third aspect of that component:

They build broad citizen coalitions and take issues directly to the public. A primary key to the successes the governors in this study experienced in winning over legislative votes was their recruitment of *non*-governmental stakeholders – particularly those who were outside of the non-governmental “insider” and “near” circles of consultants and interest groups who typically drive policy (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989; Mazzoni, 1991) – to take up the cause. Guillory (2005) contends that their willingness to do so sets education governors apart from their peers. This aspect of the

coalition-building approach – especially their efforts to win over broad support from the general public (what Rosenthal [1990] refers to as “conditioning”) – has not been given much attention in previous research.⁷² Former Michigan governor G. Mennen Williams (1949-1961) forecasted the importance that the grass-roots movements sponsored by each of the Southern education governors would play when he said, “The governor’s power, I found, results only in part from the constitution and statutes. As in all else in a democracy the ultimate source of power is the people. If the people are not with you, you cannot, or can only with the greatest difficulty, exercise many of the powers that are yours under law” (quoted in Sabato, 1983, p. 89).

The clear leader in these efforts was Winter, whose staff constructed detailed plans for his nine public fora on education that were designed not only to sway public opinion but also to get the public involved in the process of persuading legislators. Indeed, after one of the meetings, several members of the crowd were quoted as indicating that they would contact their legislators (Warner, 1982, October 13), and several representatives who attended another such forum acknowledged that the rallies actually might make a difference (Monteith, 1982, September 22). In the end, they did. “He had the grassroots organizations and these community meetings, which in turn put pressure on the legislators, with an election coming up in ’83, and of course it only passed by one or two votes – you know, it was very close – but I think that without that it wouldn’t have passed” (J. White, personal communication, December 3, 2008). In Winter’s estimation, the “grass-roots constituency out there . . . literally overwhelmed whatever residual opposition still existed in the legislature” (personal communication,

⁷² Exceptions include Rhodes (2009), who argues that general public support for education reforms during this period likely was a result of the efforts of education policy entrepreneurs, and Thomas (1992), who provides some treatment of this topic, though it is largely anecdotal in form.

January 21, 2009), but for Winter, the victory went beyond the impact the rallies had on the legislation itself: “I think as important as the substantive nature, the substance of the program, the policy, I think just as important was really a change in the perception of how legislation can be influenced. These weren’t a bunch of paid lobbyists down here, these were people out in the rural areas, all over the state, coming in here [to Jackson], and really putting an honest appeal to legislators” (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Governor Winter may have organized the initial public rallies, but by the end of the early 1980s, he was certainly not alone: Alexander, Clinton, Hunt, Riley, and, to some extent, Graham also dedicated significant time and energy to taking their messages to the public and encouraging them to add their voices in favor of the proposed education reform measures via letters and calls to their representatives. In Arkansas, in addition to a series of public meetings that attracted citizens in the thousands (Thomas, 1992), Clinton’s team organized call-ins to legislators (Durning, 1991; Fulk, 1983, September 28), and the governor established committees charged with running media campaigns and mass mailings (Durning, 1991). In Tennessee, Alexander targeted about twenty counties for events that he and his staff thought might lead to vote changes in the legislature (*Better Schools*, 1983). He invited legislators to sit with him during visits to these counties, and he “would deliver copies of [public opinion] surveys to senators in their districts, and say, ‘This is how the people in your district feel about the idea’” (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009); he also established after his 1983 *State of Education* address a toll-free hotline for citizens to call to get more information about his proposed reforms, as well as a bi-weekly *Better Schools Report*, which

provided instruction for readers regarding how they could get involved and influence the legislation. Hunt's Commission on Education for Economic Growth held four public fora across the state to elicit input from citizens (Poff, 1987), and Riley took a similar tack in South Carolina: "[W]e formed a committee with, I guess, twenty-five, thirty people, very representative . . . all across the state, and then started meeting, and the Press was picking up on it, and then we really got into a major development of a movement, and . . . we had [seven] forums . . . and we'd have like twenty-five hundred, three thousand people in a forum" (R. Riley, personal communication, July 2, 2009).

It is important to note that, as with many of the other strategies employed to generate legislative support described above, this strategy was not an invention of the governors in this study, or even of governors of this era. Decades earlier in North Carolina, for example, Governor O. Maxwell Gardner managed to get a number of unpopular measures passed in an effort to stave off the effects of the Great Depression, and one of his most important tools was public participation. He publicly appealed to the state's citizens to telegraph their legislators and urge them to vote not only in favor of such controversial proposals as placing a significant proportion of the state's roads under state control, but also in favor of education policy proposals that should have a familiar ring: centralization of school governance and a three-cent sales tax increase to help finance state oversight of education. Education governor godfather Terry Sanford also had followed this strategy in the 1960s (Christensen, 2008).

Collaboration: Working Outside Traditional Political Boundaries

Perhaps the most compelling result of the research conducted for this study is the strong evidence pointing toward a sense of camaraderie among the education governors

that, more than just providing them with moral support, may even have helped to shape many aspects of each of their reform efforts. This third element of the study's emerging conceptualization of the education governor (and one not formally identified as part of the traditional policy entrepreneur concept) – the *collaboration* evident among the highlighted governorships – is possibly the most important. The rich and thoughtful collaboration that sprung up among these governors most likely was in part a result of their involvement in organizations like SREB and NGA (chapter 3), but it was also a result of their personal affinity for each other and for what each was attempting to accomplish in education reform. The proposed components of education governorships presented below all focus on this heightened level of collaboration, and they represent new additions to the education governor literature.

Successful education governors work at both ends of a rapid policy diffusion process. Evidence of the importance of cross-state policy adoption has been recognized since at least the late 1960s, when Walker (1969) proposed that states naturally grouped themselves into self-defined “leagues” of like-minded states, informal networks that were made formal as officials in these states contacted each other for policy suggestions as problems arose. Most of these episodes of policy adoption take part through a process of *policy diffusion* – the process by which a policy idea moves from one state to another – but many theorists contend that such diffusion can take as long as fifty years to unfold (McLendon & Cohen-Vogel, 2008). The spread of systemic education reforms in the South in the early 1980s did not follow this pattern: Near-complete adoption of education reforms took place in the span of only a few years. Thus, while diffusion may have played a role, it was in a somewhat rapid, atypical form. McDonnell and Fuhrman (1986)

attribute such rapidity to the power of public concern about education, but, as argued earlier, that public concern (in the South, at least) was generated for the most part by the actions of activist education governors. Possibly more fundamental than any other strategy to such rapid diffusion were two critical aspects of collaboration: a willingness on the part of each governor not only to learn from other governors and bring outside ideas into their states but also to take what they learned and share it with other governors, both regionally and, in many cases, nationally.

Education governors follow other governors' leads and collaborate with them.

They work outside traditional state lines. That governors exchange ideas as a result of their involvement in interstate organizations such as the National Governors Association or the Southern Regional Education Board is not surprising, nor is it offered here as a revelation; indeed, Sabato (1983), Beyle (1988), Vinovskis (2008), and others all have written about the role these organizations played in the strengthening of the office, and such opportunities for collaboration via meetings at regional or national conferences are not even unique to governors.⁷³ Without a doubt, many of the relationships highlighted by this study began and were fostered in the various regional and national conferences and meetings sponsored by the organizations described in chapter 3, particularly the Education Commission of the States (ECS). In his introductory remarks at the unveiling of ECS's *Action for Excellence*, Hunt called for his fellow governors to take the lead in education reform (Hunt, 1983, July 21). In addition, memberships of several ECS committees were dominated by the presence of Southern education governors, and one of the stated purposes for a 1983 ECS Task Force on

⁷³ E.g., Jewell (1982) cites the existence and importance of "the communication networks established among state officials and facilitated by a number of organizations such as the Council of State Governments and the National Conference of State Legislatures" (p. 640).

Economic Growth meeting was to “give momentum to the growing interest and concern among governors and corporate leaders for the quality of our public schools” (ECS, 1983, p. 4). Efforts were made even to coordinate press conferences to show simultaneous, region-wide support for various ECS recommendations (Hunt, 1983, June 10).

However, the ties among the Southern education governors that formed across state lines throughout the reform period appear to have arisen across a wide array of venues and to have consisted of deeper, more complex, and more persistent collaborations than one might associate with the relationships that typically develop at annual meetings.⁷⁴ As Jesse White observed, “[T]hey were tight. . . . they were friends” (personal communication, December 3, 2008). When Winter convened his Governor’s General Conference on Education in late 1981, he asked Riley to deliver a keynote address (Mullins, 1992). He followed up with Riley throughout 1982 (Weaver, 1982, November 30), and Graham and Alexander became involved, too: “Graham came here and stayed . . . and Riley did, too. I mean, we just considered them . . . friends, you know. . . . Riley would speak here and he [Winter] would speak there” (D. Molpus, personal communication, January 21, 2009). “[W]e were all singing off the same page. . . . we were all on the same wavelength, all talking to each other, all kind of holding hands, sharing information. Dick Riley sent a team over here to work with us, I think Lamar sent somebody down, and I know I talked to him personally several times” (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Alexander also relied on support and help from his fellow governors. In 1983, Alexander arranged to send several legislators to education conferences and meetings,

⁷⁴ Alexander described the extent of the associations this way: “[W]e’d see each other, we’d go to national governors’ meetings twice a year, and then we’d go to the Southern Governors’ Conference once a year . . . and then we’d see each other, sometimes, for other reasons” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

where Governor Winter and Governor Graham would talk to them about supporting Alexander's reforms, and Winter and Graham later traveled to Tennessee to talk directly to the legislature (Thomas, 1992). "Bob Graham, to his great credit, on his way home from Washington in 1984, came to Nashville on his way back to Florida, had a private meeting with me and Senator Annabelle Clement O'Bryant in my office, and told her that what I was trying to do was the right thing to do, and helped persuade her to cast the deciding vote on the Better Schools Program. . . . That was a really brave thing, 'cause he was a rising Democrat, and the Democratic National Conventions were composed about 20 percent then of NEA members, and he didn't have to do that at all" (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009). Hunt lent a hand as well: "Lamar [had] me come over and talk to his Cabinet one time. . . . I recall Lamar calling me one day. . . . He said, 'I've got [the Career Ladder proposal] in front of my state Senate,' I think he had passed the House with it. . . . And he said, 'I'm having trouble in the Senate. Would you call the Democratic lieutenant governor for me?' and I did, and told him that this was exactly the right thing to do" (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009). Letters to Winter, Graham, and even Charles Robb of Virginia indicate that Alexander also invited governors to attend lunches with his legislators and offer their support for his education plans (Alexander, 1983, June 13a, b, and c).

Clinton acknowledged that he "talked to a number of [governors]. . . . I would certainly counsel with Governor Bill Winter, who is a very close personal friend of mine, on what they had done in Mississippi, and I talked with Bob Graham a lot about what [Florida] had done and I talked to the other governors about what they were in the process of doing" (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 79). Molpus recalls Clinton telling him

that he thought Governor Winter was the best governor in America and that “he sent his people over right after we passed [ERA]” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). Riley was advised by Winter and future education governor Ray Mabus about topics like community organization (J. White, personal communication, December 3, 2008), which he then translated into his own series of public fora: “[W]e got [the forum idea] from him. I think he . . . had those same kind of . . . forums around that kind of thing, and he and I were very close friends. . . . You know, [tackling education reform] was risky for me, and I’m sure it was risky for all those other governors[, but w]e helped each other” (R. Riley, personal communication, July 2, 2009). After assisting Alexander with his efforts, Graham asked him to return the favor, which he did: “Lamar called me and said that he was having difficulty with his Democratic legislature, getting support for his education plan, and asked me if I would go to Nashville and talk to some of them, because our plans were essentially very similar. And I said, ‘I will, Lamar, but the *quid pro quo* is, we’re not getting any Republican support, particularly for the taxes that are going to be necessary, and we need a few of those votes. . . . Come to Tallahassee.’ So we did a home-and-home exchange” (personal communication, August 1, 2009).

They identify and/or follow a leader governor who has the political longevity to develop a full reform platform. The evidence suggests, then, that many of these governors appear to have overcome limitations imposed by Party difference, term limits, and early failures by following the lead of successful governors who were either in the process of securing legislation passage or already had done so. In the case of the education reform bills examined in this study, that lead governor was most often either Governor Hunt or Governor Winter, but even Winter himself joined with his fellow governors in citing

Hunt first and foremost as the ringleader for the whole regional effort.⁷⁵ The evidence suggests that the various regional reform efforts needed someone with the *political longevity* (*time plus commitment plus ability plus insider status plus political savvy*) necessary to develop fully the model that others would follow. Hunt benefitted from an unusually long and contiguous series of terms in the executive branch (twelve years – 1973-1985 – beginning with his Lieutenant Governorship, when he was Governor Holshouser’s acting education advisor), and during that time he worked out his formula for passing major education reforms.⁷⁶ While it is true that many of the other governors also worked on education issues in official capacities for extended periods of time – for example, Graham spent 16 years in the legislature prior to his election as governor, many of which included time on education committees, and during his terms in the legislature, Riley oversaw two major changes in the distribution of power among the three branches of government (personal communication, July 2, 2009) – none could claim either the longevity or the relative earliness of education reform work that Hunt could, and his influence saturates almost all of the other Southern education reform events. “Jim Hunt was kind of above, kind of far out, he was out front on education, more so than any of the other governors. . . . Jim Hunt was the real leader” (A. Mullins, personal communication, January 21, 2009). Much of his influence came through his leadership of ECS: “[A]s chairman of ECS, when I put together the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth. . . . I put a lot of those governors on there. And this was the first time that we

⁷⁵ “I have the highest regard for Jim Hunt. I mean, he was one of those that inspired me” (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

⁷⁶ Hunt’s long-time legislative liaison, Zebulon Alley, noted (personal communication, September 8, 2009) that the powers of the Lieutenant Governor were much stronger at that time (before the constitutionally-enhanced rise of the Senate President *pro tem*, who now has much more sway in the Senate than does the Lieutenant Governor, as suggested by the meteoric rise of the current President *pro tem*, Senator Marc Basnight).

had a national group working that involved *the* education governors and *the* business leaders. . . . I had Dick Riley, I had Lamar Alexander. . . . we were learning” (personal communication, April 28, 2009).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that in a few of the interviews conducted for this study, the subject being interviewed hesitated to place too much emphasis on the extent of these collaborations.⁷⁷ But the preponderance of evidence from other interviews (and even from some of the same interviews in which doubts were raised) and from reviews of various documents suggests that the collaborations were indeed more important to the process than perhaps even those involved were aware of at the time: “We each had different needs, different objectives, but we were good friends, saw each other a lot, compared notes, competed a little bit, you know, and then at the national governors level, we worked together” (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009); “It was a just an absolutely wonderful group of people. They were very like-minded, they were Southerners who really cared about the future of our region and saw education as the primary means of improvement for our people, and they were then such genuinely decent human beings. You don’t get better people than Jim Hunt, Dick Riley, Lamar Alexander[, or] Bill Clinton” (R. Graham, personal communication, August 1, 2009).

Education governors go national with their own messages. Krotseng (1987) suggests that two defining characteristics of an education governor include renown in one’s own time as an education governor and indications of regional influence beyond one’s state borders. Although it might not seem that efforts to take one’s education reform agenda to a national audience necessarily would make a governor more effective

⁷⁷ Charles Overby in particular contended that, while each governor “may have been encouraged in an oblique sort of way by what was happening elsewhere,” most of what took place was “a result of local politics” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

at gaining bill passage in her or his own state, it is important not to overlook the value of national exposure for governors who were trying to gain traction back home for unpopular reforms: After all, there is added pressure for legislators to support reform when a governor announces to a wide national audience (an audience that perhaps tends to characterize the governor's state as "backwards") what she or he is trying to accomplish there. Post-term efforts, too, are worth acknowledging, not (obviously) for their impact on already-completed reform efforts but more for the fact that they indicate a governor's commitment to education reform writ large that helps to strengthen her or his claim to being a true education governor. With the exception of Winter, each of the governors in this study extended his influence well outside the borders of the South by taking on national leadership positions in education. The obvious examples are Alexander's and Riley's terms as United States Secretaries of Education, but there were several other ways in which each worked to take his message to a national level.

Hunt chose as his platform some of the national organizations that had been helping to enact change in the South all along, as well as a few organizations that were relatively new to the K-12 education policy scene. While still governor, he did not hesitate to announce a national agenda for his involvement in these organizations. Upon taking the helm of ECS, he indicated that his mission would be "to mobilize the friends of education across the United States; to focus the attention of our people on the schools, in every state, city, county, and school district; to build an alliance with all national education organizations; to get the people of this country into their schools, to see what they need, and to see how they can do a better job" (Hunt, 1982, August 20). At one point, he was simultaneously chair of ECS, chair of NGA's Committee on Human

Resources: Education Subcommittee, and chair of NGA's Task Force on Technological Innovation. He followed up after his first two terms by serving a stint with the Carnegie Corporation's education reform Group of Twenty (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009) and other national organizations.

During his struggle to pass CERA, instead of dedicating all of his energy to negotiating with the recalcitrant Tennessee Education Association (the state-level arm of the National Education Association), Alexander recruited support from Albert Shanker and the rival American Federation of Teachers (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009). He also invited key legislators to join him at meetings of the national organizations to which he belonged (NGA, SREB, and the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth). The second half of this strategy forced Tennessee legislators to compare their state to other states, and allowed them to envision Tennessee as a national leader instead of as a follower. Alexander even hosted visits from Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell. In addition, Alexander also took advantage of many opportunities to appear on national television (Achilles *et al.* 1986). In his final year as governor, he chaired NGA and spearheaded the development of a national education platform for governors (Rosenthal, 1990), one that, along with his work on CERA, laid the groundwork for the U. S. Department of Education's *America 2000* proposal he championed after President George H. W. Bush named him Secretary of Education in 1990 (Stallings, 2002). Rosenthal (1990), Owen (personal communication, June 25, 2009), and others also have noted the influence of Hunt and Alexander on "second generation" education governors like Bruce Babbitt of Arizona and Charles Robb of Virginia as they crafted their own education proposals.

Lewis (1993) highlights the importance of this ability to take one's education agenda national in his analysis of the strategy followed by Riley in South Carolina. According to Lewis, it was Riley's work with the Southern Region Education Board that led to the development of the national goals that underpinned President Bush's famous education summit in Charlottesville in 1989, the precursor to the Alexander-led *America 2000* effort (Stallings, 2002). Riley himself suggested that what separates one state from another on education policy movement is the presence or absence of a larger, comprehensive vision for education. As noted in the narratives in Appendix B, Graham was very active in getting the Reagan Administration (in particular, Secretary Bell) involved in his efforts in Florida (R. Graham, personal communication, August 1, 2009), and Clinton also managed to work on education reform at the national level on a regular basis while governor (Johns, 1991; Krotseng, 1987). As president, he and newly-appointed Secretary of Education Riley even followed up on Alexander's ultimately unsuccessful *America 2000* plan with *Goals 2000*, which informed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994 (Stallings, 2002; Rhodes, 2009).

Altering the Political Landscape

Successful education governors change the rules of the game / restructure bureaucracies. Also absent from the policy entrepreneur concept is a fourth component that preceded many of the strategies discussed above and proved particularly important for the education governors as they worked to establish a structure in which they could enact their reforms more effectively, and that was the effort to change some of the fundamental structures of government in their own states. Caldwell (1985, February 6) argues that one effective strategy for any governor who is attempting to enact significant

policy change is to change some of the “rules of the game” (*e.g.*, by restructuring the shape of state-level government) that may be hindering those efforts. In many cases connected to education reform, the changes were to the composition and responsibilities of State Boards of Education, or to the ways in which superintendents are chosen (from elected to appointed, for instance). Similarly, governor-sponsored (or at least governor-supported) constitutional changes in at least two states (North Carolina and South Carolina) that allowed those governors to succeed themselves made a significant difference in the ability of both governors to stay in office long enough to enact sweeping education reform. Winter shepherded through a constitutional change that allowed for the installation of a lay Board of Education (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009). Graham formed a Governor’s Commission on Secondary Schools, apparently in an effort to change the education policy power dynamics in the state (K. Alexander, 1986), and, though a certain degree of mismanagement neutered the impact at first, the governor’s budget staff was moved from the Department of Administration to the governor’s Executive Office and was named the Office of Planning and Budgeting (Grizzle, 1991)

Many of the changes were not formal, *per se*, but they turned out to be perhaps more impactful in the long run. For example, Hunt focused on putting a lot of loyal “outside the Capital” people in a multitude of positions throughout state government: “[H]e brought in educators from universities and from the public schools and the community colleges . . . and he had a really strong lobbying group for education, headed by [former educator] Betty Owen, and . . . he had them over at the legislature all the time” (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009). In Mississippi, the

informal changes turned out to be even more fundamental. Winter believes that the passage of ERA actually contributed to a change in the overall mood of the legislature: “[T]he legislature had kind of gotten down on itself. It was beginning to feel, that, you know, ‘We just can’t get anything done, can’t pass this. We’re just tired of talking about it.’ And then when they did it, they were walking with a spring in their step, heads held high, ‘And look what we’ve done,’ and they did take justifiable pride in being able to pass that piece of [legislation]” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). According to “Boy of Spring” Richard Molpus, those changes extended out from the capital and across the state: “[W]e moved from an oligarchy to a democracy, and this period, this passage of the Education Reform Act was much more than just that Act. To me, it really took down the barriers and put together a coalition of Blacks, progressive Whites, parents, and . . . it changed the political dynamics of Mississippi forever” (personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Summary

The analyses conducted for this component of the study reveal a richer and more fully realized conceptualization of education governorship than has been presented in previous research. Taken together, the analyses suggest a portrait of education governorships that includes the characteristics in Table 5.1 (below). It is important to acknowledge, however, that these characteristics represent patterns that arise when one considers *collectively* the accomplishments of all of the governors examined for this study. When applied to each of the governors’ education reform efforts individually in an informal assessment of the importance of the characteristics outlined above (Table 5.2),

Table 5.1
Education Governorships Re-Conceptualized

Successful education governors:

- *Restructure bureaucracies*
- *Make education reform a priority early in their tenures by:*
 1. Making strong policy proposals after re-election or after a clear voter mandate;
 2. Outlining specific education policy proposals in their State of the State and/or inauguration addresses;
 3. Pursuing a limited, focused array of objectives and elevating education as a major policy issue; and
 4. Running reform efforts like campaigns
- *Focus on the Big Picture and actively (re-)frame the debate by:*
 1. Using a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals;
 2. Proposing systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms; and
 3. Linking education to other policy areas, particularly the economy
- *Court allies and create teams by:*
 1. Actively maneuvering in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high;
 2. Forming and supporting a large, education-attuned staff in the governor's office; and
 3. Building broad citizen coalitions and taking issues directly to the public
- *Work at both ends of a rapid policy diffusion process by:*
 1. Following other governors' leads and collaborating with them by
 - a. Working outside traditional state lines; and
 - b. Identifying and/or following a leader governor who has the political longevity to develop a full reform platform
 2. Going national with their own messages

it is clear that different sets of characteristics were more important than others for each governor⁷⁸ A broader perspective on what the arguments above and in Appendix H may mean for understanding gubernatorial leadership in general is presented in chapter 6.

⁷⁸ In addition, the present study is based on only a limited number of governorships active during a relatively short period of time and in a confined geographic region; thus, these characteristics are offered primarily as contributions to a broader discussion of education governorships and gubernatorial leadership that should include data from other time periods and regions.

Table 5.2

Primary Characteristics of Each Education Governorship (Informal Assessment)

Characteristics of Education Governorships	Winter	Alexander	Hunt	(Incomplete data)		
				Clinton	Graham	Riley
<i>Restructure bureaucracies</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓
<i>Make education reform a priority early in their tenures by:</i>	1. Making strong policy proposals after re-election or after a clear voter mandate;	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓
	2. Outlining specific education policy proposals in their state of the state and/or inauguration addresses;	✓	✓	⁻¹	⁻¹	⁻¹
	3. Pursuing a limited, focused array of objectives and elevating educ. as a maj. policy issue; and	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)
	4. Running reform efforts like campaigns	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓
<i>Focus on the Big Picture and actively (re-)frame the debate by:</i>	1. Using a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals;	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓
	2. Proposing systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms; and	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3. Linking education to other policy areas, particularly the economy	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓
<i>Court allies and create teams by:</i>	1. Actively maneuvering in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high;	✓	✓			✓
	2. Forming and supporting a large, education-attuned staff in the governor's office; and	✓	✓		(✓)	
	3. Building broad citizen coalitions and taking issues directly to the public	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓
<i>Work at both ends of the policy diffusion process by:</i>	1a. Following other governors' leads and collaborating with them by working outside traditional state lines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1b. Following other governors' leads and collaborating with them by identifying and/or following a leader governor who has the political longevity to develop a full reform platform	✓ ²	(✓)	⁻²	✓	✓
	2. Going national with her or his own message		✓	(✓)	(✓)	✓

¹ Insufficient data; did not review addresses for these governors.² Both Winter and Hunt also acknowledge North Carolina governor Terry Sanford as a vital inspiration for their work on education reform.

CHAPTER 6 – IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENDING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION GOVERNORSHIPS

This study was framed by two primary questions, the first of which – What contributed to the development of Southern governors into education policy leaders in the early 1980s? – was addressed in the previous three chapters. The second question – What lessons from these reform efforts and institutional changes might be applicable to broader questions of gubernatorial power and governor-led policy reform? – is addressed in this final chapter. First, the chapter assesses the viability of the hypothesized *executive leadership moment* concept developed in chapter 3. Next, it utilizes the study’s revised and expanded framework for understanding education governorships to draw distinctions among different types of education governors. The chapter ends with a discussion of some of the implications of this study’s results for future research on gubernatorial leadership.

Assessing the Executive Leadership Moment Concept

“There are external circumstances, over which no one really has any control, and so the accomplishment of a meaningful reform frequently is based on that period in our history when the elements come together to make it possible”

– W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009

In the spirit of a grounded theoretic approach, this section will assess and modify a foundational element of the original framework upon which the analyses presented in the previous chapter were built, before considering some of the implications for studies of

the governorship that emerge from those analyses. The leading contention of the framework was that the education governorships of the early 1980s were made possible by the emergence of an *executive leadership moment* – a period during which governors or other political leaders have the opportunity to take advantage of contemporary circumstances to claim or expand a leadership role in a policy area – that resulted from the intersection of several different political and cultural streams. For the most part, the review of the literature presented in chapter 3 appears to support the contention that the early years of the 1980s did indeed represent such a moment, and that it contributed to the ability of the education governors to make successful inroads into the education reform arena. Jesse White, former Executive Director of SGPB, characterized the period in this way: “It was all part of this ferment in the eighties, and this group of governors that sort of came out of World War II and emerged, came of age in the eighties, and ascended to power in the eighties, and it was . . . extraordinary, it was the Golden Age of Southern governors. . . . [T]o some degree it’s sort of the ‘Greatest Generation’ taking over the reins of power” (personal communication, December 3, 2008). For Alexander, the equation was even simpler than that: “The times were ripe; we had a lot of catching up to do. . . . [T]he opportunity was there” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The evidence gathered in chapter 3, however, points toward a need to modify each component of the original model. For example, the first component contends that changes in dominant national and regional education values and beliefs contributed to the establishment of a leadership moment in the early 1980s. Rather than contributing to the *establishment*, however, it might be more accurate to say that changes in the dominant education values contributed to the *shape* that the education reform debate would take in

the early 1980s. Furthermore, the resultant shape was impacted just as much by a broader shift in mood that influenced policy arenas beyond education alone: a rising sense of economic urgency. Equity-based education reforms were introduced frequently in the period following the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision, but by the 1970s, the impact of Great Society-era reforms was questioned with increasing frequency, and some reformers began to champion an excellence-based approach to education reform. At around the same time, human-capital-development solutions to the pains of escalating economic pressures emerged that matched well with the standards-and-accountability-based excellence movement. Together, these two value systems helped define the foundation for most gubernatorial education reform strategies, which combined the two perspectives under the umbrella of a pursuit of overall excellence in both educational attainment and economic prosperity.

The second component of the hypothesized executive leadership moment argues for the importance of changes in the federal-state relationship and the contribution of these changes not only to the possibilities for education reform but also in particular to the expanded role of the governor in enacting those reforms. Changes to the federal-state relationship certainly do appear to have opened opportunities for governors and other state-level actors to move to the fore in the education policy arena, but the original phrasing of this component misses the importance of changes in the state-*local* relationship as well. Severe reductions in the ability of local-level governments to support education, coupled with many states' decisions to halt the Reagan-era process of devolution from the federal level at the state capitol steps (instead of allowing the devolution to trickle down to localities), moved the center of education policy formation

away from both the federal *and local* levels and back to the state level. In essence, rather than creating a situation in which policy decisions were made with input from state and local actors, Reagan's New Federalism appears to have resulted in the exclusion of local governments from education policy-making circles almost entirely.

The third component states that changes in the political, social, and economic landscape of the South between the mid-twentieth century and the early 1980s also played a role in (but did not make redundant) the emergence of education governorships in the early 1980s. Desegregation pressures, expansions in voting constituencies, and a healthy dose of regional hurt pride all were evident in the Southern states in the years leading up to the reforms, and the time was indeed ripe for any number of new policy actions that would either capitalize on these changes or tackle the problems onto which some of them focused attention. Whether the presence of activist governors was a necessary condition for ensuring that those policy actions took the form of education reforms is unclear, but there is some evidence to suggest that such was indeed the case.⁷⁹ Although at first glance systemic education reform might appear to have been common to every Southern state during the early 1980s, it is important to bear in mind that in at least a few Southern states such reform was short-lived or never took place at all. For example, the reform effort in Alabama was half-hearted at best, lasting no longer than a single legislative session, and in that state the governor himself eventually overturned the reform package (Rudder, 1991). Though its legislature approved some new programs in 1985, significant changes would not come to Kentucky until a court order later in the

⁷⁹ Arguments for an exclusively or predominantly historical explanation for the advent of the education reform era in the South often are based on a *path dependence* framework, which is explained in greater detail in Appendix A. Appendix A also includes a rationale for why education reform in the South in the early 1980s would have been unlikely without the presence of gubernatorial leadership.

decade (*Rose v. Kentucky*, 1989) required action (Clements & Kannapel, 2010). And despite a healthier corporate tax base (due to Governor Waller's successful bid to put a higher severance tax on oil and gas in place, for example) than that of its neighbor, Mississippi, and even though other state-level conditions were similar to those in other Southern states, no systemic education reform efforts took place in Louisiana in the period under study.

Finally, also missing in the original formulation of the executive leadership moment concept is a clearer statement of the importance of direct changes in the institution of the governorship itself. As suggested above, some of these changes grew out of shifts in federal policy. For instance, the education reform narratives suggest that in the education arena, New Federalism often left unclear the power relationships among actors at the state level, which created an opportunity for expansion of gubernatorial power. In addition, the assignment of specific roles for governors via legislation like ECIA aided in the promotion of many of the governors to leadership roles in education policy. More important than the federal influence, however, were the various state-specific changes in the formal and informal powers of the office noted in the case studies, along with the support provided by regional and national gubernatorial associations.

None of these amended and expanded arguments serves as proof positive that the early 1980s represented a special opportunity for state-level executive leadership, but the case studies help to demonstrate that the possibility for gubernatorial intervention was at the least *significantly heightened* at that time, and appears to have been impacted as much by the historical moment as it was by each governor's desire to effect change. That is, the Southern education governors could not simply *choose* to be education governors; they

also needed favorable on-the-ground conditions. Many of the governors themselves expressed sentiments that support this conclusion. Winter stated, “[I]n 1979 . . . I ran on precisely the same platform that I’d run for governor on in ’67 and run for governor on in ’75, but this time, I was overwhelmingly elected. . . . I don’t think a really meaningful education reform could have passed earlier than it did in ’81. I don’t think I could have been elected and been successful in education reform. . . . [W]e were still too close to the resistance to desegregation and the disorganization of public education in the seventies” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). Riley added, “Well, of course, timing is everything, as they say, in political decision-making. . . . I think the time had come, the South was really developing into a real machine of excitement, and people were ready to do something, and do something big, and do something different” (personal communication, July 2, 2009). In addition, the evidence presented in chapter 3 of the importance of changes in the formal and informal powers of governors, as well as of the growth in governor-supporting organizations, helps to explain how such gubernatorial intervention became possible for those who were motivated to pursue it.

The historical overview of chapter 3, evidence from chapter 4, and this analysis suggest the need for several clarifications and emendations to the visualization of the theoretical conceptual framework presented in chapter 1 (*Figure 6.1*). The revised framework described above and depicted in the figure below more accurately illuminates and clarifies ways in which seemingly disparate historical threads intersected to make the hypothesized executive leadership moment and subsequent governor-sponsored, systemic education reform in the South in the early 1980s possible. It may also provide a useful

contextualization for the exploration below of the implications of the analyses presented in chapter 5.

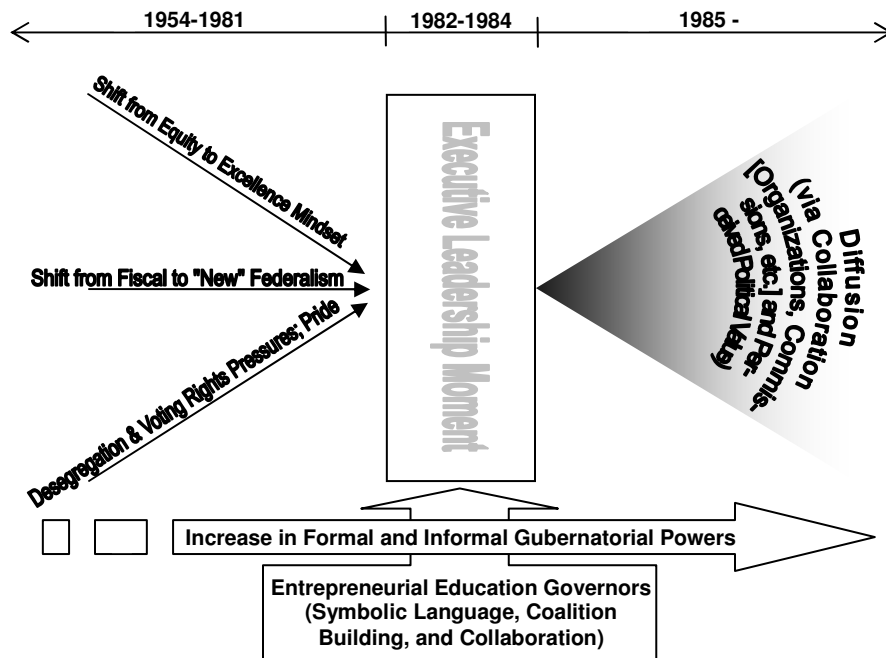


Figure 6.1. Southern Accents: A Revised Theoretical Conceptual Framework

Re-Framing the Governorship

Drawing Distinctions between Nominal and Empirical Education Governors

One of the original motivating goals for this study was to investigate whether there was any way to differentiate among the bevy of governors who have claimed the now-ubiquitous title of “education governor.”⁸⁰ Indeed, during the 2006 election period, candidates from both parties in nearly every state proposed major education policies (McNeil, 2006, October 25), and in 1999, Indiana governor Frank O’Bannon described a formulation of what constitutes an education governor that captured nearly *every*

⁸⁰ To date, only Krottseng (1987, 1988) appears to have made any concerted effort to approach the question academically, and her research was limited to analyses of the contents of certain public speeches.

governor in its net: “Every Indiana governor is an ‘Education Governor’ in that education is important to every aspect of life in our state. That importance is reflected in the fact that over 50% of the state’s budget is dedicated to its school systems” (Governor, 1999, p. 2). A key implication of the cases examined for this study, however, is that there is much more to being an education governor than making policy proposals or overseeing a sizable state education budget. Some might posit instead that *passage* of a large number of governor-sponsored education bills is a fairer determinant. But as Gross (1989) points out, governor-sponsored bill passage in the abstract also is a weak indicator of gubernatorial influence; after all, a governor who sponsors bills that also happen to mesh with her or his legislature’s agenda may experience success simply because of that concordance, not necessarily because of any personal influence or innate ability on the part of the governor.

The analyses in chapter 5 lead to the conclusion that the defining characteristics of the education governors in this study include a) immediate, constant, and carefully planned pursuit of education reforms, b) a focus on systemic reforms and their impact on other policy areas, c) a willingness and ability to form broad coalitions both in and outside of the legislature, and d) meaningful involvement in the process of sharing reform efforts and lessons learned across state lines, most particularly with gubernatorial colleagues. These characteristics help to distinguish, for example, the governors examined in this study from some of their contemporaries, like Joe Frank Harris of Georgia (Appendix C), who, unlike most of his peers, encountered little resistance to his education reform measures, and who did not spend years preparing for and fighting for those reforms.

The characteristics proposed above suggest that one overarching characteristic of true education governors is that they actively and willingly maintain heavy involvement in almost all aspects of their education efforts, often personally taking on a wide range of tasks that could have been delegated to members of their staffs. Hunt, for example, not only pushed for improvements in science and math education but also moderated a state conference on the topic, detailed in speeches a number of pressing issues in North Carolina related to those two academic areas, and accepted state-level leadership responsibility for addressing them (Hunt, 1982, September 29). Alexander estimated that he “spen[t] 60 percent of my time on the issue for maybe a year and a half” (personal communication, June 3, 2009), and Riley noted that “before those of us that really were reformers, governors weren’t near as talkative in leading about education. Now, I’m sure they were *for* it, and good, positive, progressive people, but they didn’t throw [themselves] into it (R. Riley, personal communication, July 2, 2009). Added Winter, “I realized that the only way any governor or any other public official is going to get anything meaningful done is just through absolutely persistent effort” (personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Several of the non-gubernatorial interview subjects offered additional estimations of what set apart some governors from others when it came to education policy: “The true education governors were the ones that were *willing to risk their political capital* and their career and their legacy on making the schools better” (D. Molpus, personal communication, January 21, 2009, emphasis added); and “A governor who is *committed to making a difference in the education structure*, whether it’s in funding, the governance structure, or a change in the way schools are seen by the public” (A. Mullins, personal

communication, January 21, 2009, emphasis added). As Hunt's first education advisor noted, "He participated in everything. He never tired. One of his basic characteristics is – and this would be true of Lamar Alexander and Bill Winter – *they never got tired* of this, they never got weary along the road" (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009, emphasis added).

The governors themselves offered additional suggestions for what it means to be a true education governor, and in general their definitions match well with some of the conclusions of this study. Alexander: "Someone who is a *transforming leader*, who can actually achieve some fundamental change. A lot of people can have passion for an issue, and anybody can write a speech, but a few governors have been able to actually, if they haven't transformed the entire system, they made transforming changes within the system" (personal communication, June 3, 2009, emphasis added). Hunt: "The great leaders, I won't say that I'm one of them, but they really are motivated by [the belief that great nations are constant works-in-progress], and it's in their hearts, it's in their guts, and it *drives them to try to change things* and accomplish these things for all people, but first of all they believe they *can* do it" (personal communication, April 28, 2009, emphasis added). Riley: "They really were ready to move out, even if [there] was risk involved. It's awfully easy to lay out platitudes – you know, 'I'm for education, I'm an education governor,' and so forth – but to say, 'We've got to do this, and that's going to make some teachers mad, and this is going to make some [mad], but we gotta do it,' that's people who *are willing to lead*. . . . [They] *care* enough about education to lead"

(personal communication, July 2, 2009, emphasis added).⁸¹ Perhaps the best summary came from Governor Winter:

I think there are some governors more worthy of being held out as education governors than others, but I think almost all of the governors with whom I served could really justifiably be called education governors. Some devoted more of their careers to education, Jim Hunt being one, I'd put Dick Riley up there. And of course, Alexander, we all would have gone with those. I mean, I would certainly want to put us all on about the same platform, in terms of our commitment to public education, and in terms of whatever successes we might have had in promoting public education. I have just always regarded it as a great privilege, great opportunity for me to have served as governor with those governors with whom I served in that period in the early eighties. As I said a while ago, I would put them up against any political leaders I've every known in this country (personal communication, January 21, 2009).

The cases presented in the previous chapters, along with the reflections from the governors and their staffs presented above, suggest that a more appropriate way to categorize or define education governors is to distinguish first between *nominal* education governors, or governors who merely preside over minimally-innovative (though possibly resource-intensive) education agendas, and *empirical* education governors, or governors who successfully promote innovative education reforms. In addition, and following Gross's (1989) observations about differences in the difficulty of

⁸¹ An interesting tangent to Riley's and others' observation of the personal risk that many of the governors took when pursuing initially unpopular education reforms is how those risks point up the apparent *unimportance* of each governor's Party identity, relative to the more fundamental importance of the set of guiding education values that appears to have informed much of what each governor proposed. This observation is discussed in more detail in Appendix I.

securing bill passage, the narratives and data suggest a further distinction, this time between empirical education governors and education *reform* governors,⁸² or governors who take risks and persistently fight resistance to achieve education reform. It was in their ability to secure passage of systemic, statewide reform efforts in the face of resistance from the legislature or from other sources of opposition that the cohort of governors examined in this study really set themselves apart and established a benchmark for distinguishing the empirical education reform governors from the rest of the pack.

The Governor and State-Level Policy-Making: Re-Thinking Analytical Approaches

The conclusions in chapter 5 and in the section above point toward a specific and focused outcome – a better understanding of what makes a governor an education governor – but there is more to be gleaned from the cases of the Southern education governors than a definition alone. The cases also contain implications for studies of gubernatorial leadership in general; in particular, they argue for consideration of several alternatives or extensions to the current approaches used to study the governorship.

chapter 4 was framed by the notion that informal powers and individual personalities matter as much as any other variable in a governor's success, and this contention and the evidence in support of it has implications for the study of the governorship not just in the context of education reform but in other policy contexts as well.

Limitations of traditional formal-power analyses. One of those implications is for the methods by which gubernatorial power is assessed. As detailed in chapter 4, the predominant approach has been to compare (usually numerically) a governor's formal (constitutionally-prescribed) powers to those of other governors (Dometrius, 1979;

⁸² A term suggested by Jesse White, former director of the Southern Growth Policies Board (personal communication, December 3, 2008).

Morehouse, 1966, 1973; Beyle, 1989, 2004). Doing so reveals a weakness in terms of formal powers in most Southern governorships relative to other governorships across the nation (Table 4.1), a weakness that is often assumed to prevent any level of significant Southern gubernatorial policy action, especially for governors of states like South Carolina, where even the most basic of gubernatorial powers – the ability to propose a state budget – is handled by a committee instead of by the governor’s office. Even in the state in this study with a relatively strong governorship (on paper) at the time of the reforms – Tennessee – gubernatorial power in education policy in particular had been curtailed by a tradition of allowing the Commissioner of Education to take the lead in education policy formation. In Florida, some of the governor’s budgetary powers were even *stripped* by the legislature during Governor Graham’s first term (Grizzle, 1991). Reflecting on the situation in Mississippi, Charles Overby, the editor of the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*, added, “The governor of Mississippi had very weak responsibilities, so the legislature had always been able to kind of trump the governor, and when you look at the powers that were arrayed against this [reform effort], even to the end, I mean it’s just, it is a miracle” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The chief problem that arises when considering the education reform efforts detailed in this study through the lens of a traditional formal-power assessment is obvious, since, for the most part, the power ratings and the outcomes do not match. To be sure, as noted in chapter 3, by the beginning of the Southern education reform period, the institution of the governorship was experiencing a significant increase in formal powers nationwide, relative to previous periods. Even before that increase, most Southern governors already benefitted from the presence of at least a few significant formal

powers, including veto power (available in every state in this study except for North Carolina), the right to present a state-of-the-state address (Bernick & Wiggins, 1991), and the ability to call a special session of the legislature. As Ray Mabus, aide to Governor Winter and future governor of Mississippi, noted in the spring before reform legislation passed in Mississippi, the special session power allowed the governor to “set[] the agenda, there are no deadlines, [legislators] can’t trade off one thing against another, they can’t trade highways for schools, they have to deal with the agenda the Governor gives them” (1982, p. 2). In addition to Winter, Governors Clinton, Alexander, and Graham all called special sessions to force their legislatures to consider the issue of education reform.

But beyond these examples, there was little else in the Southern governors’ formal-power arsenals that one could put forth as having made much difference in their reform efforts. For example, empirical connections between another formal power shared by most of these governors – the ability to propose an agenda – and a state’s *operationalized* agenda (as defined by an approved budget and successful legislation) are difficult to find. Gross (1989) cites one 1984 study of California in which a link between gubernatorial influence and agenda-setting could be found for only about ten percent of all bills considered; the majority were linked directly to interest group pressure. In addition, even the strongest tool in the arsenal of most of the Southern governors (excluding Riley) for influencing a state’s policy agenda – control over the formation of the state budget proposal – was neutralized because the education reforms called for dramatic shifts from previous budget patterns (*cf.* Gross 1989). Beginning with Winter’s call for an increase in oil and gas severance taxes, the budget-altering nature of each governor’s education reform proposal made it difficult for many legislators to swallow.

In each case, the proposed reforms would require substantial increases in revenue, and few legislators initially proved willing to support expensive programs that would require significant tax increases.

The case for inclusion of informal-power analyses. Thus, effective Southern gubernatorial formal powers were few and far between during the reform period, and in addition, the governors were not even able to benefit fully from all of the formal powers that they *did* possess. And yet, each governor in this study shepherded through significant legislation in the face of sometimes-massive legislative resistance. In other words, these cases argue that application of the standard measures of gubernatorial strength based on state-level constitutional access to formal powers is sometimes inadequate for determining or explaining a governor's *on-the-ground, realized* strength in a specific policy area. Instead, differences in constitutional gubernatorial powers across states may matter much less than do differences in a governor's influence *across various policy areas* and differences *across governors within states*. In the first instance, for any number of individual or temporal reasons, the realized strength of an education governor may be different from her or his realized strength as, say, an environmental governor or a transportation governor; in the second instance, two governors in the same state may experience radically different levels of success in their attempts to influence education policy due to differences in the ways in which each one attempts to overcome the same formal weaknesses. To a person, the governors in this study were able to overcome the limitations imposed by their relatively small slate of formal powers by maximizing what few formal powers they did have but also by exercising a host of equally-potent informal

powers, many of which were unique to the individuals and were not vested in the office itself.⁸³

Several sources indicated the importance to the reform efforts of some of these personal qualities of the particular individuals who inhabited the governor's office at the time (*cf.* Ferguson & Barth, 2002). Winter aide Andrew Mullins commented that "it took someone like William Winter . . . who was strong enough and intelligent enough to break the mold" (personal communication, January 21, 2009), and Hunt's legislative liaison, Zebulon Alley, added that "There's never been a governor that concentrated as much on the educational system of a state as Jim Hunt did for NC" (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009). Of the two Southern states that exhibited little to no education reform action during the period under investigation – Louisiana and Alabama – several sources noted (off the record) that a chief reason was the lack of strong leadership from the governors in office at the time.

The discussions in chapter 5 and in the sections above suggest many specific ways in which current analyses of gubernatorial strength could be adjusted to reflect these findings, whether through careful attention to a governor's ability to build and maintain citizen coalitions, or to the degree of focus in her or his proposed agenda, or to the size of her or his staff in a given policy area. From a broader perspective, the results of this study point toward arguments for consideration of two cross-cutting analytical approaches that could provide balance to traditional analyses of gubernatorial power that favor more easily quantifiable variables over less tangible but arguably equally- or more-important ones. The first recommended approach is to *gauge the degree to which an*

⁸³ In some ways, their achievements represent a viable alternate formulation for what it meant to be an education reform governor in the South at the time: being able to do much with little.

individual governor is able to transform the institution of the governorship in her or his state, and the second is to assess the depth of an individual governor's involvement in cross-state gubernatorial networks.

Transforming the institution of the governorship. One infrequently examined sign of the strength of an individual governor is her or his ability to transform the institution of the governorship itself and leave a legacy for the governors who follow. In the case of the Southern education governors, their transformations of their offices, both individually and collectively, left lasting marks; though they went about it in different ways, these governors helped to upset the traditional hierarchies that long had defined education policy-making in their states, simultaneously redefining the roles that governors would play in those hierarchies. Charles Overby, a longtime observer of Southern governors, contends that “the biggest political transformation in my life, besides the sea-change in Civil Rights attitudes, was the emergence of the Progressive Southern governor. I covered Southern governors who were the opposite of progressive, and then there came a point where Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, all had really outstanding governors – Georgia – who could go on, and in the case of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton did go on, to be president. And it was a complete change . . . it was a transforming event” (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The manner in which a governor is able to impact the institution of the governorship can, of course, vary from state to state, but it is instructive to identify some of the ways in which the Southern education governors did so in their own states and in the states across their region, and to reflect on the ramifications of those efforts for the power of their administrations (and in some cases, of those that followed). First, many of

them oversaw changes in their states' constitutions and in the balance of power between legislatures and the governor's office that greatly increased the formal and informal powers of their offices. Second, they left behind field-tested roadmaps for achieving significant legislative victories in their respective states, as well as (in some cases) newly institutionalized education support staff positions (such as education advisors) in the governor's office.

Examples of gubernatorial efforts to redefine constitutionally their office's *formal* powers are outlined at the end of chapter 5, but changes in the stature of the office were not dependent entirely on official constitutional amendments; in some cases, the changes were more indirect but just as significant. For instance, Hunt picked up where several of his Democratic predecessors (most particularly Sanford; *cf.* Christensen, 2008) had left off by building on the pre-existing party structure to develop what Alley called "one of the strongest political organizations that I guess that's ever been in the South" (personal communication, September 8, 2009). Recalled Hunt, "I had a county organization, and it was based on the old [Terry] Sanford organization [that] came down to me. . . . If a legislator went home, and they were giving me a hard time, and I didn't have their vote, especially if they were in my party, the key person from their county went to see them on Saturday morning and talked to them. Now, you didn't do it in an inappropriate way, you didn't threaten them, but you explain what the governor is trying to get done, and how good the governor's been to us here, and how much we need to help him get his education program through, and particularly business people were involved with this. . . . 'Mr. So-and-So came to see me. Sure, he's Hunt's key man, but he's also *my* friend, and he's big in our county, and sure, yeah, we want to help the governor get this thing

through. It's going to help us'" (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009). He also spent a significant amount of time "in the field": "As lieutenant governor, I made it my job to study the state of affairs in the schools, and I went to schools all over the state, I mean I was around this state the whole time. [As governor], I started volunteering, and the first couple of years were at Broughton High School up here [in Raleigh]. . . . I'd go in and volunteer an hour or so a week" (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009). Hunt's education advisor, Betty Owen, noted that "Traditionally . . . the education establishment in state superintendents, and in the teachers' organizations, and the principals' and superintendents' organizations, those people had really kind of run the policy in education, until quite recently, until Jim Hunt" (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009).

Similarly, Graham made sure that, whenever possible, he populated key committees with friendly faces, and, when he wasn't able to control membership, that he was on the best possible terms with those who served with him: "The State Board of Education at that time was made up of the governor and six other statewide elected officials. Frankly all of those other six people were personal and political friends of mine. Most of them I had served in the legislature with or had known in some other capacity. . . . You can look at an organizational chart and reach a certain conclusion, but it's who is actually filling those boxes that in the final analysis makes more difference than the static relationships that the chart implies" (R. Graham, personal communication, August 1, 2009). Riley added, "You can say, yes, we had a weak governor, but we also shifted an awful lot of power out of the legislature We took over several [school] districts, and that was way back yonder" (personal communication, July 2, 2009). And according to

Winter, “I think as important as the substantive nature, the substance of the [education reform] program, the policy, I think just as important was really a change in the perception of how legislation can be influenced” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). Winter credits Hunt in particular with serving as an example to his contemporaries of what the governorship could do: “I would say Jim, as much as any single governor, introduced me to the process of using the governor’s office to enhance education” (personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Another indicator of a governor’s power as a result of institutional transformation – though one that is only able to be assessed after the fact – is the strength of the legacy a governor leaves for her or his successors. For example, evidence of the significant degree to which the reform roadmaps charted by the education governorships of the 1980s directly or indirectly transformed not only their own but also other Southern-state governorships can be seen in the number of Southern governors who followed them who also have been nominated as candidates for the title of education governor. Early candidates from other states in the region include what might be thought of as the second generation of Southern education governors – Joe Frank Harris in Georgia (see Appendix C), Charles Robb in Virginia, Jay Rockefeller in West Virginia, Mark White in Texas, and Martha Layne Collins and Wallace G. Wilkinson in Kentucky. Governors who served later in the states investigated in this study who also might be eligible for the title of education governor include Ray Mabus in Mississippi, Michael Easley (who earned the distinction as the first governor officially awarded the title of “education governor” by the NGA) and Beverly Perdue in North Carolina, Jeb Bush in Florida, Zell Miller and Roy Barnes in Georgia, Carroll Campbell in South Carolina, and Ned McWherter (who

was the influential Speaker of the House during Alexander's terms) in Tennessee. Many of these governors vied for more direct control not only over their states' education agendas but also over their states' education bureaucracies (Henig, 2009).

Part of the process of making these second-wave education governorships possible, and another sign of informal gubernatorial power, is the ability to not only make but also *institutionalize* changes in the structure and staffing of the executive office. Hunt was particularly active in these efforts, both in North Carolina and in the region as a whole. His legislative liaison, Zebulon Allen, observed that Hunt found ways to make lasting changes to the culture of the executive office:

[H]e would have all those people [come] in. The Lieutenant Governor would come up there and sit at his feet, more or less. . . . [E]verybody came, and the people that didn't come were envious of the ones who did come. But it just had the effect of putting together a team. And he has always been a team person, from the time he came in through the College Federation to what he was in his fourth term of governor. He believed in strictly operating through a team, not trying to be a dictator or a person who issued commands and expected them to be followed. When he wanted to do something, like get a tax passed to support education, he would call every member of his team, the Hunt Keys, and they would all in turn call their people in the legislature, and it had a very powerful effect on legislation.

An indication of the institutionalization of these changes was that Hunt's immediate successor, Governor James Martin, was able to carry on most of the same procedures (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009). Perhaps more importantly, Hunt firmly established the position of education advisor as an important component of the

governor's staff, a move that was replicated by several other Southern governors. "To have a position within the governor's office that's defined as education advisor was new. . . . I did exactly what the governor wanted me to do, and that was, I attended all the board meetings, I represented the governor at various meetings around the state, I talked about his education legislation that was in the General Assembly, I often spoke to committees in the General Assembly, and when called upon we organized meetings and I wrote all of the education speeches" (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009).

Challenging the state-in-isolation mindset. One of the conclusions of the previous chapter was that the *interconnectedness of gubernatorial policy proposals and political strategies across state lines* in the South played a major role in the development of the education governorships, and that conclusion has implications for broader studies of gubernatorial power as well. Taken together, the cases all suggest that another critical measure of a governor's power might be consideration of her or his participation in a process of *cross-state (or cross-unit) collaboration*. In many ways, this final recommendation for the expansion of studies of the governorship is the fundamental learning toward which this study has pointed.

As noted in chapter 5, the fact that governors share information is not a revelation. Beyle (1988) observed that cross-state efforts in such disparate policy areas as mental health reform, international trade, and energy often led in the 1970s and 1980s to the development or expansion of multi-state policy and planning organizations: "These organizations can, and some have, become important parts of the policy initiation, policymaking, and policy administration processes in the states" (p. 145). Specifically, Mullins (1992) asserts that targeted publications like the Southern Regional Education

Board's *The Need for Quality* (1981) not only provided many of these governors with ideas for their education reforms (see, for instance, Table G.1 in Appendix G) but also with a jumping-off point for regular communication with each other and for, in Winter's words, "comparing notes" (quoted in Mullins, 1992, p. 37). Similarly, most of the governors in this study not only attended regional annual conferences in the early 1980s, but they also often shared the same stage to talk in depth about education reform in their respective states. For one such conversation at a Southern Growth Policies Board meeting in 1982, Governors Riley, Alexander, Hunt, Graham, and Winter were joined by Virginia Governor Charles Robb to talk about education, and at another the following year, Governors Alexander, Graham, and Winter were joined again by Governor Robb, along with Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris and Oklahoma Governor George Nigh (*Proceedings*, 1982; *Proceedings*, 1983). "The trend," noted Beyle (1988, p. 146), "was to leave the old social gathering approach [behind and] to become more involved in policy concerns."

But the evidence and analysis in the previous chapter indicate that cross-state education reform collaboration for the Southern governors went much deeper than information shared at various conferences, and that the result was a significant increase in the power of each governor relative to his legislature. At that 1982 Southern Growth meeting, Governor Graham closed the proceedings with a recognition of that potential power when he suggested that the true salvation of the South was not in gubernatorial competition with each other but in collaboration: "Our sense of common purpose is an asset that we can draw upon now as we look to what is a strategy for the next step in terms of our goal of full economic equality, to bring full quality of life to our people. . . .

[T]he emphasis in the 1980's is on how we can *collectively enhance* the quality of our educational systems, the quality of the programs that are available to our people” (*Proceedings*, 1982, pp. 105, 108, emphasis added).

While the argument for inclusion of a collaboration variable in assessments of gubernatorial power is based primarily on the Southern education reform efforts of the 1980s, there are other examples of the impact of these collaborations on the relative strengths of the governors in this study. In the early years of the Reagan presidency, Governors Hunt, Winter, and Riley worked together in leading the Southern Governors' Association's lobbying efforts to prevent significant reductions in Title I funds (Mullins, 1992). There is also evidence of the value of collaboration with respect to the governors' collective ability to influence policy in areas other than education. Jesse White, then-Executive Director of Southern Growth, recalls one episode when Graham was Chair of that organization: “When Graham took over the chairmanship June of '82, his program was creating a Southern common market, and the key of that was to get Southern states to form an interstate banking agreement that would keep everybody else out but let Southern banks [in] So Graham . . . formed this banking committee and came up with the recommendations, and the Board endorsed it, and then Graham got together with Jim Hunt and Joe Frank Harris and [they] got the legislatures to pass these reciprocal interstate banking agreements, which opened up, and then other states started doing it” (personal communication, December 3, 2008).

There is even some historical evidence of the impact that deep and lasting collaboration had on earlier cohorts of governors as well. For example, North Carolina Governor O. Maxwell Gardner called on governors from Virginia and New York to

address his legislature in 1931 as part of his successful attempts to centralize two of the state's most expensive public services (roads and education) in an effort to reduce costs for local governments as a result of the Great Depression (Christensen, 2008). In addition, as Charles Overby observed, "The parallel that I draw . . . is with the old governors of the South talking to one another and working together to figure out how to keep their states segregated, and they said, 'Well, we'll try this, and if this works here, then maybe we can hold 'em off by doing that.' And so, those same communication lines that were used to try to uphold segregation then were [later] used to be more progressive" (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

Beyond introduction of yet another variable into the analyses of gubernatorial strength and power, though, what impact might the inclusion of a collaboration variable have in the broader context of studies of the governorship? So often in studies of particular levels or units of government, the approach is to conceptualize that unit or level as being a distinct and isolated entity; for example, if the study is of gubernatorial action around a certain policy, or of a particular characteristic of governorships, the tendency is to examine first how governors act *within their own state contexts*, and afterwards perhaps (but not always) to include a follow-up comparison and contrast of the results *across various states* (e.g., Belye, 1989, 2004; Dometrius, 1979; Gross, 1989; Morehouse, 1966, 1973; Morehouse & Jewell, 2002; Sabato, 1983; Schlesinger, 1965, 1971; see also Thompson [1992] and Vinovskis [2008] for examples of this approach to the study of the education governor concept in the South). In many ways, this study initially was organized to follow a similar pattern.

Such approaches are informative, but governors and their offices need not always be thought of in studies of state policy formation as independent entities who operate as solitary political actors. A chief realization that arose during the process of constructing this study was that to think of them as such loses an important facet of the full story. It fails to consider the ways in which a governor's actions are not just informed by but also sometimes *deeply influenced* by simultaneous and sometimes even *coordinated* parallel events across geographical boundaries, such as when governors coordinate efforts to generate what in essence becomes *regional* (or, if it touches a majority of the states, *national*) policy reform.⁸⁴ The end result of the state-in-isolation approach is an analysis that offers an incomplete understanding of what is in actuality a much more complex and dynamic process of gaining and establishing power and influence. In the context of the Southern education governors, such analyses in the past (*e.g.*, Achilles *et al.*, 1986; K. Alexander, 1986; Allen, 1991; Jenkins & Person, 1991; Johns, 1991; Kearney, 1987; Mullins, 1992; Nash & Taggart, 2006; Osborne, 1992; Srinivasan, 1996), though useful for exploring individual pieces of a larger story, have missed an opportunity to advance our understanding of the governorship on a broader scale.⁸⁵

Moving Forward

This study has addressed, offered evidence for, and in some cases modified each of the initial guiding hypotheses: 1) Historically rooted but independent trends – changes

⁸⁴ The same could be true for nominally individual actors at other levels of government as well, such as presidents who talk to, plan with, and/or are influenced by their counterparts in other countries, or mayors who share information and strategies with other mayors.

⁸⁵ See also Henig's (2009) similar critique of the situation-specific approach to investigating the education executive phenomenon.

in dominant education values, an evolution in federalism and its impact on state governance of education, specific political and cultural changes in the South, and the growth of the institution of the governorship itself – intersected in the early 1980s to form a unique opportunity, or *moment*, for executive leadership; 2) Southern activist governors seized this moment to simultaneously effect systemic education policy reform and establish the governorship in a leadership role in education policy formation; and 3) Their approaches to seizing this particular leadership moment established important patterns for an extended period that followed, during which education policy formation and reform became fixtures in a majority of governorships from that point forward.

Limitations of the Study

Though the study was constructed with an eye toward addressing limitations that might reduce the strength of its conclusions, several remain that should be acknowledged. To begin with, as Burlingame and Geske (1979) point out, without access to original data, readers of all studies of this type are dependent upon the objectivity of the writer, which even in the best case is never wholly objective, despite efforts like the ones outlined earlier in this document to eliminate such bias.

A more critical limitation of the methodological approach taken for this study is its narrowness – in terms of geography, timeframe, and subject matter – relative to the breadth of the intended goals. Burlingame and Geske (1979) lament that, in their efforts to be simultaneously selective and representative, most studies' claims of representation are somewhat suspect based on the often non-random selection process alone,⁸⁶ and the

⁸⁶ Though it is worth noting that by focusing on Mississippi and by including supplemental data from Arkansas and particularly South Carolina, this proposed study does address a related complaint of Burlingame and Geske's that most studies of this type have a tendency to ignore states with small populations.

present study is no exception. While this study gained some strength for the purpose of uncovering the role of region in the development of an education governorship by focusing attention on the South exclusively, at the same time, such a geographically narrow lens perhaps obscured or failed to capture other prominent and important aspects of education governorships that might have been more readily apparent in a more geographically diverse survey. Furthermore, the chosen cases focus primarily on one narrowly-defined common element (systemic elementary and secondary education policy reform), a focus that reduces opportunities to generalize the results to governors who concentrate more on different but still related issues, such as higher education.

Similarly limiting was the study's focus on a narrow range of years in the no-longer-near-past. While imposing this boundary allowed for multiple comparisons across the identified governorships that might have been harder to justify for governorships situated in different eras, at the same time it hindered investigation of other characteristics of education governorships that might have been more apparent in a study that included, for example, governors who were not involved in sweeping reforms at the same time (or perhaps ever) but who might also legitimately be considered education governors.

Finally, the study relied on an *a priori* assumption that the identified governors were, indeed, true or empirically defensible education governors. Thus, while the study has the potential to contribute to our understanding of what constitutes an effective education governorship and of how gubernatorial leadership in education emerged and became institutionalized, it cannot make any definitive or comprehensive statements along those lines. Instead, and in the spirit of the grounded theory mindset, the results of

the research presented here might best be thought of as a starting point for a much larger and broader series of studies.

Contributions

These limitations notwithstanding, this study opens a number of doors for the continuing development of insights about governors, and particularly about their roles in the formation of education policy. Since the first early uses of the term in the 1960s, “education governor” has bestowed upon the bearer a certain degree of honor and dignity not often awarded to governors who focus on other policy areas. The declaration, “I am an education governor,” has become political shorthand for a leader who understands the needs of her or his constituency at the most fundamental of levels: the well-being of children and the pursuit of economic security. This study has attempted to shed light not only on the signals that can help to distinguish those who appear to be most deserving of the title from other claimants, but also on how a deeper understanding of what makes a governor an education governor might help to enrich our understanding of gubernatorial leadership on a larger scale.

From a historical perspective, the study has begun the process of outlining and refining the executive leadership moment concept as a lens for situating changes in executive leadership within a broader set of historical forces. From the perspective of political science, it has offered a more complete and fully-realized picture of the integrated parts of an education governorship than exists in current scholarship. And from a methodological perspective, the study has made the case for considering new ways of analyzing the governorship by shifting the focus away from governors as isolated and independent actors within state contexts who are beholden to prescribed formal powers,

to governors as interconnected actors who benefit from their ability to change their political environments and who operate in a policy context that is not necessarily defined by state or even regional boundaries.

This project also has benefitted from several methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of the governorship that may help to enhance future work in this field. To begin with, the study challenges the focus on formal-power analysis that often dominates the field of gubernatorial scholarship. While the goal was never to reject outright the value of such analyses, the study does make a strong case for situating formal-power analysis results within the context of a wider array of lenses and variables, particularly those that are perhaps more qualitative in nature. Finally, as noted in the introduction, the study was constructed with a conscious effort to apply learnings from several disciplines and thus move toward a more interdisciplinary interpretation of the data. Whether the author fully achieved that goal is debatable, but the resulting analysis arguably is richer and more fully realized than it might have been, had the study been limited to the tools and approaches of any single discipline.

Questions for Further Study

The study also raises many questions that are potentially rich sources for future research. Some of these questions spring from the limitations noted above, while others grew out of the analysis but were left unanswered. First, the study suggests several potential alternate directions of inquiry with respect to education reform in the South that focus on outcomes beyond the development of education governorships. For example, the historical analysis in chapter 3 addresses but does not explore in detail the importance of the involvement of the business community in the proposal and passage of education

reform, and there is undoubtedly much more to learn about that side of the story. Also, from a public policy perspective, there is much to gain by considering the aftermath of the passage of these reforms for individual states and for the South as a region. Can direct or indirect connections be made between the specific events of the reform period and tangible changes in outcomes for children and for the states? What have been the most lasting legacies of this first wave of systemic reforms? At least one legacy in particular with critical ramifications for the current education policy climate deserves further attention: the impact of the advent of a culture of psychometric measurement – most notably in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Florida – that continues to define education policy and reform today. In addition, this study’s focus on the club-like nature of the interactions among the governors raises questions about the ways in which the arrival of women in governors’ offices across the South in the late 1980s might have altered the landscape of education reform. As the anecdote that opens this study suggests, their involvement has been as deep as that of their male peers, but in what ways has that involvement differed?

A second series of questions for further study might focus on whether there is solid evidence of the presence of executive leadership moments in other policy areas and contexts, and, if so, whether there are ways for executive leaders to enhance or strengthen the potential impact of these moments on their offices. Do executive leadership moments apply to leaders at any level of government (as seems most likely), or are they predominantly the province of state-level actors? Henig’s (2009) argument for the importance of large, long-term trends and movements in the ascendance of education

executives other than governors, such as presidents and mayors, suggests the potential for applying the concept more broadly.

Finally, to what degree can the definitions and concepts about education governorships developed in this study truly apply across both time (*e.g.*, governorships from both before and after the period studied herein) and geographic boundaries (*e.g.*, regions other than the South) and enhance our understanding of the governorship on a more abstract level? Furthermore, if, as argued here, there is indeed some meaning behind the term, “education governor,” is there value in determining the existence of characteristics that might help to distinguish governors who work in other policy areas, such as health, the environment, or the economy? With hope, the present study has provided a useful starting point for asking questions like these that have the potential to increase our growing understanding of the governorship and of this pivotal period in education reform.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Additional Theoretical Concepts in More Detail

Path Dependence

The vast number of historical trends highlighted in chapter 3 collectively challenge the notion that it was the governors who emerged from those trends and not historical momentum itself that made systemic education reform in the South possible. In other words, on the surface, the historical background suggests that there is evidence of *path dependence* in the progress of education reform in the Southern states. “[P]ath dependence characterizes specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties” (Mahoney, 2000, p. 507). In the present case, the question is whether the reforms would have taken place as a result of a sequence of linked events *regardless of the interventions of reform-minded governors*. While this particular argument is more speculative than provable, there is some value in attempting to rule out historical determinacy as the sole or primary underlying cause for the passage of the reforms.

Pierson (2004) describes three types of path-dependent sequences that lead to policy change. First, a sequence can result in a *cumulative effect*, whereby changes slowly build and slowly unfold, like the lead-up to global warming and the slow aftermath. Second, it can result in a *threshold effect*, in which events slowly build without any visible sign until the build-up reaches a critical point and a rapid unfolding ensues, as with an earthquake. Finally, the role of time can be manifested in the guise of a *causal chain* (Mahoney, 2000; Collier & Collier, 1991), which is a long-term sequence of events – typically “big, slow-moving aspects of the social world” (Pierson, 2004, p. 13) – that

lead to the event in question. Indeed, the causal factors for a certain event may have occurred well before the event itself, and focusing on the event alone might cause one to miss these key ingredients.

Mahoney (2000) characterizes path dependence in a different but equally instructive way by distinguishing between two types of dependencies: those that demonstrate *increasing returns* mechanisms, or the persistence of a path or process over time (due to the machinations of functional, power, and legitimation mechanisms), despite the availability of perhaps more efficient or beneficial paths⁸⁷; and those that exhibit *reactive sequences*, or the more familiar cause-and-effect domino vision of path dependence.⁸⁸ Like Pierson (2004), though, Mahoney (2000) is careful to reject the definition of path dependence as merely “past events leading to present outcomes.” To be truly path dependent, he argues, an outcome must meet three criteria: 1) The causal processes under scrutiny should be highly sensitive to events that take place early on in the sequence (*cf.* Balfanz, 2000: Time and place matter); 2) Early events in the sequence are not the results of initial conditions but are instead somewhat random or stochastic themselves – only once they happen are future events predictable (otherwise, everything

⁸⁷ Such a reproduction might be evident in education in a policy that is the norm now – such as grade leveling that is determined by age alone – but that could have been replaced early on by a more efficient option, such as grade leveling that is determined by proficiency. Such a stigma has been attached to being “held back” now that it would be anathema to eliminate the direct association between grade level and age, even though such a reversal might have a dramatic and positive impact on common schooling problems associated with retention, such as dropout and truancy.

⁸⁸ These reactive sequences are *not*, however, reinforcing sequences, where event A triggers event B, which triggers event C, and so on, all in a steadily building and unidirectional change. Instead, the event B that event A triggers is often in *contradiction* to event A and thus is more of a reaction: action-reaction-reaction is the sequence, not action-action-action. The end result may be totally linked, but it will more than likely be in some degree of opposition to the critical juncture that got the ball rolling. In education policy, one might construct a reactive sequence that looks something like this: *Brown v. Board* leads to intense planning on the part of segregationist states to come up with ways to work around the ruling, which in turn leads to increased federal intervention in an effort to reinforce the ruling, which leads to private market workarounds (via private schools and white flight), which leads to impoverished public schools, which leads to further separation between those who were originally segregated and separate to begin with.

is traceable back to initial conditions and the world is a deterministic place); but 3) Once the contingent deep-past events take place, the resulting path *is* deterministic and no longer random.

Of particular importance for this study, it should be noted that most proponents of path dependence believe that dependence is not evident in all things – it is not just a matter of “going back far enough” to discover a root event that touched off a sequence of interrelated events that ends in the phenomenon under question. Thus, while many of the changes that occurred in the South between the mid-twentieth century and the early 1980s are certainly connected, and while they undoubtedly laid important groundwork for the education governors of the early 1980s, this study attempts to demonstrate that such changes were not part of a deterministic chain meeting Mahoney’s (2000) criteria that would have led to education reform in the early 1980s, with or without the presence of education governors.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ While this study proposes that path dependence is not evident in the events that preceded the emergence of the modern education governors and the passage of the various pieces of legislation that heralded that emergence, it *is* possible that this emergence, along with the historical factors leading up to it, denote a key ingredient in the *beginning* of a path dependent sequence: The presence of a *conjuncture* or a *critical juncture*. Mahoney’s (2000) definition of a critical juncture is clear and helpful: It is “characterized by the adoption of a particular institutional arrangement from among two or more alternatives” (p. 513) – presumably alternatives from which the chooser could have just as easily taken one as the other. Another characteristic of a critical juncture is that, once taken, it becomes increasingly harder to revert back to a pre-juncture period and “choose again.” A final characteristic is that the critical juncture is marked by contingency, or its *unpredictability* or *unexpectedness* based on theory alone or a lack of theory with which to make a prediction – it does not have to be random, just no more expected than any other option. He argues that these critical junctures are often locatable at the intersection of two originally unrelated dependent paths, a point he refers to as a *conjuncture*. Though it was beyond the scope of the present study to investigate, the proposed executive leadership moment may operate as just such a conjuncture, setting off the sequence of events that would lead to governor-led education reform across the nation.

Pierson (2004) adds that the path that results from a conjuncture is shaky at the start, but once one has become established, it can be very hard to change the direction of the path. What happens early on sets the tone and possibly predetermines what can and will happen down the road. At the start, there is a great deal of uncertainty and randomness, but after a few “moves,” the final paths become clearer and set, or at least harder to leave. Pierson also notes, however, that conjuncture theory has limitations: Just because an event happened at the time of one conjuncture does not mean that the same event would happen again elsewhere if another such conjuncture occurred.

The case against Southern education reform without gubernatorial leadership. In an article on statewide education reform, in which he focuses on whether partisan turnover in the governor's mansion "substantially affect[ed] the nature, scope, and direction of education initiatives" (p. 141), Fusarelli (2002) posits that successful reform depends little on which Party is in control. Citing previous research by Mintrom (1997) and others, he concludes that what matters most in successful education policy reform is the presence of a shared, bipartisan concern about the economy, state constitutional constraints, ideological consensus among elites, and a more general move toward a conservative middle (p. 142). One way of interpreting that assessment in the context of this study would be to say that education reform happens *in spite of* and not *because of* governors. Was Southern education reform in the early 1980s not just influenced by but actually the *result* of a certain degree of path dependence, an outcome of a mix of historical phenomena and broad, emerging trends?

It was not difficult to make the argument in chapter 3 that historical forces were moving Southern states to a point at which progressive, activist governors would be able to reverse legislative trends and enact significant education reform. It is equally not difficult to make the argument against the *inevitability* of those reforms occurring at that time, regardless of the presence or absence of activist education governors. The evidence from this study indicates that, even if a poor economy were the gubernatorial motivation for the reform efforts, the reforms were resisted wholeheartedly by nearly every legislature. While the pressures of a failing economy may have incited governors to action, they in no way appeared to have incited *legislatures* to action – *passage* was a result of dogged and often years-long gubernatorial efforts.

In addition, in his argument about constitutional constraints on governors, Fusarelli (2002) follows the same path trod by Beyle, Muchmore, Dometrius, and others before him by failing to distinguish between *official, formal* gubernatorial power and influence and *personal, informal* power and influence. As acknowledged in chapter 3, most state constitutions in the South *did* severely limit what the governors in this study could do in terms of policy initiation or passage, but evidence from these cases indicates that their ability to win passage of education reforms was not bounded by formal powers and the official “rules of the game” – rather, a clear understanding of how the unofficial rules of the game worked, followed by careful manipulation of those rule (or, in some cases, the ability to learn about the rules on the job, and then adjust to them) mattered more.

Reflections from the Southern governors and their staffs help to clarify the importance of these particular governors to the process of systemic education reform in the early 1980s. Bracey Campbell, Special Assistant to Alexander during the CERA debates, reflected: “I think we wouldn’t have done one . . . thing about education in Tennessee in these years if Lamar hadn’t sensed that education was kind of a bubbling cauldron beneath the surface. I think he sensed it was an opportunity. . . . His horse was education, and he just rode it to victory. . . . [I]t wouldn’t have happened if he hadn’t decided that this was something that should be done” (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 110). Hunt legislative liaison Alley believed that the governor “was about as genuinely concerned with his initiatives and really wanted them more than anyone I’ve ever seen. I mean, it was like he would die if he couldn’t get ’em, whatever it was, but mostly education and the good of the people of NC” (personal communication, September 8,

2009). Riley suggested that “It depends on who the governor is, and the governor’s relationship with people, and that kind of thing, and I enjoyed that role of convincing leaders of what we ought to do” (R. Riley, personal communication, July 2, 2009). A large part of the equation appears to have been personality. Overby observed, “So much of what transpired was done on the basis of the personal charisma of these progressive governors” (personal communication, June 3, 2009). Graham’s colleagues noted that his personality was an important part of the process, and they suggested further that his successes in education reform had as much to do with his approach as with his politics: They described him as being warm and genuine, but also serious and business-like, and nearly all agreed that he was hard-working and knowledgeable (Starobin, 1984). To the extent that such individual and personal qualities and characteristics were key factors in reform passage, it seems unlikely that those same or similar reforms even would have been proposed, much less passed, without the presence of these particular education governors.

* * *

Policy Diffusion

The discussion in chapter 5 acknowledges that some form of *policy diffusion* may be one viable way to explain some of the education reform events in the South in the early 1980s, but for the most part, the typical diffusion process and the actual process of education reform during that period differ in several ways.

Policy diffusion describes a process by which policy ideas move from one state to another, and evidence of the importance of such cross-state policy adoption has been recognized since the late 1960s. Walker’s (1969) proposition was that states grouped

themselves into self-defined “leagues” of like-minded states, informal networks that were made formal as officials in these states contacted each other for policy suggestions as problems arose. Anton (1989) calls this version of diffusion a “politics of emulation” (p. 108). There is also another school of thought regarding how diffusion occurs that gives more weight to geographical (and thus perhaps also economic) proximity (Doyle, 2006), though Mooney (2001) contends that diffusion models based on proximity can lead to biased conclusions of the power of diffusion, since the number of neighboring states adopting a policy can only go *up*. Mooney suggests instead a *regional* diffusion model, though such a model is typically more accurate during the early adoption stages of a policy than it is during latter stages, presumably after potential late-adoption states – no matter their location – have had time to assess the effectiveness of the policy in question. He also points out that diffusion may be as much a negative force as it is a positive force – what one state learns from a neighboring state may just as easily *discourage* as *encourage* adoption of a policy.

There are both external and internal determinants at work in the adoption of a policy at the state level. An external determinant might be something like *policy learning* (*cf.* Mooney and Lee, 1995) or *economic competition* (as originally conceived by Walker 1969); internal determinants are variables like the presence of a *policy entrepreneur* (Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom & Vergari, 1998). Most policy diffusion theorists contend that the diffusion concept most often resides in the external determinant category.

A typical characterization of the pattern of diffusion, and a chief reason for the difficulty in applying it to the period under review in this study, is that it often requires a long time to unfold. Diffusion usually is characterized as being slow at first, followed by

a rapid series of adoptions across states for a period, followed again by a slow decline toward the end of the fad (McLendon and Cohen-Vogel, 2008). In the case of the education reform movement of the early 1980s and the institutionalization of the education governorship, however, it is important to bear in mind that diffusion did not follow this pattern: Whereas “typical” diffusion may take as long as fifty years to reach every state, in the case of the education reform movement of the early 1980s, near-complete adoption of specific aspects such as curriculum reform took place in less than a decade (McDonnell & Furhman, 1986). McDonnell and Fuhrman (1986) argue that such rapidity indicates that something other than the standard process of diffusion happened during this period, and, while they cast their votes for the power of public concern about education, it is perhaps not stretching the point too much to suggest that another possible catalyst might have been the presence and actions of the activist education governors.

While the diffusion concept does not fit well with the Southern education reform period’s time frame in and of itself, it is not at all unlikely that the reform period represents a *segment* of a more complete education reform policy diffusion process that in some ways is still unfolding in some states as of this writing. For example, states like Alaska, Idaho, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania are still wrestling with the possibility of adopting one of the key ingredients in Winter’s and Hunt’s reform agendas from the late 1970s: universal kindergarten (ECS, 2003).

* * *

Assumptive Worlds

By what mechanisms does a shift in dominant values contribute to policy reform? One approach to understanding the link between values and policy is through the *assumptive worlds* lens (Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt, 1989). Reaching beyond values alone to also encompass political cultures, this lens posits that in every state and at every time, there is an assumptive world in operation, an unspoken understanding about behaviors and rituals that defines a state's policy-making culture. This understanding or assumption tacitly helps to answer questions about who gets to initiate policy changes, what initiatives are acceptable, and what policy actions are appropriate, and it is informed by a state's dominant values. Several attempts have been made to characterize differences in these political cultures across states, with perhaps the most famous being Elazar's (1984) typology, which classifies states as being either *individualistic*, *traditionalistic*, or *moralistic*, or a combination of two or more of these. Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990), concerned that Elazar's categories were neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, reconceptualized these categories as *individualistic* (though with a different interpretation of that term), *hierarchical*, and *egalitarian* (Table A.1).

Along with shifts in values, then, this study also is sensitive to the impact of shifts in political cultures that might have contributed to reform passage. Even though a state's political culture and the assumptive world it inhabits are sometimes viewed as static, shifts can and do occur (*cf.* Lowery, Gray, and Hager's [1989] related discussion of the volatility of public opinion). Torres (1996) offers an argument for how changes in political cultures and values are linked to changes in education policy. He contends that a society's conceptualizations of the state writ large and of its purpose(s) "influence the

dominant research agenda, the analysis of educational problems, and policy prescriptions” (p. 263). As an example, he traces how the rise of the welfare state concept after the turn of the twentieth century (and particularly after World War II) led to a clear definition of the role that the state should play in the provision of education, including what the purposes of education should be: “[T]hrough educational planning and social engineering, liberal functionalist theories of educational reform advanced personal and civil rights, including a movement toward equality of opportunity and economic redistribution” (p. 278). For the present cases, along with offering some broad explanations for what made systemic education policy reform possible, changes in values and political cultures also help to shed light on how governors navigate assumptive-world policy-making channels in their states.

Table A.1
Political Cultures Typologies

Elazar’s Categories	Thompson’s, Ellis’s, and Wildavsky’s Categories
<i>Individualist</i> – democratic order is a marketplace; anti-federalist (opposite of moralist)	<i>Individualist</i> – bidding/bargaining and self-regulation make up democratic order (low “group” – little association of the individual with a larger group identity – and low “grid” – low level of externally imposed prescriptions for individual behavior)
<i>Traditionalist</i> – paternalistic, elitist, and ambivalent to marketplace; the public looks to elites to form and manage policy; expectation that those at the top of the hierarchy will run the government; federalist	<i>Hierarchical</i> – same as Elazar’s traditionalist; evidence of “group” (abiding by collective decision) and “grid” (socially imposed prescriptions of behavior)
<i>Moralist</i> – political order as commonwealth in which all citizens have an undivided interest, shared moral principles, and cooperation; government is considered to be a transparent apparatus for improving society and supporting the public good; republican (opposite of individualist)	<i>Egalitarian</i> – communitarian, participatory approach to governance, but without prescribed roles or hierarchies (strong “group” but low “grid”)

* * *

Cooperative Federalism

Unlike fiscal federalism or its close kin, hierarchical federalism (Weber, 1947; Kaufman, 1956), *cooperative federalism* conceives of federalism as a matrix of interlocking and interwoven governments in a non-hierarchical (non-centralized) arrangement. Through this lens, American federalism is characterized by intergovernmental cooperation, with higher government levels responsible for raising revenues and setting standards, and lower government levels responsible for administering programs. As a result of the cooperation among levels of government and the fact that there is no clean separation among either functions or structures,⁹⁰ the federal government is more likely to be supplementary and stimulatory than it is to be centralizing and preemptive. From this perspective, rather than expanding *itself* to meet needs, the federal government more often than not will provide the stimulus for *state* government expansion in many areas (with a concomitant expansion in the number and quality of state personnel).

According to the cooperative federalism lens, conflict arises among government levels only when a group with some degree of voice in a state (perhaps even a governmental group) is unable to find redress for its concerns at the state level, turning to the national government for help as a result. The national government responds only if the issue and timing are right, but when it does, *the response has a ripple effect across other states as the new federal approach spreads*. And herein lies perhaps the most important, if unintended, aspect of Elazar's lens for the purposes of this study: His model is one of the few to suggest the role that federalism plays in relationships *among the*

⁹⁰ As would be the case in a *dual federalist* system, which was the norm in the nineteenth century (Hanson, 2002), but which was declared officially "dead" in 1950 by constitutional scholar Edward S. Corwin (Derthick, 2001).

*states*⁹¹ as well as between individual states and the federal government. Thus, federalism through a cooperative lens is the working-out of a solution to a problem between the federal government and a state government, as well as an impetus for the resultant rise of, and then resolution of, similar problems in other states as part of the aftermath of the initial implementation.⁹²

⁹¹ Sometimes called “confederal” relationships (Hanson, 2002), or, in Elazar’s own words (1984), “federalism without Washington.”

⁹² This concept of the spread of policy ideas is reflected in earlier discussions of policy entrepreneurship and diffusion.

Appendix B: Other First-Generation Southern Education Governorships of the 1980s

William Clinton and the Quality Education and School Finance Acts⁹³ – Arkansas

Arkansas education history and background. Gubernatorial efforts to institute some degree of state-level education reform were not a novelty in Arkansas in 1978 when William Clinton first took office. Former governors Rockefeller, Pryor, and Bumpers had all worked on education reform in the state during the 1960s and 1970s (Durning, 1991), and education “reform” of a decidedly different sort defined the earlier career of Governor Faubus (Allen, 1991). But it was not until a 1978 report (the *Alexander Report*, named after its lead author) crystallized ongoing criticisms of the quality of the Arkansas education system – identifying inadequate spending as a primary reason for substandard education in the state – that a viable policy window was opened to enact systemic changes. Among other problems, the report noted that Arkansas remained last in teacher salaries and was spending about half of the national per-pupil expenditure average (Durning, 1991).⁹⁴ Motivation and movement, however, are two different things; transforming the criticisms into actions would be no easy task in a state that by many standards had been mired in educational malaise for generations.

Though most Southern states made valid claims to suffering under the weight of higher-than-average amounts of poverty and lack of education, Arkansas in the early 1980s was a clear front-runner in most respects. Per-capita income ranged between 47th and 49th in those years, half of the population lived in very rural communities, and more

⁹³ Acts 445 (Regular Session) and 34 (1st Extraordinary Session), respectively; other related acts are noted below.

⁹⁴ At one point, the *Report* goes so far as to say that ““from an educational standpoint, the average child in Arkansas would be much better off attending the public schools of almost any other state in the country”” (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 73).

than 40 percent of the adult population had not graduated from high school. In addition, Arkansas was last in education spending per student, teacher salaries, and percentage of college graduates, and hundreds of the state's high schools did not offer such basics as physics (54 percent), advanced biology, foreign language (47 percent each), chemistry (32 percent), or advanced math (35 percent; Blumenstyk, 1992, April 29; Osborne, 1992).

Unlike many other states at the time (but similar to several other Southern states), the Arkansas legislature was in the habit of supplying the clear majority of funds for education (59.8 percent in 1980-1981 and 60.8 percent in 1984-1985), but it also relied more heavily on federal funds than did most states, with 14.6 percent of the total education budget comprised of federal funds in 1980-1981. Federal education funding reduction after the advent of Reagan's New Federalism movement was notable (\$9 million less annually via ECIA than in the pre-Reagan years), but hardly insurmountable, and Arkansas responded quickly with several revenue-raising measures that covered the shortage ten-fold. Even after the full impact of the Reagan Devolution, federal support still reached 10.5 percent in 1984-1985 (Veasey, 1988).

Early attempts at education reform. The invective of the *Alexander Report* was an important step toward stirring the state to overcome these hurdles, but perhaps even more important was an August 1983 state Supreme Court ruling, *Alma v. Dupree*, which struck down the state's formula for financing schools (Blumenstyk, 1992, April 29; Caldwell, 1983, September 7; Fulk, September 28, 1983; Pipho, 1986). The original reason for the state Supreme Court case was the existence of what some referred to as "phantom students," or the fact that, no matter how small a school system was, it was supported by the state as if it had at least 360 students. The rationale was that smaller

districts had higher per-pupil administrative expenses and should be compensated in some way. In addition, school systems could not be funded less than they were in the previous year based on shrinking student enrollment. All told, the total number of funded phantom students in 1983 was around 45,000 at a cost of almost \$34 million a year (Durning, 1991). As a result of the ruling, Arkansas moved from a multiple-program funding scheme to a pupil-weighted foundation program, or a program in which the state set both a minimum expenditure level per student per district as well as a minimum district tax rate, and then made up the difference between the minimum expenditure level and what the district was able to raise. The state required each district to spend no less than 70 percent of the new funds on teacher raises (Augenblick, 1986).⁹⁵

The Arkansas education reform effort is often mistakenly tied to the publication in spring 1983 of *A Nation at Risk* (cf. Durning, 1991; Ritter, 2005), but it is important to note that Clinton was working to enact education reform legislation even at the start of his gubernatorial career in 1978. Clinton ran in both 1978 and 1982 on an education reform agenda that linked such reform to economic prosperity (Durning, 1991; Thomas, 1992), and in his first term, Clinton managed to increase education spending by around 40 percent, including spending on teacher salary raises and benefits, as well as on the establishment of the Governor's School for Gifted and Talented Students, a special summer program at Hendrix College. He also signed an executive initiative that recognized gifted students and introduced standardized testing requirements for both teachers and students (Allen, 1991; Osborne, 1992). At the same time, the Arkansas Education Association proposed an Equal Educational Opportunity Act, which would

⁹⁵ Of the six states in this study, Arkansas was the only one under a court order to re-frame its financing scheme.

have established uniform standards for all public schools. However, the Act was never passed (Allen, 1991), and Clinton lost his re-election bid in 1980, largely due to the vast number of programs and policies he pushed in a short time period, which more often ended up alienating rather than winning over many constituents (Osborne, 1992; Thomas, 1992).⁹⁶ It was a lesson that several other Southern education governors (perhaps most notably Graham; see below) would learn as well.

Rebooting and reframing. Clinton has characterized his approach to governance as a “fusion of . . . conservative and liberal impulses,” which he defines as “the rise of a progressive liberal agenda that is married to [an] emphasis . . . on market solutions to problems and the importance of individual responsibility” (quoted in Newman, 1990), a characterization that resembles not a little Luebke’s (1998) Modernizer category. Clinton’s Modernizer approach is readily apparent in many aspects of his push for education reform in Arkansas.

Clinton was re-elected in 1982,⁹⁷ and he appointed wife Hillary to chair the newly-formed Arkansas Education Standards Committee shortly thereafter in 1983 (Ritter, 2005).⁹⁸ The establishment of the Education Standards Committee came about as a result of a failed proposal from Senator Max Howell to consolidate districts. Though he might have been a champion of such a proposal during his first term, Clinton’s loss in 1980 had tempered his approach to education reform during the opening months of his

⁹⁶ Allen (1991) notes, for example, that the establishment of the arts-heavy Governor’s School eventually led to charges of liberalism.

⁹⁷ Governor Winter, who was no stranger to losing gubernatorial elections, lent Clinton a hand with his 1982 campaign (Thomas, 1992).

⁹⁸ Said Clinton of this appointment, “This guarantees that I will have a person who is closer to me than anyone else overseeing a project that is more important to me than anything else. I don’t know if it’s a politically wise move, but it’s the right thing to do” (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 147).

second term, and he chose instead to back a more palatable and milder education reform: a \$600 teacher pay raise.⁹⁹ The result of the Howell proposal was an agreement to form the Education Standards Committee, which was intended to recommend new standards to the state Department of Education and to force non-compliant districts to consolidate (Durning, 1991). The Committee began its deliberations by essentially going on tour, visiting every one of Arkansas' 75 counties to drum up support for education reform (Rosenthal, 1990).¹⁰⁰ In its final report,¹⁰¹ the Committee eventually recommended requiring kindergarten for all students, establishing promotional gates, raising high school graduation requirements (from 16 to 20 Carnegie units, minimum), sanctioning districts (via forced consolidation¹⁰² and other means) that did not comply by 1987, establishing a higher legal dropout age (16 from 15), and extending the school year. Other specifics included maximum pupil-teacher ratios in elementary grades, better counseling services at the elementary level, and a standard elementary curriculum. At the time, the commission estimated the total annual additional cost to be about \$185 million, with \$30 to \$35 million going to universities (Caldwell, 1983, September 7).

⁹⁹ Other notable education legislation that passed in 1982 included: Act 375, which required all districts to *offer* kindergarten; Act 14, which allowed students to take courses in other districts if their home districts did not offer them; and the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act (Allen, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ Hillary Clinton estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 citizens attended the meetings in all. She credits the passage of ERA in Mississippi the previous year with convincing Arkansans that something could be done: ““At the time we began our work, Mississippi had just passed its reform act, and I would say, “My gosh, even Mississippi’s just raised taxes for education.” People began to realize that something could be done for change because someone whom they could relate to had done it”” (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 80).

¹⁰¹ Released September 6, 1983 (Allen, 1991).

¹⁰² With 382 school districts (Allen, 1991), Arkansas was a prime candidate for consolidation, if for no other reason than as a cost-saving measure; as it turns out, the proposed merger coercion was not entirely necessary. Between 1983 and 1990, thirty-two districts voluntarily consolidated (Johns, 1991).

During a televised address on September 19th, Clinton called a special session of the legislature to consider the plan, along with his proposed sales tax increase from 3 percent to 4 percent to cover the costs. He endorsed the recommendations of his wife's Committee and also added new recommendations, such as a call for merit pay experiments and a specific requirement for all currently-licensed teachers who had not previously taken it to take and meet a predetermined cutoff score on the National Teacher Examination by 1987. All new teachers already were required to take the test, but many older teachers had not done so (Durning, 1991; Fulk, 1983, September 28). Earlier as lieutenant governor, North Carolina governor Jim Hunt had backed a similar measure (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

The pillars of the full proposed reform bill (summarized from Arkansas Department of Education, 2006; Fulk, 1983, September 28; Osborne, 1992) included:

1. Increased accreditation standards;
2. Increased teacher standards;
3. Increased teacher salaries;
4. Experimentation with performance pay for teachers;
5. Longer school days and a longer school year (an additional five days);
6. Improved curricula (expanded vocational/technical options, computer education, and gifted and talented programs);
7. Mandatory kindergarten;
8. Across-the-board improvements to the state's university system; and
9. Provisions for consolidating or annexing school districts that by 1987 still remained out of compliance with the new standards.

Specific curriculum offerings requirements included chemistry, physics, advanced math, computer science, foreign languages, global studies, fine arts, and instrumental music. In compliance with the Committee's earlier recommendations, the bill also required smaller classes, a longer school year, higher graduation requirements and promotion standards, and universal kindergarten, as well as an increase in the legal dropout age from 15 to 16 (Osborne, 1992). In addition, Act 89 required students to be held in eighth grade until they passed a competency test, and Act 76 created a competency testing program for teachers (Pipho, 1986). The teacher competency testing component was the first such measure in the nation, followed in 1986 by a similar requirement in Texas (Veasey, 1988).

But Clinton's strategy had to go deeper than simply calling the special session. As was the case with several other Southern governors, the Arkansas legislature was not often an ally in Clinton's reform efforts – *Arkansas Democrat* editor John Robert Starr once declared, "He labors under the delusion that the legislators love him. They do not. They despise him. They grin in his face and shake his hand and pat him on the back, but they don't like him. They have not liked him" (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 191) – and Clinton had to rely on several of the strategies common to the other Southern governors who were pushing education reform through recalcitrant legislatures at the same time. The run-up to the special session included three summer months of what Clinton referred to as a "listening phase," during which he and the Committee sought public and legislative input. This phase was followed by an all-out election-style campaign designed to drum up public support for the ensuing tax increase proposal. Clinton's office

established the Arkansas Partners in Education (APE) and the Blue Ribbon Committee,¹⁰³ both of which were intended to promote the reform efforts. APE was in charge of a media blitz, and the Blue Ribbon Committee was responsible for a mass mailing to Arkansans to ask for their support (Durning, 1991).¹⁰⁴ The symbolic rhetoric also increased, with Clinton calling the opportunities offered by the session a “magic moment,” and characterizing the proposal as “the most important thing I’ve ever tried to do It’s more important to me personally than whatever political consequences will come of it. . . . It’s something that’s worth putting myself and whatever career I might have on the line for” (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 155).¹⁰⁵ And, like his gubernatorial colleagues in other Southern states, he connected his state’s economic health to the health of the schools,¹⁰⁶ asking at one point, ““Do you believe that God meant for us to drag up the rear in the nation’s economy forever?”” (quoted in Osborne, 1988, p. 94). The price tag for these efforts was about \$130,000, all privately funded, primarily by the business

¹⁰³ The blue ribbons were to be worn by legislators as an indication of their support for the education reform bill, but during the televised speech in which Clinton called the Special Session, only about a dozen legislators could be seen wearing the ribbons (Allen, 1991).

¹⁰⁴ In all, 26,000 brochures were mailed, with hundreds more handed out at numerous public venues (Allen, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ Clinton previously had experimented with alternative means for spreading his message at the start of his first term as well, but his targets then were legislators themselves. In 1979, he provided the legislature with a forty-eight-page booklet that not only outlined his legislative agenda but also spelled out for them how state government financing worked (Allen, 1991). Though no direct evidence suggests so, it seems feasible that such a presumptuous move could have had a negative impact on the reactions of some legislators to his agenda.

¹⁰⁶ The education-economy link was not manufactured merely for the sake of passing QEA but continued to feature prominently in his education reform stump speeches long after passage of QEA. At an Education Commission of the States-sponsored Teacher Education Forum in 1986, Clinton argued that better teaching led to better students, and that better students were essential to the nation’s economic health. As Education Commission of the States chair that same year, he noted, “This nation must either work toward some sort of high-wage, high-technology, innovative economy – or ask each succeeding generation to accept a lower standard of living An advanced economy will demand more creativity, more mental flexibility, and more capacity to adapt to rapidly changing work requirements and job structures” (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 184).

community (Allen, 1991).¹⁰⁷ In the end, the public relations efforts raised public support for a tax increase to about 63 percent (Durning, 1991).¹⁰⁸ The campaign culminated in Hillary Clinton's press conference on the day after Labor Day and Governor Clinton's September 19th public address on television, and the plan as outlined in that speech became the blueprint for the eventual bill (Durning, 1991; Thomas, 1992).

The 1983 special session convened on October 4th. Durning (1991) characterized the debates as occurring in three phases: a protracted fight over the new funding formula, a short but acrimonious tussle over teacher testing, and the tax increase debate. Fully aware of the consternation his teacher testing component would cause to groups like the Arkansas Education Association, Clinton only tipped them off about that part of the proposal an hour before he went public with it during the televised speech in which he called the Special Session. Such a move was dangerous, since the AEA consistently was ranked as one of the most effective lobbying organizations in the state. As predicted, the bill's primary opponent was the AEA, which counter-proposed a more qualitative evaluation process.¹⁰⁹ The NEA also joined the fray, publicly condemning Clinton and calling for his party to bring pressure to bear on him to back off (Fulk, 1983, September 28; Osborne, 1992), but public sentiment in favor of teacher testing won the day, not only for the issue itself but also for Clinton politically, who was seen as taking the "right" side

¹⁰⁷ Thomas (1992), citing Smith (1985), estimates the figure was closer to \$500,000.

¹⁰⁸ Democratic Party chairperson Betsey Wright noted: "We bought radio ads, newspaper ads, TV ads; we did a lot of direct mail across the state. We had people doing postcard and letters to their legislators. We had them wearing the blue ribbons that were little manageable ways to be involved and stand up and rallied meetings across the state – all meant to snowball into the beginning of the legislative session so that by the time those legislators convened, each of them had a constituency in their district begging them to raise their taxes for education [I]t happened because the people brought it to the legislature. The legislature did not do it To get it done was very well planned campaign" (quoted in Allen, 1991, pp. 164-165).

¹⁰⁹ AEA President Peggy Nabors said of the proposal, "We the teachers are being laid on the altar of sacrifice for political expedience" (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 156).

of a controversial issue. The AEA had enough support to muster a filibuster in the Senate, but the Clinton team organized a call-in with a goal of ensuring that the first four calls received by crucial senators after the weekend layoff were from supporters of the testing provision (Durning, 1991; Fulk, 1983, September 28).¹¹⁰ Clinton also took a major gamble by threatening to kill his own sales tax increase bill, which, among other things, would leave teacher without promised raises (Allen, 1991; Durning, 1991).

In the end, more than one hundred education reform bills passed into law (Thomas, 1992), headed up by Act 445, the Quality Education Act of 1983 (Arkansas Department of Education, 2006).¹¹¹ Adopted proposals included the student testing requirement component, an increase in the legal dropout age to an even-higher-than-recommended 17, and the increase in the length of the school day (Durning, 1991).¹¹² In addition to the K-12 reforms, the final package also directed \$32 million to colleges and universities for new science and engineering facilities, an additional \$3.4 million for selected college improvements, \$2.2 million additional dollars for student loan programs, and \$800,000 for the creation of a new merit scholars program (Krotseng, 1987). Rejected proposals included an attempt to lower the mandatory school age to six, making kindergarten mandatory (though kindergarten was required to be universally available), and lengthening the school year. Clinton's compromise for eliminating entirely the phantom student funding was to identify twelve special schools that would continue to

¹¹⁰ A union-sponsored repeal effort also surfaced in 1985, passing in the House but dying in the Senate after another Clinton-orchestrated spree of call-ins in support of the reforms (Osborne, 1992).

¹¹¹ The bill passed the Senate on October 27 and, after the AEA-sponsored Senate filibuster dissolved, the House on October 31; the tax increase portion passed on November 4; the Special Session adjourned on November 10 (Allen, 1991).

¹¹² A school accreditations component of the Act was adopted by the State Board of Education in February 1984 (Johns, 1991).

receive unique funding.¹¹³ Passage came at the end of the 38-day special session. Clinton received a considerable amount of praise from supporters and critics alike for his Special Session work, and he even earned praise from the usually neutral-to-unsupportive *Arkansas Democrat*¹¹⁴ (Durning, 1991).

Though passed in support of the Quality Education Act (QEA), the sales tax increase was actually a part of Act 34 of the First Extraordinary Session, the School Finance Act of 1983. The Act provided foundational funding for all school systems based on a formula, and the funding was paid for by a one-cent increase in the state sales tax, which generated an additional \$107.4 million by the 1984-1985 school year.¹¹⁵ Clinton insisted that one quarter of the revenues from the tax be reserved for higher education funding (Arkansas Department of Education, 2006; Blumenstyk, 1992, April 29; Veasey, 1988). The provisions of the QEA were paid for not only by the sought-after sales tax increase – the first in 26 years, by Clinton’s reckoning – but also by millage increases in two-thirds of the school districts.¹¹⁶ In addition, higher education institutions were granted the power to issue revenue bonds (Durning, 1991; Hayden, 1986). Durning (1991) contends that the need for a change in education funding strategies as a result of the *Alma v. Dupree* case in 1983 was the catalyst Governor Clinton needed when he finally introduce these long-promised tax increases. The Court’s decision, Durning argues, coupled with recent recovery from recession, publications like *A Nation at Risk*,

¹¹³ The compromise ended three weeks of debate on October 26th, 1983 (Durning, 1991).

¹¹⁴ Not surprisingly, teachers groups remained less than ecstatic (Durning, 1991).

¹¹⁵ The new revenue amounted to a 41 percent increase in state aid over a two-year period (Augenblick, 1986); in September 1983, the Clinton Administration had predicted an increase in revenue of about \$150 million from the increase (Fulk, 1983, September 28).

¹¹⁶ However, the final version of the tax did not include a Clinton-supported House amendment that would have refunded poorer families for the tax increase on food.

and increased exposure of education problems in the state, provided Clinton with the political cover he would need to convince legislators to vote in favor of a tax increase.¹¹⁷

Clinton also tried to pass two other taxes – a corporate income tax increase of one penny for larger businesses and an increase on the severance tax on natural gas – but both of these taxes failed after successful lobbying efforts from representatives of the poultry and gas industries and the state Chamber of Commerce (Durning, 1991; Fulk, 1983, September 28; Osborne, 1992).

Riding the wave. Clinton did not stop with passage of the 1983 reform acts but continued to push education legislation and tax increases (Blumenstyk, 1992, April 29; Osborne, 1992) and stave off new challenges to many of the measures of the acts, up until his departure for the White House in 1992 (Osborne, 1992).¹¹⁸ By 1988, Clinton's leadership had helped to raise state accreditation standards; increase the number of educators several thousand-fold, and triple the number of counselors in schools; establish near-universal access to computer science, physics, and advanced math classes; increase enrollment in foreign languages; and implement community involvement programs statewide. He also oversaw measurable increases in math and reading tests (Allen, 1991).

Like most of the other Southern education governors, Clinton also dedicated considerable time to working with other governors to take their education reform agendas to the national level, culminating in his contributions to the Charlottesville Conference

¹¹⁷ Budget formation in Arkansas is not exclusively in the hands of the governor. The governor recommends a budget to a Legislative Council, who in turn recommends their version of the budget to the full legislature (Rosenthal, 1990).

¹¹⁸ It should be noted, however, that in 1989 he was unsuccessful in his efforts to get the legislature to continue to fund many of the reforms, even though he called another special session that year to once again try to force the issue (Johns, 1991). In a report-card-like review of the Clinton governorship and its education efforts, the *Arkansas Times* magazine in 1990 attributed the loss to the work of one hard-lobbying Senator, Knox Nelson, and to the failure of an earlier bill that would have lowered the 75 percent super-majority required for passage of tax bills other than sales tax (Allen, 1991).

convened by the first President Bush in 1989. He often characterized the broader regional and national education reform work in the post-QEA era as the “second wave” of reform, and he frequently identified the lynchpin of that reform as the forging of a relationship between education and business: “The governors who have been most active in educational reform over the last five to ten years know that the key to success in the second wave of reform is to get those inside and outside the system to work in tandem”; “If we want to keep the American dream alive for our own people and preserve America’s role in the world, we must develop an excellent, continuously changing system for educating and training our people. To do that, we must build better partnerships between schools and businesses” (quoted in Allen, 1991, pp. 181, 185). Johns (1991) recounts one episode spanning only two or three days in December 1987 that perhaps captures best Clinton’s dual state- and national-level investment in education reform: After first releasing results of an Education Commission of the States survey on dropouts in Washington, D. C., he then flew down to Little Rock the next day to release a column on education in the *Arkansas Gazette* and also co-convene a two-day conference on schooling (*Schools for Arkansas’s Future: Restructuring for Higher Order Learning*). At one point (1986), he even enjoyed joint chairmanship of the Education Commission of the States and the National Governors’ Association – the first time that both organizations had been led by the same governor (Krotseng, 1987). Once arriving in Washington as President in 1993, one of his first appointments was of fellow former Southern education governor Richard Riley as Secretary of Education.

As the *Arkansas Times* once asserted, “[N]o governor in Arkansas’s history has forged as comprehensive a plan, worked as hard, or staked his political future as squarely on education as Bill Clinton” (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 231).

Robert Graham, the RAISE Bill,¹¹⁹ and Related Acts – Florida

Florida education history and background. Unlike many of the other states in this study, Florida experienced a long history of Great Society education reform prior to the passage of the RAISE bill (White, 1981), and the Florida legislature had a reputation for being activist, a reputation that extended back to at least the early 1970s (Fusarelli, 2002), aided in part by a court-ordered reapportionment in 1967 that helped to break up a post-war rural Democratic stranglehold on the legislature. Consequently, the Florida governorship traditionally was weak by comparison, even though the governor’s formal powers were stronger than those of many other Southern governorships at the time (see Table 4.1), in part because gubernatorial decision-making was monitored and checked by a governing cabinet of elected officials (Starobin, 1984). Florida governors had attempted, however, to assert some control over education policy making before the education reform period of the 1980s. For example, Governor Claude Kirk called the first special session for the purpose of discussing education in 1968 in an effort to head off an impending teacher strike sparked by low wages (White, 1981).¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ RAISE was the name given to the education reform bill developed by Senate President Curtis Peterson in response to Graham’s education reform proposals (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986)

¹²⁰ An important casualty of that crisis was the Florida Education Association (FEA), which was unsatisfied with the results of the special session and went on strike again to force another special session to consider raising local millage limits. Public and media condemnation of the FEA’s militant tactics “destroyed the school lobby” and led to the defection of thousands of Florida teachers and administrators from the organization (White, 1981, p. 244).

Additional reforms followed in steady order. Standardized testing for school accountability became a reality in 1971 with the founding of the legislatively-sponsored, back-to-basics Florida Accountability in Education Program. State centralization of education was further solidified in 1973 with the advent of the Florida Education Finance Program, which was designed to equalize educational opportunity across the state (White, 1981). More significant than the reforms themselves might have been the added power and prestige that the reforms brought to the legislature, which transformed from an education policy also-ran, well behind the FEA and the state Department of Education, into a policy leader (Starobin, 1984). The legislature followed up by making changes to early childhood education and implementing some degree of basic skills curricula in 1973, and in 1976, it passed the Accountability Act, followed in 1977 by a compensatory education act (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986). Finally, a mandatory teacher competency test for initially licensing teachers came online in 1980 (White, 1981).

It is always important to bear in mind that Florida has a relatively light educational burden, compared to other states, because of the high number of elderly residents (and thus a low number of children), though this is counterbalanced to some degree by the disproportionate number of students who do not speak English or speak English as a second language. In addition, Florida has long been host to a large number of transplants and absentee property owners, who typically have less concern about the education of native Floridians (K. Alexander, 1986). Finally, there is no personal income tax, and Florida traditionally has been a very anti-tax state. As a result, spending on education traditionally has been low, reaching only \$565 per resident at the time of Governor Graham's reforms, good enough only for 45th among all states (K. Alexander,

1986; Starobin, 1984). Though it is difficult to establish a direct connection between low per-capita spending and education quality, it is worth noting that in the decade leading up to the reforms of 1983, Florida's average SAT score fell from 937 in 1972 to 893 in 1982 (K. Alexander, 1986).

The low spending pattern also was evident in sub-par changes in teacher compensation, even relative to other government jobs in the state. Teacher salaries in Florida did not rise at the same rate as other state government job salaries between fiscal 1972 and fiscal 1982: While other state jobs saw an up-tick of 99.7 percent, teacher salaries rose only 87.8 percent, possibly contributing to a decline in the level of quality of teacher candidates, as measured by SAT scores (which dropped for these candidates from 59 points below the state average in 1973 to 82 points below the state average in 1983) (K. Alexander, 1986).

Charting a path to education reform. It was into this education environment that Governor Graham was elected in 1978 (Fusarelli, 2002), and, as was true of governors in many other Southern states that enacted reform between 1982 and 1985, Graham's reform efforts began *before* the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (K. Alexander, 1986). While a state legislator, he had been among the "new breed" of legislators that helped to transform the legislature's role in education policy-making in the 1970s (Starobin, 1984), and he had developed a reputation as a strong advocate for education and had chaired the Senate Education Committee (Rosenthal, 1990), which suggests to some degree that his election to the governorship was in part an indication of the public's

desire to see that advocacy continue statewide.¹²¹ Soon after his election, Graham chaired both the Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Board (K. Alexander, 1986). Before embarking on the massive reform push in 1983, Graham also saw through an increase in per-pupil funding for community colleges, as well as the development of a special fund for the improvement of the state's universities (Krotseng, 1987).

Not long after taking office, Graham became aware of the limited degree to which a governor in Florida could impact education without first generating wide public support (K. Alexander, 1986). For instance, Florida's government includes six cabinet-level positions that are popularly elected, instead of being gubernatorially appointed, and collectively they have a good deal of policy-making authority, thus limiting the governor's direct exercise of power (Fusarelli, 2002). Perhaps in an effort to change the education policy power dynamics in the state, Governor Graham formed the Governor's Commission on Secondary Schools in October of 1981, whose twelve members included representatives from the legislature, the business community, colleges, administrators, and teachers' unions (K. Alexander, 1986). Though the commission may have been formed largely in response to pressure from business leaders, Fusarelli (2002) also believes that Graham used the Commission as a mouthpiece for encouraging public support for his reforms.

The Commission issued a blistering report in 1982 (finalized in January, 1983), a year after its inception, and for the most part laid the blame for educational outcomes on the public schools; needless to say, the report's findings were not met with open arms by

¹²¹ In addition, upon election to the governorship, Graham joined forces with Speaker of the House Lee Moffit and Senate President *pro tem* Curtis Peterson to choose a chair for the education committee who they knew would support their own objectives (Rosenthal, 1990).

the larger Florida education community, and even Graham's office was reluctant to back it entirely. The commission's recommendations included increasing the length of the school day and year, placing more emphasis on math, science, and foreign languages, undertaking a career-oriented revamping of the state's vocational programs, and setting statewide high school graduation requirements (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986).

Simultaneous with the work of his committee, and perhaps in an effort to smooth feathers ruffled by the tone of the report, Graham formally initiated a public campaign for education reform in late 1982, delivering speeches and holding press conferences to promote his vision for education. His initial goals were: improvement of math, science, and technology programs; improvement of coordination between education and industry, especially high-tech industry; reduction of student-teacher ratios, K-16; provision of more special programs beyond the basics at all levels of education; and funding sufficient enough to minimize remediation at the community college and early university levels. Graham described these goals as being reachable via two rails: The first entailed substantive improvements in education quality, along with careful evaluation via annual reports (including reports on student test scores, pupil-teacher ratios, and teacher qualifications) to the State Board of Education; the second entailed ensuring that the state provided enough funding to reach those goals. Consequently, his 1983 budget included: higher per-pupil expenditures; higher teachers' salaries; funding for math, science, and technology programs (summer enrichment programs, after-school tutorials, adjunct faculty programs, in-service training for teachers, and computer summer camps); textbooks; and funding to improve curriculum standards (K. Alexander, 1986).

In 1983, the governor's office also advanced the beginnings of a teacher career ladder program, but one that was not a merit pay program. While the idea had not been screened by education groups or the public, there had been substantial coverage of Alexander's struggles to pass a similar provision in Tennessee (L. Alexander, 1986a). Before presenting his career ladder plan to the legislature in 1983, Graham and his staff worked closely with representatives of the local NEA and AFT chapters, starting in March, to forge an agreement about a plan that they could live with. Graham presented the resultant plan to the legislature in May.

Another of Graham's goals was to pass a package that would move Florida into the top quartile nationally in both per-student spending and teacher pay, a move that would require over \$866 million new dollars between 1983 and 1985 (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986; Fusarelli, 2002). He hoped to achieve this in part by raising the required local tax rate from 3.878 to 4.385 mills, with a local option to raise it an additional 1.6 mills (K. Alexander, 1986).

The Florida reform effort was distinctly different from the other states in this study in several ways. First of all, the Florida reforms were presented in several separate bills, though the largest and most influential clearly was SB 6B (Pipho, 1986).¹²² Second, the legislature also took up the education reform charge, in part due to the efforts of Graham, but also due to the (often contradictory) efforts of President *pro tem* Curtis Peterson and Speaker of the House Lee Moffit (Starobin, 1984). The House and Senate both drew up plans, but the more comprehensive Senate plan (SB 6B), which went under the name "Raise Achievement in Secondary Education" (RAISE) and echoed many of

¹²² Graham's office did not dictate the form or number of bills. Of the governors in this study, only Governor Riley of South Carolina (see below) explicitly chose to divide his reform package into separate provisions.

Graham's goals, received more attention. The Senate plan, however, did not provide enough funding to carry out the proposed reforms. The House then followed suit by proposing a plan and passing a bill that *would* provide more funding, to the tune of a two percent increase in the corporate income tax.¹²³ Eventually, however, both sets of plans diverged from each other, diverged from Graham's original version, and got bogged down in a tug-of-war between the anti-tax Senate, the pro-corporate-tax House, and the powerful but capricious Associated Industries (business) lobby (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986).

As a result, the reforms originally were turned down by the legislature in the spring due to costs (McGrath, 1983) and due to the House-Senate-business lobby squabble, but there were other important factors as well. According to some observers (Rosenthal, 1990), part of the reason for the lack of coordination between the legislature and the governor's office was that Governor Graham may not have made the most of his previous legislative experience in his dealings with the legislature. One Chief of Staff suggested that Graham's tendency toward independence when he served in the legislature, along with the fact that he had never served on the legislature's leadership team, may have contributed to the coordination issues. Rosenthal (1990) describes Graham's style as being more "executive" or confrontational in nature than it was

¹²³ The battle over the two percent increase in the corporate tax rate was intense (Fusarelli, 2002). The business community initially was on board, having been promised that the House would support a merit pay plan. Even though the Speaker continued to support a merit pay plan, the business lobby eventually withdrew their support for the corporate income tax raise. The House eventually passed a \$500 million plan on May 11, 1983, that no longer included the merit pay provision, which was apparently enough to egg the business lobby to re-assert their support, given the inclusion of a merit pay plan. The Speaker then presented another plan on May 15 that included a merit pay provision. The story does not end there. Having gotten the concession, the business lobby then demanded not only a merit pay system but also a broader performance pay system that included teacher termination if a teacher under-performed. The Speaker rejected the new proposal, and the House approved the two percent corporate income tax proposal and original merit pay plan, even though the Senate was likely to reject it, being staunchly anti-tax (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986).

“legislative” or compromise-oriented. He was also perceived by some legislators as having a tendency to waver, and they even went so far as to give him the nickname “Governor Jell-o.” Adding to his troubles was his very ambitious first-term legislative agenda, which included over fifty different proposals. By the end of the third full legislative session during his first term, his accomplishments were few and far between (Starobin, 1984).

In addition, Graham’s threatened veto of any bill that did not provide the estimated \$300 million additional dollars necessary to fund the programs, as well as his reluctance to call for an extended legislative session (as most of his contemporaries in other states had done) likely were detrimental. Finally, though important groundwork for increasing the potential significance of a governor’s proposed budget had been laid earlier in 1979 – when the governor’s budget staff was moved from the Department of Administration to the governor’s Executive Office and was named the Office of Planning and Budgeting – the impact of new budget-making arrangements was neutered somewhat by mistakes early in the life of the Office. At the beginning of his first term, Governor Graham’s staff submitted a program-based budget that was long on arithmetic errors and short on details. The legislature’s reaction was to pass a statute that, among other things, mandated the content and format of subsequent budget proposals while also directing agencies to submit assessments of their needs directly to the legislature, rather than relying exclusively on the governor’s budget proposal formulation, thus giving legislative staffs several weeks’ lead time to assess budget requests before the governor submitted the formal budget proposal. The same statute (Chapter 216) also increased legislative oversight of formerly gubernatorially-approved transfers of funds from one

appropriations category to another in a given agency (Grizzle, 1991). Thus, the final appropriation reflected merely a continuation of previous budgets (K. Alexander, 1986).

Putting the pieces together. Despite his hesitations, and even though the end of the fiscal year was approaching and the legislature had already been extended to June 24th, Graham immediately called for a three-day special session (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986). It was at this point that Graham won the Press to his side,¹²⁴ as they supported his measures and accused the legislature of dragging their heels on education reform. Graham took the fight public again, flying to seven different locations to once again stir the public into action. With the Press now on his side, he vetoed the \$1.9 billion public schools portion of the legislature's budget and generated enough support to suppress any threat of an override of his veto (Starobin, 1984). With public opinion and the Press behind him, Graham moved quickly to negotiate a new deal with the legislative leadership before the two-day special session was to open on July 12th, on which day the budget finally passed (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986). Fusarelli (2002) argues that the existence of an activist legislature and the power of their respective heads meant that Graham was dependent upon the Speaker and the President *pro tem* for the political muscle to get his reforms through. The new package would include increasing appropriations over a number of years, new and improved math and science curricula, a merit pay plan, a lengthened school day, and state-mandated curricula (K. Alexander, 1986). It also included new revenue sources. Graham revised the original proposal to include new taxes on liquor and corporate profits earned abroad – so-called multinational unitary taxes – taxes that he estimated would bring in an additional \$100 million. This

¹²⁴ According to K. Alexander (1986); Starobin (1984) identifies tentative Press support much earlier in the session.

last was negotiated in private, leaving the business lobby little time to work against it (Starobin, 1984; K. Alexander, 1986; McGrath, 1983). Taxes for the final reform package weighed in at a compromise level of \$228 million (McGrath, 1983; Starobin, 1984).

The reform package (summarized from Fusarelli, 2002; McGrath, 1983; Piphoo, 1986) included:

1. Tougher student graduation requirements (Krotseng [1987] calls them some of the most rigorous in the nation);
2. Tougher academic standards, apparently for grades 9-12 (Piphoo, 1986);
3. A planned phase-out for all post-secondary remediation programs by 1990;
4. An improved accountability system;
5. A state-mandated curriculum;
6. An increase in funding for a writing skills program;
7. A master teacher (career ladder) program;
8. An increase in the course requirements for teacher certification;
9. A visiting scholar program to bring new teachers into the schools;
10. Summer institutes for teachers;
11. The creation of 28 regional coordinating councils for vocational education;
12. An increase in the number of computers in schools;
13. Longer school days;
14. Teacher raises;
15. A merit-pay provision (though it was never fully ironed out by the Quality Educational Instructional Incentives Council [K. Alexander, 1986]; see below);

16. New science equipment; and

17. Bonuses for math and science teacher recruitment.

Macmillan (1991) posits that the primary motivating factor for Graham (and perhaps for all governors) for including many of these provisions was the belief that educational opportunity was not the same across the state. In other words, a core value, at least behind the *intent* of the Florida reforms, was *equity*.

Apparently despite Graham's seemingly successful earlier work to bring them on board (K. Alexander, 1986), the final version of the career-ladder component was opposed by Florida's two major teachers' unions (Fusarelli, 2002). To allay some of the concerns, the legislature and the governor together agreed to form a commission – the Quality Educational Instructional Incentives Council, made up of business leaders, school union leaders, and school administrators – which was tasked with figuring out how to structure and administer the program. The commission proved to be ineffective, and Graham eventually had to intercede, getting members of his staff and of the Department of Education to help the commission come to resolution, which it finally did in early 1984, but only on the issue of the master teacher program. Merit pay eventually died, being replaced by a “merit school plan” instead (K. Alexander, 1986).¹²⁵

In the end, it took one extended session and two special sessions to pass most of the elements of SB 6B and the supporting budget bill, and Graham was an active participant in that process (Pipho, 1986).

¹²⁵ It seems that, as was the case in Tennessee, the teachers' unions were so focused on the two aspects of the proposal that they did not like – merit pay and career ladder – that they were willing to allow the rest of the programs to fail, or so K. Alexander (1986) would have it, though she also argues that they worked on a compromise with the governor before he proposed these elements. She also says they “stripped their support away from both the governor and the [S]peaker at a time when their support could have a profound difference” (pp. 166-167), implying that whatever concessions they had made with the governor earlier on eventually were rescinded.

Checks and balances. A follow-up recommendation from the state education standards commission that would have required ongoing teacher testing was voted down in October 1983 by the state board of education, 6-1 (Graham cast the only vote in favor), before ever reaching the legislative stage (Aldrich, 1983, October 5). Had it passed, it would have pre-dated Clinton's Arkansas plan. Also, the merit-pay provision suffered a setback in 1984, when the Governor's Cabinet, acting as the State Board of Education, waived the teacher competency test requirement. Governor Graham and Education Commissioner Ralph Turlington opposed the Cabinet's decision; Attorney General Jim Smith fought against the merit-pay program (Breckenridge, 1984, May 9). Macmillan (1991) reports that the program was eventually abolished altogether.

Those setbacks notwithstanding, Graham's efforts largely met with success. His colleagues have noted that his successes in education reform had as much to do with his approach as with his politics: They described him as being warm and genuine, but also serious and business-like, and nearly all agreed that he was hard-working and knowledgeable (Starobin, 1984).

Richard Riley and the Education Improvement Act (EIA) – South Carolina

South Carolina education history and background. South Carolina's first post-*Brown* attempt at major education reform took place in 1977 with the passage of the Education Finance Act, which established a schedule for gradually introducing a baseline per-pupil expenditure level statewide. The final stage of expenditure equalization under the Act was scheduled for 1984, which, along with momentum from the passage of two other Acts during Governor Riley's first term – the Basic Skills Assessment Act of 1978 and the Educator Improvement Act of 1979 (Edgar, 1998; Kearney, 1987) – provided a

natural opportunity for Riley to introduce the possibility of more far-reaching statewide education reform (Riley & Peterson, 1995). After a false start in 1983, his efforts eventually culminated in the passage of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984.

As was the case in most of the reform-minded Southern states at the time, the impetus for reform in South Carolina was boosted by a sometimes-grim education landscape. South Carolina's SAT scores in the year before approval of the EIA were ranked 50th in the nation, per-pupil expenditures were 39th at \$1,937, and the graduation rate was 43rd at 65.1 percent (Euchner, 1983, November 9). In addition, contemporary publications like *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the multitude of other national and regional education reports placed the idea of education reform firmly in the minds of much of the South Carolina public (Kearney, 1987). Indeed, Governor Riley and Terry Peterson noted after EIA's passage that the bevy of reports gave many governors and legislators the ammunition they would need "both to mobilize public and political support for reform and also to develop a comprehensive framework for specific reform strategies" (Riley & Peterson, 1995, p. 74). Writing in 1991 to Wisconsin education leaders, Peterson even suggested that a majority of the nine factors that he and Riley believed contributed to the successful passage of the EIA were directly or indirectly related to these reports: their timing and timeliness; the credibility they lent to the idea of broad reform; the encouragement they gave for making reform comprehensive; their help in selling the reform idea to the public and the legislature; and their ability to maintain excitement and interest in education reform over the long term.

Such support was perhaps more necessary for a governor in South Carolina than for governors in any other Southern state at the time. By most measures (*e.g.*, Dometrius,

1979; Schlesinger, 1971), the South Carolina governorship ranks at or near the bottom among all governorships in terms of formal powers (Table 4.1). Though the governor of South Carolina does have a line-item and a general veto at her or his disposal, the office is neutered in almost all other executive respects. For example, the governor has appointment powers, but only for ten of 69 state agencies. More importantly, the governor's budget-making powers are shared with four other officials, an arrangement almost unheard of in other states. The budget is formed by a five-person Budget and Control Board (BCB), a commission that was created in 1933 and evolved into its present form in 1950. The governor chairs the BCB, but its members also include the House Ways and Means Committee chairperson and the chairperson of the Senate Finance Committee, as well as the independently-elected state treasurer and state comptroller general.¹²⁶ Despite its heavily legislature-dominated character, historically the budget recommendations of the BCB have been all but ignored by the legislature when it comes time to pass the actual budget. Thus, any governor-sponsored budget or budget item faces a steep uphill battle, as it must survive scrutiny by the BCB, the House Ways and Means committee, the Senate Finance committee, and the legislative budget conference committee (Whicker, 1991).

The first push for education reform. As noted earlier, EIA was not the state's first attempt at comprehensive education reform. It was preceded by a similar (though less ambitious) bill in 1983 that never made it out of committee (Hitt, 1986; Kearney, 1987). Among other criticisms, opponents claimed that the 1983 bill lacked financial details (Euchner, 1983, November 9), which, as has been noted in other sections of this study, is a recurring theme in many of the stories of early education reform failures in the

¹²⁶ The constitutionality of the Board was upheld by a 1977 state Supreme Court decision (Whicker, 1991).

South. EIA also was preceded by another related 1983 bill that proposed raising the state sales tax by one cent. The governor's office (with the help of some legislators) lobbied to designate at least one-third of the revenue so generated for education, but the bill ultimately failed (Riley & Peterson, 1995). It was in the aftermath of this series of failures that the language of EIA and strategies for its passage were formed.

Riley acknowledged that the specific education components of the EIA came from the state superintendent's office and not his own office (see Euchner, 1983, November 9, below), but the primary responsibility that fell to the governor's office – handling the political maneuvering (Riley, 1986b) – was an equally challenging task. Perhaps as a result of the unsuccessful earlier initiatives described above, EIA had little support at the start, with only a small minority of House members (and none of the House leadership) on record as being in favor of the Act (Hitt, 1986; Kearney, 1987).

An aggressive reframing. As a result, the Riley Administration completely revised its approach to gaining support for the Act. Hitt (1986) characterizes Riley's change of approach as “a textbook strategy for how to pass progressive legislation in conservative times,” and it included a re-framing of the passage of the reforms as an act of economic necessity, arguing that unskilled labor would be the death of business in the state. In addition, and like other governors in this study, Riley, along with Superintendent of Education Charlie G. Williams, appointed two blue-ribbon commissions – the Business-Education Partnership and the Committee on Financing Excellence – six months before the 1984 legislative session began,¹²⁷ tasking one with designing a program for excellence in education and figuring out how to fund it, and tasking the other with reviewing the recommendations of the first commission and figuring out how to

¹²⁷ Summer, 1983

make them politically palatable. Both commissions included legislators (including education and finance committee members) and educators, and the first included private sector representatives, while the second included business leaders and gubernatorial staff members (Euchner, 1983, November 9; Heady, 1984; Kearney, 1987; Riley, 1985; Thomas, 1992).

Both commissions were provided with copies of all of the major national and regional education reform reports available at the time, and the recommendations of the Committee on Financing Excellence largely came from ECS's *Action for Excellence*, which had just been published in 1983. Recommendations from other national reports, like *A Nation at Risk*, were then organized under the six broad goals gleaned from *Action for Excellence* (Riley & Peterson, 1995). The efforts of the two committees were centered on making Superintendent Williams' 41-point "Move to Quality" proposal a reality. Their original plan called for \$200 million in new spending the first year, with costs climbing to \$282 million by year five, the projected final year of the plan (Euchner, 1983, November 9). The two blue-ribbon commissions came up with eight "Action Recommendations" that were made up of 64 individual items, only three of which ended up being deleted (Kearney, 1987). The Action Recommendations for EIA included (paraphrased from Pipho, 1986; Riley, 1985; Riley, 1986b):

1. More rigorous academic standards;
2. A focus on basic skills;
3. Elevation of the teaching profession;
4. Improved leadership, management, and fiscal efficiency;
5. Quality control and rewards for productivity;

6. School-parent-community-business partnerships;
7. School building improvement; and
8. An increase in funding for education.

Some specifics included (Euchner, 1983, November 9; Hitt, 1986; Pipho, 1986):

- A pre-kindergarten program for developmentally-delayed 4-year-olds;
- Statewide provision of kindergarten, and mandatory kindergarten (later weakened by the House to allow parents to keep students out if they signed a waiver; S. C. House, 1984, March 28);
- A required college-prep track in high schools;
- Funding (\$60 million) for a remedial system designed to lower the dropout rate;
- An increase in the minimum high school graduation requirement from 18 to 20 units;
- Expanded AP offerings;
- New gifted and talented programs;
- A revamping of vocational programs to match growth in the high-tech and health care sectors;
- Increased attendance standards (minimum 6-hour instructional day, minimum 180-day school year, maximum 10 absences)
- A graduation-gateway basic skills testing program;
- A maximum student-teacher ratio of 30:1 in mathematics;
- Loans for students who want to teach in critical subject areas, and recruitment of teachers for those areas;
- Allowances for non-traditionally certified teachers to teach;

- Increased accreditation requirements for colleges of education;
- Classroom management workshops for teachers;
- Requirement of consistent rules for student behavior, as well as specification of consequences;
- Teacher salary increases (16 percent across-the-board) to bring the state in line with the average for the Southeast;
- School-level improvement incentive awards based on student achievement in basic skills, teacher attendance, student attendance, and family participation;
- Incentive programs for building-level staff members;
- Gubernatorial power to intervene at the school level on personnel matters in schools that fail to meet improvement goals (Hitt, 1986);
- Screening of principal candidates, and bonuses for effective principals;
- Parenting classes for all communities;
- An adopt-a-school program; and
- Property tax relief.

There was also an *accountability component*, embodied in the newly-formed Division of Public Accountability (Riley, 1986a), as well as provisions for remediation for special needs students; leadership training; allowance for state takeover of a district; and yearly assessment of progress under the reforms (Riley, 1985). Finally, the plan called for *ten pilot merit-pay programs* for school years 1984-85 and 1985-86 (Euchner, 1983, November 9; nine programs based on three different models were officially adopted [Hitt, 1986]). The merit-pay option was strongly opposed by the South Carolina Education Association (SCEA, the state branch of the NEA) and the Palmetto State

Teachers Association, but Riley was able to allay concerns with his inclusion of the across-the-board salary increase for all teachers (Hitt, 1986). In the end, the greatest area of conflict among committee members was whether to focus more on excellence (by supporting students with the most academic potential) or to focus on equity (by supporting students who struggle academically). The issue was resolved by dedicating funding to both elements, but with the caveat that funds for remedial programs would be reduced over the years (Euchner, 1983, November 9).

Riley followed the first unveiling of the proposal with a 30-minute televised address (Kearney, 1987). Efforts were also made to get public buy-in via seven local-level “seminars” or forums at which the public could ask questions and make suggestions. More than 13,000 people attended these forums, with another 15,000 to 20,000 reached by the daytime campaign efforts that accompanied the forums (Kearney, 1987; Riley, 1985; Riley, 1986b), echoing a strategy first used by Winter in Mississippi (Srinivasan, 1996). In fact, the final version of the EIA included a legislated role for public involvement in education, particularly from private sector leaders (Riley, 1986a). The seminars must have worked, as polls indicated that more than half of all South Carolina residents were aware of the reform effort, as compared to only about one-quarter of the residents in six other Southern states that had undergone similar reforms (Riley & Peterson, 1995, citing Howell, 1988). In addition, one poll conducted by the governor’s office indicated that about three-quarters of all voting South Carolinians would be *more* likely to support the re-election of legislators who raised taxes to support education (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986).

Nevertheless, as noted above, the House opened with most of its members opposed to the legislation, particularly because of the one-cent sales tax increase requirement. The bill did not even receive the two-thirds vote necessary from the Education Committee to move it on for debate and discussion, but was instead passed on to the Ways and Means Committee with changes (Kearney, 1987). But a one-two punch from Riley's governor's-office-backed young legislators and call-ins and visits from attendees at the seven forums turned the tide. Many citizens also were bused in to attend the legislative sessions (Kearney, 1987). Riley and Peterson (1995) note that grassroots lobbying and support groups were developed in each county and networked in an effort to help push for passage of the reforms. Riley himself made over 100 speeches in a span of only three weeks as part of the effort to raise public awareness and support (Hitt, 1986).

Another important strategy was one that might best be described as divide-and-conquer. Unlike Reagan's strategy for passing the potentially unpopular OBRA in 1981 (Conlan, 1998), and unlike the majority of the major education reform bills introduced across the South, EIA supporters chose instead to force individual votes on each provision, believing that a vote on an omnibus bill would end in defeat. This way, legislators who mostly just didn't support the tax increase would go on record as supporting various provisions of the Act (Hitt, 1986; Kearney, 1987). Even so, Riley never lost sight of the importance of passing the entire package, arguing after the fact that a key component of education reform was to propose comprehensive reforms, not piecemeal reforms (Riley, 1985).

The strategies worked, and EIA was passed by the legislature on June 22nd, 1984, and signed into law on June 28th, 1984 (Riley, 1985). To pay for EIA, the state passed the

1-cent sales tax increase (Hayden, 1986; Kearney, 1987; Riley, 1986b) that had been rejected a year earlier (Riley & Peterson, 1995), which raised about \$213 million annually (Pipho, 1986). However, the Act was not funded at full-formula levels by the legislature, which was able to blame lower-than-expected revenues for the failure to meet the formula targets (Whicker, 1991).

Taking it to the next level. Governor Riley was appointed by fellow education governor and newly-elected President William Clinton to succeed fellow education governor Lamar Alexander as U. S. Secretary of Education in 1993, a post he would hold for the entire Clinton presidency.

Appendix C: A Second-Wave Southern Education Governorship

Clinton often characterized the broader regional and national education reform work in the period following passage of his own education reform act and those of the other governors in this study as the “second wave” of reform.¹²⁸ As noted in chapter 2, candidate Southern governorships for inclusion in that category include Mark White of Texas, Charles Robb of Virginia, and Joe Frank Harris of Georgia. Harris’s education reform efforts are recounted here to provide some sense of the similarities and differences between the second-wave Southern education governorships and the governorships highlighted in this study.

Joe Frank Harris and QBE – Georgia

Georgia education history and background. There is a long history of education reform in Georgia, stretching back at least as far as Governor Joseph M. Terrell at the turn of the twentieth century (Hulett, 2006), but Governor Harris contends that most modern-era reforms largely were inadequate because they had been formulated almost exclusively by educators. He cites in particular the Georgia Minimum Foundation Education program (MFE, originally passed in the 1940s [Urban, 1991] and later updated under Governor Sanders) and the Adequate Plan for Education (APE, during Carter’s term; Harris, 1998). Both programs were intended to equalize funding across districts.

But at the time of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act, education reform was no longer exclusively the province of educators. At least two years before passage of QBE, seven banks in Atlanta – along with the Atlanta Federal Reserve branch – collaborated to establish a magnet school, Harper High, which benefited from bank

¹²⁸ Cuban (1988, quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 35) also has referred to this period as the “second order reform” period.

funds, but also from bank employees who taught financial courses, as well as from summer opportunities for internships for students (McGrath, 1983). The common theme of the business sector playing a role in education reform seen in so many other Southern states was alive and well in Georgia, too.

Reform passage. The Act got its title from a comment Harris made as a candidate: “A student in Georgia, a young person in Georgia, certainly has a right to a quality basic education” (Harris, 1998, p. 112). Harris began his quest to earn passage of the QBE by appointing a Governor’s Education Review Commission in January 1983, right after his inauguration, which was tasked with studying the state’s elementary and secondary education programs and making recommendations for improvements. The commission was thirty-five people strong, with input from over 1,000 contributors, and Harris claims the commission was made up of a cross-section of Georgians of all walks of life. The committee worked for nearly two years to craft its recommendations (Harris, 1986; Harris, 1998; Olson, 1984, November 21), with the first report – *Priorities for a Basic Quality Education* – coming in November of 1984 in preparation for the 1985 legislative season. The estimated price tag at the time for the first year of the proposed changes was an additional \$153 million, escalating to an additional \$506 million by FY 1989, not including projected added local expenses in 1989 of \$218 million (Olson, 1984, November 21). With such a high price tag, the Review Commission worked on developing a funding plan that would withstand judicial scrutiny (the state having learned clear lessons from the funding adequacy cases of the 1970s; Harris, 1998). A final report was due by the end of the year (Olson, 1984, November 21).

There was wide public ownership of the recommendations by virtue of the formation of the Coalition for Excellence in Education,¹²⁹ which was a group made up of representatives from business, education, and the general public (according to Harris) who lobbied the legislature in support of QBE (Cook, 2005; Harris, 1986). In addition, and as was the case in Mississippi and Florida, the Press – at least the Atlanta Press – was overwhelmingly supportive of the legislation (Urban, 1991). Harris presented the plan to the General Assembly on January 16th, 1985 (Harris, 1998), and the provisions of the resulting Act (summarized from Cook, 2005; Harris, 1987; Olson, 1985, March 6; Pipho, 1986) included:

1. A statewide core curriculum;
2. A new state funding formula for school systems;
3. Requirement of a local contribution to education “equivalent to a 5-mill property-tax rate” (Olson, 1985, March 6);
4. Minimum competency standards for teachers (required passage of a Teacher Certification Test, for instance, for all non-lifetime-licensed teachers every five years);
5. Additional teacher training opportunities;
6. An annual performance evaluation of all school employees, including superintendents;
7. A call for the State Board to develop a career ladder system for teachers and administrators;
8. Authorization for the State Board to develop remediation programs, with an emphasis on the elementary years;

¹²⁹ In his 1998 biography, Harris refers to the group as “Georgians for Excellence in Education” (p. 114).

9. Authorization for the State Board to push “in-school suspension solutions over suspensions and expulsions;
10. Educator pay raises (10% for teachers; 17% for administrators);
11. Starting pay increase from \$14,329 to \$16,000 (to match average starting salaries for graduates of the University of Georgia);
12. Universal full-day kindergarten by the 1987-1988 school year;
13. Several gifted & talented and special needs pilot programs;
14. An accountability system for schools and school systems that included both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests (administered in grades 1, 3, 6, 8, and 10);
15. A school readiness test, to be administered in kindergarten and early in first grade;
16. An expansion of the state student assessment program, with a focus on achievement; and
17. Establishment of teams of citizens, teacher-training professors, and educators to evaluate schools every five years and publish the results.¹³⁰

Harris recalls (1998) that the first negative reaction he got about the bill was from Speaker Tom Murphy himself, who had earlier championed the governor’s election bid. He recalls Murphy’s words as being, “I don’t know who you’ve been listening to, but if you think you’re going to pass that bunch of trash through this General Assembly, you’ve got another thought coming!” (quoted in Harris, 1998, p. 113). Harris contends that

¹³⁰ While almost all of the Commission’s 1984 reform recommendations were included in the final bill, a few – most notably beginning teacher salary raises of 17 percent, with an additional seven percent “catch-up” increase for administrators; new standards for compensatory education; and a requirement that superintendents be Board-appointed rather than elected (Olson, 1984, November 21) – were cut. Some critics who were not in favor of the bill in the first place were particularly harsh about the removal of the recommendation regarding superintendent appointments; see, for instance, Urban (1991), who claims it was removed in deference to resistance from rural politicians (pp. 132-133).

Murphy was really just making him aware of how much work needed to be done on the bill before a stubborn Assembly would pass it, an assertion perhaps validated by the fact that Murphy eventually helped shepherd the revision through the House, the Senate, and the Conference Committee (Harris, 1998). Murphy's comment may also reveal some of the budgeting tension that sometimes exists in Georgia between the House on one side and the Senate and Office of the Governor on the other. In Georgia, budgeting starts with the governor, who is vested with relatively strong budget-making powers.¹³¹ The budget is drawn up in the governor's Office of Planning and Budget, not in a Department of Finance or Administration, as is common in many other states. It is perhaps telling that the Georgia Senate appropriations committee tends to rely on this office, and not on the Legislative Budget Office, for staff assistance (Lauth, 1991), and it is also worth noting that the governor's office relies in turn on the Senate's Appropriations Committee when drafting the initial budget. As a result, there is often very little difference between initial Senate and gubernatorial budget proposals. Both often work in opposition to the legislature's Legislative Budget Office, which for all intents and purposes works predominantly for the House. Thus, it is an institutional relationship with the governor's office and subsequent similarity in budget proposals that leads to the perception that the Senate and the governor are more in agreement than either is with the House (Lauth, 1990). Lauth (1990) found that, after appropriations conference committee work and final approval, final appropriations bills in Georgia over a ten-year span more often reflected

¹³¹ Among other formal powers, Georgia governors also have had the right to succeed themselves since 1976 (Lauth, 1991).

the governor's original budget than they did either the House's or the Senate's proposed modifications.¹³²

In the end, though, the bill passed unanimously in the Senate on February 11th, 1985, and again unanimously in the House on February 22nd, 1985 (Olson, 1985, March 6). A joint legislative committee worked out differences in the House and Senate versions in March, 1985, and sent the bill back out for a final vote without dissent. The refinements included: limits on student eligibility for remediation services; expansion of testing to include criterion- and norm-referenced tests in alternate years grades one through ten; extension of the millage requirement due date from 1987 to 1988; expanded testing requirements for teacher licensure; and a requirement for the state board to report quarterly to the legislature on the progress of the reforms (Georgia, 1985, March 13). QBE passed unanimously and was signed into law on April 16th, 1985 (Harris, 1986; Harris, 1998).

Unlike other Acts in neighbor states, QBE was not paired with a tax increase in any area, maintaining a campaign promise made by the relatively conservative Harris (though he did oversee a one-cent sales tax increase during his second term; Cook, 2005). Economic growth in Georgia had been strong during the period leading up to the passage of QBE and would remain strong for some years after (3.4 percent between 1980 and 1989, compared to a national rate of 1.9 percent), and the percent change in revenues from previous years of 8.3 percent (1984) and 9.4 percent (1985; Lauth, 1991) made increases in appropriations for education that much easier. But estimates of first-year

¹³² Lauth (1990) writes in overall dollar terms, however, and does not account for potentially dramatic shifts in line-item funding from one program to another; his conclusions are more about overall money appropriated than about House, Senate, or gubernatorial influence over *which* programs benefit most from a given budget. Lauth admits as much at the end of his article.

costs were \$231 million (\$135 million of which was for teacher pay raises [Cook, 2005]), and anticipated costs by 1990 were expected to be around \$700 million (Olson, 1985, March 6; Pipho, 1986). With funding coming only from shifts in state resources, Harris's requested \$231 million was not fully funded (Cook, 2005). As a result, the program was never fully implemented as passed and required much fine-tuning in later years (Cook, 2005).¹³³

Next steps. The passage of QBE and its constituent programs was followed by continued education innovation for at least the next decade (if not beyond; Dayton & Matthews, 1995), as well as continual tinkering with many of the never-fully-funded programs (Cook, 2005).

¹³³ Dayton and Matthews (1995) report that the legislation added more than \$908.9 million in new state funds in its first year alone, but it is unclear how they derived that figure. Perhaps it is the total school budget for that year, including the additional \$231 million in the QBE.

Appendix D: Data Sources

Sources for Official Documents

Lamar Alexander, Tennessee

*Data obtained from the Tennessee State Library and Archives.*¹³⁴

These records are part of the collected papers of Governor Alexander and are preserved on microfilm:

<u>Name/Subject</u>	<u>Box and Folder Number</u>
Addresses & Speeches	991-x
Basic Skills Test	102-7; 649-3; 667-7; 668-1; 669 716-15; 996-3; 997-1
Better Schools Program	102-8; 550; 551; 644-4 to 10; 645-1 to 4; 649-4; 670; 717-1; 827; 991-11, 38; 992-10
Career Ladder	649-5; 671-1, 3; 901-2; 992-10
Master Teacher Program	684-5, 6, 7; 992-10

James Hunt, North Carolina

Speeches and addresses analyzed for this study.

January 10, 1981 –	Inaugural Address
January 15, 1981 –	State of the State Address
February 25, 1981 –	North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
March 20, 1981 –	North Carolina Public School Superintendents
May 6, 1981 –	Community College Congress
May 28, 1981 –	Human Resources Liaison Committee, National Governors Association
July 23, 1981 –	Statement on Economic Development
August 28, 1981 –	Education Commission of the States
November 30, 1981 –	North Carolina Council on Economic Education
February 25, 1982 –	Statement on the Economy
March 3, 1982 –	Statement on Job Training
May 18, 1982 –	Governor's Conference on School Dropouts

¹³⁴ <http://tennessee.gov/tsla/index.htm>; <http://tennessee.gov/tsla/history/govpapers/findingaids/gp53.pdf>

June 30, 1982 –	Statement on Annual Testing Program
July 9, 1982 –	Superintendents’ Summer Conference
September 1, 1982 –	Testimony before U. S. House Committee on Education and Labor
September 29, 1982 –	North Carolina Education Policy Seminar: Education for a High-Technology Economy
January 17, 1983 –	State of the State Address
April 27, 1983 –	Presentation of <i>North Carolina 2000</i> Report
July 14, 1983 –	Statement on 1983 General Assembly
July 21, 1983 –	Opening Session, Education Commission of the States
July 22 1983 –	Chairman’s Banquet, Education Commission of the States
October 13, 1983 –	Statement on North Carolina Commission on Education for Economic Growth
January 9, 1984 –	Regional Hearing, North Carolina Commission on Education for Economic Growth
January 25, 1984 –	The Conference Board, Inc.: “Business and the Public Schools – A New Partnership”
April 13, 1984 –	North Carolina Association of Educators’ Annual Convention
June 7, 1984 –	Special Address on Education
December 5, 1984 –	State Goals and Policy Board
January 3, 1985 –	Statement on Economic Growth

William Winter, Mississippi

*Data examined at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.*¹³⁵

Corporate Author Mississippi. Governor (1980-1984 : Winter)

Title Education Reform Act Files, 1979-1982.

Scope Note Records relating to the Education Reform Act, including information gathered about the cost of maintaining public kindergartens, correspondence, speeches made before the Legislature, and newspaper clippings.

Citation Cite as: Series 48: Education Reform Act Files.

System Number 000082965

¹³⁵ <http://mdah.state.ms.us/>; <http://www.mdah.state.ms.us/arlib/>

Title	Inaugural Address, 1980.
Scope Note	Copies of Governor William F. Winter's inaugural address, January 22, 1980, and message to the joint assembly, January 29, 1980.
Citation	Cite as: Series 67: Inaugural Address.
System Number	000082984

Title	The Inaugural papers of Governor William F. Winter / edited by Charlotte Capers.
Imprint	Jackson: Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History, 1980.
Gen. Note	"The inaugural address delivered to a joint session of the Mississippi Legislature in the House of Representatives, Old Capitol, Jackson, January 22, 1980; the symposium papers presented as part of the inaugural activities in the House of Representatives, Old Capitol, Jackson, January 21, 1980."
System Number	000022782

Title	Legislative Files, 1981-1983.
Scope Note	House and Senate bills that received the Governor's approval, those that he signed into law, and those that he vetoed. Bills included in this series concern appointments to boards and commissions, the carrying of weapons by deputy fire marshals, taxes, bonds, and acts to amend the Mississippi Code, among others.
Citation	Cite as: Series 51: Legislative Files
System Number	000082968

Title	Legislative Platform, 1981.
Citation	Cite as: Series 1061: Legislative Platform.
System Number	000082994

Title	Speeches, 1980-1983.
Scope Note	Original copies and photocopies of speeches made by Governor Winter at various events. Among the topics included in this series are the completion of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, support of the Democratic Party, and the state's economic situation and justice system. Also included are statements made before the Mississippi Legislature, AFL-CIO, and various out-of-state organizations.
Citation	Cite as: Series 57: Speeches.
System Number	000082974

Title	State of the State Message,1981.
Scope Note	Copy of Governor William F. Winter's State of the State message to a Joint Session of the Mississippi Legislature, January 13, 1981.
Citation	Cite as: Series 69: State of the State Message.
System Number	000082986

Newspaper Accounts

Mississippi

Clarion-Ledger (Jackson)

Press-Register (Clarksdale, MS)

Sun (Jackson)

North Carolina

The News & Observer (Raleigh)

Tennessee

Commercial Appeal (Memphis)

Journal (Knoxville)

Interview Targets

Interview Target	Position(s) at the Time of the Reforms	Term(s)	Current Status
William Winter	Governor, Mississippi	1980-1983	Attorney
Richard Molpus	Executive Director, Mississippi Office of State and Federal Programs	1980-1984	Chief Executive Officer, Woodlands Timber
Andrew Mullins	Special Assistant to the Governor	1980-1984	Exec. Asst. to Chancellor and Assoc. Prof. of Education, University of Mississippi
Charles Overby	Editor, Jackson <i>Clarion-Ledger</i>		Chair and CEO, Freedom Forum (VA); CEO, Newseum (DC)
<i>Charles Deaton</i>	<i>Special Assistant to the Governor</i>		<i>Deceased</i>
<i>C. B. "Buddie" Newman</i>	<i>Speaker of the House</i>	<i>1948-1952 (Senate); 1952-1988 (House)</i>	<i>Deceased</i>
<i>Ellis Bodron</i>	<i>Senator; Chair, Senate Finance Committee</i>	<i>1948-1952 (House); 1952-1984</i>	<i>Deceased</i>
Lamar Alexander	Governor, Tennessee	1979-1986	U. S. Senator, Tennessee
Charles Overby (see Winter, above)	Special Assistant for Administration, Governor's Office		Chair and CEO, Freedom Forum (VA); CEO, Newseum (DC)
Ned R. McWherter	Speaker of the House	1973-1987	Former Governor (TN, 1987-1995); Businessman; did not interview
<i>Bracey Campbell</i>	<i>Chief Lobbyist for CERA</i>		<i>Indicted¹³⁶</i>
<i>John Wilder</i>	<i>Speaker of the State Senate/Lieutenant Governor</i>	<i>1971-2007</i>	<i>Deceased</i>
James B. Hunt	Governor, North Carolina	1977-1985; 1993-2001	Attorney
Betty Owen	Governor's Education Advisor	1977-1985	Retired
Zebulon Alley	Legislative Liaison	1981-1984	Attorney, Lobbyist
W. Craig Lawing	President <i>pro tem</i>	1978-1984	Auctioneer; did not interview
<i>Liston Ramsey</i>	<i>Speaker of the House</i>	<i>1981-1988</i>	<i>Deceased</i>

Other Targets	Position(s) at the Time of the Reforms	Term(s)	Current Status
Richard Riley	Governor, South Carolina	1979-1986	Attorney; Board Member, Albert Shanker Institute
Robert Graham	Governor, Florida	1979-1986	U. S. Senator, Florida
Jesse White	Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board	1982-1990	Director, UNC-CH Office of Economic and Business Development
William Clinton	Governor, Arkansas	1979-1980, 1983-1991	United Nations Special Envoy to Haiti; did not respond to interview requests
Joe Frank Harris	Governor, Georgia	1983-1990	Board of Dir., Aflac; did not respond to interview requests
<i>Winfred L. Godwin</i>	<i>President, Southern Regional Education Board</i>	<i>1961-1989</i>	<i>Deceased</i>

¹³⁶ Campbell, former Director of Communications for the Southern Regional Education Board, recently was indicted on multiple fraud and theft charges and went on trial in October, 2008.

Appendix E: Sample Two-Tiered Interview Question Template

This sample partial list of questions is not exhaustive but it does reflect the range of differences between the primary, open-ended questions that framed the interviews and the secondary, specific questions that were used when an interviewee was parsimonious in any or all of her or his responses to the primary questions. Interviews lasted between forty and ninety minutes, with all but one (with former Governor Robert Graham) conducted in person. Words and phrases in parentheses indicate choices the interviewer made depending upon the role(s) of the person being interviewed.

Sample Primary Framing Questions

- A. Tell me about your role in the (proposal/passage) of the (state-specific education reform) Act.
- B. What were some of the motivations that led you to (sponsor/become involved in the support for/become involved in efforts to modify/become involved in efforts to oppose) this legislation? Why focus on education?
- C. In your opinion, what were the key ingredients that made passage of (this bill/these bills) possible? What were the major roadblocks to passage?
- D. What lessons did you learn from the process?

Sample Secondary (Follow-up) Questions

- A. When did you first become involved in the (proposal/passage) process?
 - What role(s) did you play in that process?
- A. Why focus on education at this time?
- B. Tell me about some of the specific events or personal beliefs about education that you think contributed to your interest in this legislation.

- C. Who emerged as the key actors in the (development of/debate about) (this bill/these bills)?
 - o What role(s) did these participants play in the (policy formation/bill passage) process?
- C. How would you characterize the (public/House floor/Senate floor) debate about the legislation?
 - o What do you think were the most important contributions to this atmosphere?
- C. In your opinion, was there much private or personal conflict about the (proposed legislation)?
 - o (If so): How would you characterize this conflict?
 - o (If not): Why do you think there was (none/little) to begin with?
- C. Describe the influence that (name of partisan interest group, most frequently state teachers' associations and business interests) had on the (development/passage/blockage) of the legislation?
 - o (If influential): Why do you think this group was so influential?
 - o (If not influential): What prevented this interest group from being a significant player?
- C. Describe the influence that (governor) had on the (development/passage) of the legislation?
 - o Who from the governor's office was most involved in the process, and in what way(s)?
- C. Describe the influence that your involvement in (SREB/ECS) had on the development of the legislation and on the timing of your proposal?
 - o What role did the publications of these organizations and others have on your decision to pursue this line of policy reform?
 - o In particular, could you comment on your involvement in the development of SREB's *The Need for Quality*? ECS's *Action for Excellence*? NCEE's *A Nation at Risk*?
- D. As you reflect on the (proposal development/passage) of this (policy/program), what stands out in your mind as the most important components or people or values that led to its (development/passage)?
- D. In what ways do you think this (development/passage) reflected the standard or traditional "way things get done in (state capital)"?
- D. In what ways do you think this (development/passage) was unique?
- D. What did you do / what was done to keep education on the agenda in subsequent years?

Appendix F: Summary of Initial and Revised Coding Scheme

Original Scheme

Influence/Impact of the Office

- **IG** – Evidence that the *institution of the governorship* (the office, as opposed to the individual) contributed in ways that another institution or individual could not
- **GI+/-** – Supportive (+) or counter-factual (-) evidence that education reform passage likely would not have happened without *gubernatorial intervention*

Significance of what the Southern education governors achieved

- **FP/WFP** – Importance of informal powers and individual characteristics *vis-à-vis* formal powers (budget formation, appointment powers, *etc.*)
- **xHD** – Evidence against the role of Historical Determinacy
- **TG** – Evidence of the transformation of the governorship, either formally or informally, immediately before, during, or immediately after each governor's term

Education Governor Strategies (as identified by the extant literature)

- **HGR** – *Hits the Ground Running* (makes education reform a priority early in her or his tenure)
 1. Makes strong policy proposals after re-election or after a clear voter mandate
 2. Outlines specific education policy proposals in her or his state of the state and/or inauguration address
- **BP** – *Focuses on the Big Picture* and actively (re-)frames the debate
 1. Uses a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals
 2. Proposes systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms
 3. Links education to other policy areas, particularly the economy
- **CRG** – *Changes the rules of the game* (restructures bureaucracies)
- **CB** – *Courts Allies and Creates Teams*
 1. Actively maneuvers in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high
 2. Forms and supports a large, education-attuned staff in the governor's office
 3. Builds broad coalitions

Other

- **ELM** – Evidence of the Executive Leadership Moment concept

Additions and Modifications to Original Scheme

Influence/Impact of the Office

- **EEG** – Evidence of distinctions between *empirical* education governors and *nominal* education governors

Significance of what the Southern education governors achieved

- **VAL** – Primacy of education *values* over Party identity

Education Governor Strategies

- **HGR** – *Hits the Ground Running*
 3. Pursues a limited, focused array of objectives and elevates education as a major policy issue
 4. Runs reform effort like a campaign; takes issue directly to the public (see also **CB(2)**, below)
- **CB** – *Courts Allies and Creates Teams*
 - [Revision of Code CB(2) with an emphasis on attention given to building citizen coalitions]
- **PD** – *Works at Both Ends of a Rapid Policy Diffusion Process*
 1. Follows other governors' leads and collaborates with them
 - a. Works outside traditional state lines
 - b. Identifies and/or follows a leader governor who has the political longevity to develop a full reform platform
 2. Goes national with her or his own message

Appendix G: Relevant National and Regional Organizations and Selected Publications

Organizations

National Governors Association (NGA). Though it has been around since 1908, when it was formed by President Theodore Roosevelt for the purpose of discussing conservation issues, it was not until the 1960s – partly in reaction to the increased federal role in previously state- and local-only social policy areas via Johnson’s Great Society programs – that the NGA became a prominent policy player. NGA activities in the 1970s included the institution of the “New Governors’ Seminar,” during which sitting governors passed on their knowledge to newly-elected governors. NGA also published several surveys and reports that were designed to disseminate information about shared problems and programs across states, and two independent national organizations that were started to support gubernatorial staffs – the Council of State Planning Agencies and the National Association of State Budget Officers – were subsumed under the NGA (Beyle, 1989).

Important for this study was the NGA’s focus on getting states in general, and governors in particular, to take on the role of innovators. Larry Sabato (1983) argued that “[t]he governors . . . have been asserting themselves on a national level in an unprecedented and surprisingly effective manner. Their vehicle has been the National Governors Association, revolutionized from the hollow shell of yore to a bustling, professional lobby that can achieve results (and overcome the serious handicaps to effectiveness inherent in a high-powered constituency such as the governors)” (p. 180).¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Though both events took place after the events under consideration in this study, it is perhaps worth noting that when Lamar Alexander took the helm of the NGA in 1985, he pushed for the organization to complete a 50-state assessment of education, and when Bill Clinton succeeded him in 1986, he pushed for a focus on economic strength (Beyle, 1989).

NGA served (and continues to serve) an additional coordinating role by publishing annually an overview of policy issues facing governors in every state (Fleer, 1994).

Regional organizations. Every governor interviewed for this study made a point to note the importance of the regional organizations in their ability to enact education reform in their states. As Graham summarized, “The Southern organizations, I think, by far are the most effective regional organizations, at least they were at that time [in the] country. The South has had a greater sense of regional identity than most other parts of the country, and from that a willingness to work together” (personal communication, August 1, 2009).

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The grandfather of all education organizations that helped to elevate the role of the governor, the SREB was formed in 1948 by governors and legislators in fifteen southern states. The initial purpose of the organization was to help use the collective strength of the sponsoring states to raise the level of higher education they were able to offer, mostly by allowing students from member states to take advantage of in-state tuition rates across the region. Even though the need for this particular aspect of the original partnership waned with the general improvement in higher education options across the region, the partnership remained, along with its well-developed policy and planning staff (Beyle, 1988). In ensuing years, SREB turned its attention to primary and secondary education as well as higher education, and in 1981 it introduced 25 recommendations for improving education quality in a publication called *The Need for Quality*. Former Georgia governor Joe Frank Harris (1987) contended that it was *Quality’s* list of recommendations that proved to be the catalyst for the successive years of education reform in the South. Said Winter of the

publication, “I know one of the most helpful and encouraging publications that I ran into in ’81, I guess it was, was that publication of SREB. . . . I had a little copy of that. I’ve got a dog-eared copy that I took around and quoted from all over the place. So it was very helpful. The work of SREB, I think, was almost a[n] essential element in what we did” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). The importance of the document is detailed in the next section.

Education Commission of the States (ECS). John Casteen traces the evolution of the professionalization of gubernatorial staff back to the formation of James B. Conant’s Education Commission of the States. Former North Carolina governor Terry Sanford played an active role in the establishment of the organization and in its efforts to increase staff professionalism: “Terry Sanford took the position that you should strengthen this capacity in the governors’ offices so they can direct education policy in the same way as they make executive policy in other areas” (quoted in Caldwell, 1985, February 6, p. 34). Beyle (1988) suggests that the birth of the ECS was at least an indirect result of the success of the SREB and the other regional compacts that it inspired.

Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB). The new kid on the block, founded in 1972 in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, SGPB, like its older siblings, helped to produce numerous documents on the state of the South’s economic growth, and these reports were not shy about linking the health of the South’s economy to the health of its public schools. A report by the 1980 Commission on the Future of the South (1982), for example, notes that “In the face of increasing demands for better schools and a better trained labor force, low levels of educational achievement and low per-pupil education expenditures will remain a problem in the South,” and that under-education of African-

American and migrant citizens could lead to “serious social and economic problems later” (p. 19).

Selected Publications and their Impact

A Nation at Risk. Reports like *A Nation at Risk* and the host of others listed in chapter 3 (Table 3.4) were not entirely new phenomena; in fact, several such reports had been generated since at least the late 1970s; the Twentieth Century Fund, the College Board, and the National Science Board had all commissioned earlier reports on goals for improvement to K-12 education. The difference, Graham (2003) and others contend, was that *Nation* was much more direct in its language, eschewing what some considered the off-putting language of the previous reports (which for the most part faded from public view rather rapidly) in favor of a direct and easily digestible style. Consequently, perhaps the most important purpose it served for states already in the throes of education reform was the language it lent to politicians who needed to convince the public of the necessity for major reform (Fuhrman, 2003). Even the executive director of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) acknowledged that the reform efforts in the South largely were already underway when *Nation* was published, citing in particular the work of Riley, Alexander, Clinton, and Winter as examples (Goldberg & Renton, 1995). Echoing Elmore (2003), Goldberg and Renton (1995) wrote: “Those states that had already begun to improve their education systems found their efforts buoyed by a new sense of urgency” (p. 22). In addition, Elmore (2003) characterizes *Nation* as a *legitimizer* of the actions already taking place in “southern and border states, like Florida, South Carolina, and Kentucky” (p. 25). “The publication of *A Nation at Risk* really . . . sort of legitimized these Southern governors taking it [education reform] on” (J. White,

personal communication, December 3, 2009). As Graham recalled, “The diagnosis that the *Nation at Risk* [report] made was not surprising to any of us. We were aware of that, and I think their prescriptions were within the range of what most people were thinking of, but they gave it a national voice, and advocacy” (personal communication, August 1, 2009). Finally, the report led to a higher degree of media exposure of the “education crisis,” too, with over 700 newspaper articles written about *Nation* in the first year of its publication alone (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986).

Writing about South Carolina reform in particular but reflecting on the early reform era in general, Riley and Patterson (1995) contend that *A Nation at Risk* and its predecessors gave many governors and legislators the ammunition they would need “both to mobilize public and political support for reform and also to develop a comprehensive framework for specific reform strategies” (p. 74). In particular, they note the importance of the timing of the reports; the credibility they lent to the idea of broad reform; the encouragement they gave for making reform comprehensive; their help in selling the reform idea to the public and the legislature; and their ability to maintain excitement and interest in education reform over the long term. Added Hunt, “It was easier to get people to move and do the things they ought to do because of *A Nation at Risk*” (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009). Riley and Peterson (1995) also note the importance of *A Nation at Risk* – released by a conservative, business-friendly administration – in recruiting support from the business community for education reforms and the taxes that would be required to fund them. Governor Alexander acknowledged the importance of the report in Tennessee – indeed, in the official response to the document that he presented to NCEE in 1983, he credited *Nation* as a springboard for his

reform efforts (Alexander, 1983, May 13) – but at the same time he also noted its limitations: “The National Commission on Excellence Report was a big help. That’s national leadership. That doesn’t mean[, however,] that the federal government can solve the problem. It can’t” (*Proceedings*, 1983, p. 60).

Action for Excellence and The Need for Quality. The Education Commission of the States’ *Action for Excellence* (1983) and particularly the Southern Regional Education Board’s *The Need for Quality* (1981) both involved more gubernatorial efforts and reflected more gubernatorial thought (and thus acted more directly as a diffusion mechanism) than did *A Nation at Risk*. In addition, due to their relatively earlier drafting timelines (work on *Quality* began in January, 1981; Task Force on Higher Education and Schools, 1981), both reports arguably played a larger role in the development of the education reform platforms of most, if not all, of the Southern governors in this study.

The thesis of *Action for Excellence* is both simple and by now familiar: The United States, once a dominant economic world power, is in danger of losing that status as technological advances and emerging economies with capable citizen-workers pass it by. Without a doubt, *Action* provided many governors with powerful language for linking education to healthy economic growth – “It is the thesis of this report that our future success as a nation – our national defense, our social stability and wellbeing and our national prosperity – will depend on our ability to improve education and training for millions of individual citizens” (Hunt, 1983, p. 15) – but more importantly, its construction provided a venue in which the governors who wrote the document – including Riley, Winter, and ECS Task Force on Education for Economic Growth Chair Hunt – could come together and share ideas and strategies.

Action's contributions notwithstanding, it was not published until well into the education reform stage for many Southern states, and at around the same time as *Nation*. More important, suggests Harris (1987) and others, was SREB's 1981 document, *The Need for Quality*, the seminal governor-created blueprint for all of the reforms in this study. While *Action* provided the rhetoric, *Quality* provided the roadmap. The report, commissioned by Governor Graham, the chair of SREB at the time (Task Force on Higher Education and Schools, 1981), outlined twenty-five ways for states to reform education (Thomas, 1992). Though, like *Action*, the document does note the connection between education and the economy of the South, it does so only in passing; the primary focus is clearly on outlining specific reforms necessary for improving educational outcomes, all of which were adopted in one form or another by the Southern governors in the years ahead (See Table G.1, which compares *Quality* recommendations and each governor's original proposed slate of reforms; it is interesting to note, however, that, while provision of kindergarten played a significant role in most states' reform plans, lower-grade education is not addressed in *Quality*).

Governor Winter has said on many different occasions that he carried a copy of *Quality* with him always (W. Winter, personal interview, January 21, 2009), and he has even asserted that it was the document that most inspired his fellow education governors in the South: "[The report] was a blueprint of educational programs that evolved in the next few years. I attribute that report as being one of the most important documents that I saw during that period" (quoted in Thomas, 1992, p. 60). Mullins (1992) adds that the report anticipated the state-by-state fight over the funding necessary for most governors' proposed education reforms, and that it was used extensively not only by Winter, but also

by Riley, Alexander, Hunt, and Graham. A follow-up report, *Meeting the Need for Quality: Action in the South* (1983) helped to drive home the importance of the previous report by noting the numerous strides made in several Southern states in the two years between the two reports, as well as the ground yet to be covered in meeting each of the original twenty-five goals.

Table G.1
The Need for Quality and Original Reforms Proposed by Southern Governors

Original Education Reform Proposals

	<i>Need for Quality (1981)</i>	<i>Alexander (1983-1984)</i>	<i>Winter (1980-1982)</i>	<i>Hunt (1973-1983)</i>	<i>Clinton (1983)</i>	<i>Riley (1983-1984)</i>	<i>Graham (1983)</i>
<i>Compensation</i>	<i>Tie teacher pay and recertification to completion of meaningful graduate or professional development work</i>	Master Teacher and Principal Program - Incentive pay based on performance evaluation and a career ladder		Bonuses for teachers with advanced degrees (1973)	Experimentation with performance pay for teachers	School-level improvement incentive awards; Quality control and rewards for productivity; bonuses for effective principals	A teacher career ladder program
	<i>Develop incentives to attract math and science teachers</i>			Teacher pay raises (1973); Better teacher salaries (1983)	Increased teacher salaries	Teacher salary increases	Higher teachers' salaries
<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Strengthen high school offerings and requirements</i>	More High School Math and Science		An expanded curriculum (1983)		A required college-prep track in high schools; Expanded AP offerings; More rigorous academic standards	Increase emphasis on math, science, technology and foreign languages; Provide more special programs beyond the basics at all levels of education
	<i>Forge local connections among K12 leaders and their local higher education leaders, especially in the area of gifted education</i>	Residential Summer School for Gifted Juniors and Seniors		Establishment of the North Carolina School of Science and Math (1979)	Expanded gifted and talented programs	New gifted and talented programs	Summer enrichment programs
	<i>Preparing Youth for Work [meta-category]</i>	Redefine High School Vocational Education Curricula; Consolidate management of community colleges, technical institutes, and area vocational schools		Strengthen vocational education offerings (1979); Improve summer school and vocational education programs (1983)	Expand vocational/technical options	Revamp vocational programs to match growth in the high-tech and health care sectors	Career-oriented revamp of the state's vocational programs; Improve coordination between education and industry
<i>Graduation Standards</i>	<i>Establish a joint higher education/State Board committee in each state to raise graduation standards and higher education core standards</i>		Compulsory attendance	Minimum graduation standards (1977)		Increase minimum high school graduation requirements; Institute graduation-gateway testing program; Increase attendance standards	Set statewide high school graduation requirements; Funding to improve curriculum standards
<i>Early Childhood</i>		Kindergarten for Every Child	Statewide kindergarten	Mandatory kindergartens (1973)	Mandatory kindergarten	Statewide provision of kindergarten, and mandatory kindergarten	
<i>Teachers and Teaching</i>	<i>Strengthening Teacher Education[meta-category]; Reduce unnecessary licensure barriers to teaching</i>		Changes to teacher certification and training; Establishment of teacher in-service training	Better teacher training (1983)	Increased teacher standards		In-service training for math and science teachers

Appendix H: Evidence in Support of Previously Defined Characteristics of Education Governorship

Evidence in this Appendix is offered in support of the characteristics of successful education governorship identified by previous research and speculation.

Phrasing and Framing

Successful education governors make education reform a priority early in their tenures.

They make strong policy proposal moves after re-election or after a clear voter mandate. Beyle (2004) reminds us that one component of a governor's power in general is her or his margin of victory, or *electoral mandate*. All else being equal, governors with electoral mandates are better positioned than are other governors in the same state to become education governors, if they so choose. Evidence from the cases in this study suggest that these mandates were important not only for providing the momentum to get reform rolling but also for convincing the governors themselves to consider pursuing reform in the first place. Hunt's and Alexander's second-term post-victory *State of Education* addresses (delivered in early 1981 and 1983, respectively) feature sweeping education reform proposals, and Alexander's were delivered with the rhetoric of a governor who would be unwilling to support anything less than what he proposed: "I will oppose, campaign against and veto any general tax increase that does not include the BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM. That will be my position until the BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM is law" (January 28, p. 11, emphasis in original). Many of the governors clearly took sizeable electoral victories as signals to move forward with education reforms. Riley acknowledged the courage his victory gave him to move

forward: “[My re-election] really opened a door for me with a lot of momentum to really get something major done. And I announced when I was running that I was going to go all out for education, more than they’d done before. And I did” (personal communication, July 2, 2009). Graham and Winter both credited the *size* of their election victories as well: “I was re-elected by a very substantial margin, and I think that helped my political influence. People said, ‘Well, you know, he ran for re-election based on these education reforms. He was re-elected by a 2-1 margin, we should give that some credibility’” (R. Graham, personal communication, August 1, 2009); “In 1979, I ran on precisely the same platform that I’d run for governor on in ’67 and run for governor on in ’75, but this time, I was overwhelmingly elected. And I felt then I had a mandate, I felt, with that overwhelming vote, I had a mandate to finally achieve some constructive education [change]” (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009). In Winter’s case, his earlier victory in his efforts to introduce a constitutional amendment that would alter the make-up of the Board of Education also served as a voter mandate of sorts: “I said in the fall, when [the amendment] was being voted on in November of ’82, I went around saying, you know, this is going to be a signal to me, if the people approve this, that’s going to be a signal they want some really corrective, some instructive change” (W. Winter, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

Hunt clearly understood how to translate not only his victory but also the campaign leading up to it into evidence of a voter mandate: “I found, and I have always found, that the way to make it work is to run on it, tell the people what you’re planning to do, and let them say, ‘We want to do it.’ When you get elected, it isn’t *your idea*, it’s *their mandate*” (J. Hunt, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

They outline specific education policy proposals in their State of the State and/or inauguration addresses. Morehouse and Jewell (2002) and Fler (2007) point out that the State of the State address, like the president's State of the Union address, is the policy agenda-setter for the governor.¹³⁸ Putting an item in the address, and putting it in a prominent place in the address, makes a difference. In most of the State of the State addresses examined for this study, education plays a prominent role, and each governor's proposals exhibit a level of specificity that indicates the degree to which each already had prepared ready-to-implement plans. The key ingredients of Winter's ERA – universal kindergarten, compulsory school attendance, a lay board of education, and funding equity – all were outlined in his 1981 speech; Alexander's 1983 State of Education address outlines in detail each facet of what would become his Better Schools Program proposal, and he followed that speech up with a two-week, statewide promotional tour of his plan (Alexander starts push, 1983, January 28); and Hunt's 1977, 1979, 1981, and 1983 State of the State addresses highlight specific education proposals, with the final speech containing specific goals in only one policy area – education.

Krotseng (1987) argues that true education governors not only make these announcements in campaign speeches and inaugural addresses but also make an effort to follow through on the education policy promises they make, and the evidence from the cases analyzed in this study indicates that that level of commitment was present in each administration.

¹³⁸ In fact, Alexander went so far as to establish a separate "State of the State of Education" address, which was delivered annually before a joint session of the legislature.

Successful education governors focus on the Big Picture and (re-) frame the debate.

They use a lexicon of symbols and ideas to communicate education reform proposals. James (1991) notes the power of a governor's ability to use symbolic language to seize the momentum of mass movements and translate them into policy change: Policy leaders such as education governors "mobilize the aspirations of their constituents with the language of policy" (p. 198). He anticipates further that:

[Governors] are likely to view educational policy development, perhaps more than anyone within or beyond government except for those involved directly in social movements, as a constitutive act, *full of exhortation, vague intentions*, and a quest for political community. Because they traffick in *imagery*, not specifics . . . they are drawn irresistibly to bold and unrefined ideals (p. 198, emphases added).

As argued above, many of the ideas that constituted the reform efforts of the Southern education governors, rather than being vague or unrefined, were instead quite detailed and elaborate. Even so, the governors often were in a position of having to translate those ideas into easily graspable concepts. Governor Winter's plan included over forty different points, but for audiences of parents, for instance, he simplified it to five components: public kindergarten, higher teacher salaries, improved school curriculum, compulsory school attendance law, and the oil and gas severance tax (Zimmerman, 1982, September 14). After his first failure, Clinton learned a similar lesson: "If you want to get broad, popular support for what you're doing, people have to be able to understand or explain it in a sentence or two. And I think to the folks out there, a lot of what I did came across just as a lot of good government things that didn't have any unifying theme that people

could buy into” (quoted in Osborne, 1988, p. 88). Many of the governors even adopted single-phrase slogans, such as Winter’s “If you think education is expensive – try ignorance,” Alexander’s “Basic Skills First, Computer Skills Next, New Job Skills for Tennesseans of All Ages,” Graham’s “Education Means Business,” and Riley’s one-cent tax increase catch-phrase, “A penny for *their* thoughts.” Hunt followed suit by latching on to the idea of projecting a vision of North Carolina in the then-distant 21st Century.

Another symbolic tactic was to identify physical, human symbols that embodied certain principles of the reform movements. In his opening address for the 1984 Special Session of the legislature, Alexander ended with a word-for-word quote from a mostly-illiterate Tennessean asking the governor to make sure that his kids didn’t suffer what he had suffered: graduation from a Tennessee high school without the ability to functionally read or write. For his second inaugural address, Riley “wanted to find a baby that was born that morning . . . black baby, white baby, rich, poor, what part of the state, whatever, but I wanted to make my speech about that baby’s life. And so we got a . . . baby over in Cheraw, which is kind of a medium-small town, the father worked in a mill, the mother was a secretary. . . . And he was born that morning, something like 6:00, 5:00. . . . And so . . . my whole speech was about John Christopher Hayes, who was this kid, and in that speech, I really showed how he was arriving here, he had all kind of serious problems to work out, primarily education” (personal communication, July 2, 2009).

Hunt may have summed up the importance of symbolic language best when he said, “People will respond if they know *what* they need to do, *why* they need to do it, *how* they can be involved, and how important it is for their future” (personal communication, April 28, 2009).

They propose systemic reforms, not just programmatic or localized reforms.

Herzik (1991) classifies education as a perennial issue for most governors, suggesting that its mere presence on the governors' agendas in the various Southern states at the start of the 1980s is not particularly unique; what matters more in these cases is the *extent* of the proposals. Caldwell (1985, February 6) adds that education governors propose education policy *reforms* – not just additional financial support for education, and Guillory (2005) adds that they devise comprehensive *plans* – not just isolated ideas. In other words, education governors attempt to change not only education policy but also underlying education structures (as was the case in Winter's successful efforts to change the constitutional rules for populating the State Board of Education). Doyle and Finn (1984) use the examples of Southern governors in the early 1980s to illustrate the point: “[Their] state-level education reforms display two general characteristics. They envision much more statewide homogenization and regulation of public school norms, standards, and procedures. And they include substantially increased education spending by state governments. Many of these reform plans are comprehensive, multi-part schemes, ranging from computer literacy to the retraining of school principals, from changes in high school graduation requirements to summer programs for gifted youngsters, from statewide basic skills proficiency tests for sixth graders to mandatory foreign language study for tenth graders” (pp. 83-84).

The depth and breadth of the reforms pursued by each governor is evident in the narratives in chapter 4 and Appendices B and C. It is perhaps important also to note that this depth and breadth did not come about accidentally or as the result of having to cobble together an unrelated series of plans that would please a wide variety of stakeholders. In

every case, the formulation of the reform packages appears to have been the result of extensive and lengthy work, as well as a desire to introduce comprehensive, logical, and system-altering change. As Winter explained to the legislature at the start of the Special Session, “Each recommendation made to you is an integral part of a total program. The elimination of one item will reduce the effectiveness of the others” (1982, December 6)

They link education to other policy areas, particularly the economy. Nothing is more consistently true across each of the cases than the sometimes single-minded focus of each governor on how improvements in education would equate to improvements in his state’s economy, a message borrowed from predecessors like North Carolina governors Sanford and Hodges. But it was not merely the abstract linkage of education and the economy that set these governors apart from their contemporaries, or even from their predecessors. Statewide education reform as a tool for achieving economic development was not, after all, a policy priority that originated with Southern governors in the early 1980s. Black (1972) noted that “During the 1960s many governors . . . [had] reached a new understanding of the state’s role regarding economic development. Numerous white politicians have become less concerned with the size of the state budget per se and more willing to support substantially higher state spending for public education as a long-range investment in economic development” (p. 52).

In addition, the growing importance of economic development in the South had been fueled in recent decades in part by a desire to refute the region’s national image as a business backwater that was more closely tied to the legacy of the “Dixiecrats” (*cf.* Grimsley, 2003) than to an emerging and healthy world economy. Riley indicated how important a sense of that history was for each of the governors: “I, and Jim Hunt, and Bill

Winter, and Bob Graham . . . Lamar, were familiar with the history of the South. And I think that's the lead-in to where we ended up. And the South, of course, had . . . peaks and valleys, but in terms of education a lot of valleys, especially for African-American kids. And the biggest economic problem in the country, according to Roosevelt, in the Depression years, the South was really the bottom of the sack economically. And, I think those of us that studied the history, as we became leaders in the state, understood that education was the only way out, and the only way for us to move up" (R. Riley, personal communication, July 2, 2009). Or, as Alexander put it, "I wasn't really wrestling with education. And I think this may be true of the other Southern governors. We were wrestling with relative poverty" (personal communication, June 3, 2009).

The economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s would not seem like an opportune time for transforming state education systems through tax increases, but what was different in the South in the 1980s, as evidenced by almost all of the narratives and related data gathered for this study, was that these governors were able to frame the education reform debate in each of their states as being a matter not just of economic *improvement* but also of economic *necessity*. In an address before his Council on Economic Education (1981, November 30), Hunt sounded a warning alarm: "[M]y economic-development tour of the Orient made me realize again how important this matter of economic education is. My friends, we live in a competitive world. If the United States is going to remain a world leader, we must regain our economic and technological leadership." Winter even credited the approach with ultimately swaying his legislature: "I think there was a final recognition that Mississippi was going to drop out of the competitive mainstream economically if we did not create a competitive

educational system and a workforce, and I think that was ultimately how we sold [ERA]” (personal communication, January 21, 2009).

It was also in this particular strategy vein that the main gubernatorial organizations – the Southern Regional Education Board, the Southern Growth Policies Board, and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) – helped the most. In the summer before the passage of Mississippi’s ERA, Winter, Graham, Alexander, Hunt, and Riley met together at the annual Southern Growth Policies Board conference. Former Executive Director Jesse White characterized the goals thus: “[States] can’t control monetary policy, states can’t control international trade policy, there’s a lot that states can’t control. But the one thing they can control is education and training policy. So we started zeroing in on that as the area of state policy that could help state economies. And so we helped provide them the argument to pass education reform for the sake of the economy” (personal communication, December 3, 2008). At that meeting, each governor constructed publicly a simple conceptual framework for the battles ahead that firmly linked education and the economy. Said Winter, “I think [education] is the basis upon which the South will reach parity with the rest of the country” (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 57). Graham added, “One of three keys to Florida’s economic future, as I see it, is education” (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 57). Hunt drew the connection more specifically: “I think for the South to experience future economic growth we’ll have to plan for the kind of economies we want to have. . . . In North Carolina we are targeting micro-electronics. In a year that was very tough economically. . . . we established a high school for young folks gifted and talented in math and science. We’re going to be doing a lot of things to upgrade dramatically the quality of math and science education in the public schools throughout

the state” (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 58). A year later at the same forum, Graham and his colleagues continued to craft the economy-education message, and their rhetoric raised the stakes further: “[Education] is the number one issue facing our state. If we are going to have the kind of future for our people, economically and socially, and provide an opportunity for our young people and adults in need of retraining, we must make an investment in our human beings; and education is the primary institution to make that investment” (*Proceedings*, 1983, p. 49). Even Winter, whose reforms already had passed, continued to draw the connection: “[L]ike the other states represented here, we recognize education as a key to everything else, as a key to our ability to progress economically, culturally, and in every other way” (*Proceedings*, 1983, p. 50). Similar strategizing took place in ECS meetings during the drafting of *Action for Excellence*. “In the Education Commission of the States, when Hunt was the chair [1982-83] . . . Hunt just said, ‘We’re going to do a national convention about education and the economy,’ and so he organized a task force on education and the economy, and all of those governors were members of that task force, and they talked up and down the ladder about what was important in education reform. And it was tying those things that related to good jobs, the changing economy, to good schools” (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009).

Partnerships

Successful education governors court allies and create teams. Echoing Neustadt (1990), Sabato (1983) posits that “Perhaps at its base gubernatorial power, like the presidential variety, is the power to persuade. Governors must command respect in their governments and among their people to have the chance to accomplish their goals” (p. 89). They do so by building coalitions (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989) in a variety

of venues, especially among stakeholders with otherwise disparate wants and needs. The original draft for ECS's Hunt-organized *Action for Excellence* even recommends in its short "Actions for Governors" section that governors take a leadership role in promoting working partnerships at the state and local level among stakeholders, including members of the business community.

They actively maneuver in the halls of the legislature, even when opposition is high. James (1991) suggests that "one of the most salient political struggles taking place in the states today is between governors and legislatures (Rosenthal, 1990; see also Beyle & Dalton, 1983), and it is over the control of policy formation and oversight. Many of the goals that matter to people who are interested in education hinge on the resolution of that struggle" (pp. 198-199). And in most of the Southern states in the early 1980s, it was a titanic struggle. *Arkansas Democrat* editor John Robert Starr said of Clinton and his struggles with the legislature, "He labors under the delusion that the legislators love him. They do not. They despise him. They grin in his face and shake his hand and pat him on the back, but they don't like him. They have not liked him" (quoted in Allen, 1991, p. 191). In addition, Winter was criticized for not working closely enough with his legislature, and Graham's style was characterized by Rosenthal (1990) as being more "executive" and confrontational than it was "legislative" and compromise-oriented.

These challenges notwithstanding, the education governors in this study eventually mastered the art of moving reforms through their legislatures, even when faced with a high level of resistance. None of the strategies they chose is unique to education reform passage; what matters more for the purposes of this study is the fact that each governor learned to use several of them effectively.

For most governors, the bulk of the process involved nothing more than taking the time to educate their legislatures and craft language that would sway votes in their direction. Winter called meetings with legislators to discuss his ideas so that they would be ““plugged into just exactly the kind of information I was getting – to compare notes and see where we can combine what the committees are considering and avoid duplications”” (quoted in Associated Press, 1982, September 14). At the start of his Special Session, Alexander (1984, January 10) was careful to paint his legislature in positive strokes: “[T]he hard work of this Legislature has gotten us this far” (p. 3), and “You decided last year to study the career ladder idea more – and you were right to pause and reflect” (p. 5).

Many also figured out ways to create win-win scenarios backstage for legislative leaders who could not afford to lose face by backing down publicly in front of their fellow party member and constituents. The more seasoned politicians even worked to forge alliances with legislators behind the scenes *before* they became opponents. Winter scheduled time before his Special Session to meet with his chief legislative opponents, Senate Finance Committee Chair Ellis Bodron, and House Ways and Means Committee Chair Sonny Meredith (Treyans, 1982, December 2), and he also scheduled follow-up private lunch meetings with Bodron (Anklam, 1982, December 14). In addition to more traditional methods of persuasion – “I knew the system, I knew the people, and I worked the legislature all the time. I mean, my wife and I [always] had something going on in the governor’s mansion” – Riley identified and brought together a small band of young supporters in the legislature: “I had this twenty-three people, they called them the Smurfs, they were all relatively new members of the House. We had no leadership, we didn’t

have the Speaker *pro tem*, we didn't have any committee chairs, [but] we had these reform-minded members of the House" (personal communication, July 2, 2009).

The most effective of them all may have been Hunt, who appears to have made working the legislature a daily ritual. Echoing a strategy employed by former North Carolina Governor Sanford (Christensen, 2008), Alley recalls that Hunt "started having key people from the legislature up to have sausage and biscuits and coffee . . . usually it was Tuesday mornings. He would have Kenneth Royal, Billy Watkins, Liston Ramsey, all these leaders of the General Assembly up there in his office in the old capital building, and he would serve them coffee and biscuits and tell them what his goals were at that time, and try to get commitments from them to do what he needed to have done. . . . If he wanted something passed, he didn't sit back and say "I hope it passes." He would take a personal interest in it and call people. He'd call people all night long! He'd call them 2:00 in the morning!" (personal communication, September 8, 2009).

Also, nearly every governor had an "inside man" who was much closer to several key legislators than was the governor, and who could be counted on to get votes when needed. For Winter, that role was handled by Charles Deaton, who, unlike the "Boys of Spring," presented an image of someone who actually fit in at the legislature. "He smoked a big cigar, and he was on Governor Winter's staff. He would always kind of look at us [the Boys of Spring] like, 'Where'd these children come from?' But Deaton, I don't think we could have done it without him. He was the guy that was the in-road to these legislators" (D. Molpus, personal communication, January 21, 2009). "Winter was always kind of seen as an intellectual, and he was not a 'hail fellow, well met,' go-out-and-drink-whiskey-with-the-boys [type]. Winter was never that kind of guy. But Deaton

had that streak in him and so he was very accomplished at working his old pals in the legislature” (J. White, personal communication, December 3, 2008). Winter also relied heavily on Lieutenant Governor Dye, who held more sway than most people in that position: “He pretty much controlled Bodron. Bodron could have killed that bill. He could have stopped the Reform Act in its tracks, had it not been for Brad Dye” (A. Mullins, personal communication, January 21, 2009). Hunt’s Legislative Liaisons, Charles Winberry and Zebulon Alley, played similar roles: “He wanted me at the legislature, and he wanted me to make friends with everybody in the legislature, Republicans and Democrats, and encourage them to get his initiatives moving” (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009).

They form and support a large education-attuned staff in the governor’s office.

Making all of this work required a large and dedicated education advisory staff, which Beyle (1989), Caldwell (1985, February 6), Guillory (2005), and others argue is another key ingredient in the rise of the modern education governors. For example, Winter’s help came in the form of the “Boys of Spring” – Molpus, Mullins, future education governor Mabus, and others – who he says “kept my spirits up, and my determination on track. I don’t think I would have pursued [reform], had they not been so diligent in their efforts to get it done. It was a cause for them, as it was for me, but it was at the time, and I think maybe still, the most important thing they were going to do in their life” (personal communication, January 21, 2009). Mabus estimated that collectively they made “350 speeches between the first of June [1982] and the first of November” (1982, p. 3). Similarly, Achilles *et al.* (1986) and Charles Overby (personal communication, June 3, 2009) note the importance of a “staff of energetic professionals” (p. 31) to Alexander’s

successes, and Graham, too, relied on Charlie Reid, who would go on to be the chancellor of the California state university system (R. Graham, personal communication, August 1, 2009).

Fleer (1994) associates Hunt's ability to transform the governorship from a relatively weak entity into a "powerhouse" with his appointment of "loyal personnel to do his bidding" (p. 110). In many cases, their energy was more important than their expertise – "The whole cabinet, regardless of what they did in their administrative duties, was keyed in on doing this educational bit" (Z. Alley, personal communication, September 8, 2009) – but they were also relied upon to provide the governor with some resolve: "When he called the [legislative] leadership into his office, and they proposed changes, he'd simply say, 'No, we're not going to change that. That's the way it should be. That's the way I've been advised that it should be by experts, so we're not changing it'" (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009). Not surprisingly, a realization of the importance of a dedicated education advisory staff soon spread to other would-be education governors: "The Governor of Texas got on board, and he had an education advisor on his staff, and the education advisors met under the auspices of ECS, and we would see each other at the National Governors' Association" (B. Owen, personal communication, June 25, 2009).

Appendix I: The Triumph of Values over Party Identity

An interesting result of the research for this study for which there was no obvious home in the main narrative was a growing awareness that, in terms of each governor's relationship with his legislature, in the education reform debates Party identity issues mattered less than did differences in education values and the conflicts those differences engendered (*cf.* Fusarelli, 2002). A governor's identification with a minority Party might at first glance appear to have been a problem for only one governor in this study (Alexander), but in terms of their positions on education, each could be considered a member of a minority Party. Their reform proposals were far enough removed from the collective will of their legislature's majority preferences to create a *de facto* Party distinction between governors and legislatures who would otherwise both identify as Democrats. In North Carolina, for example, as Luebke (1998) has pointed out, identifying a politician as a Democrat is not always a useful tool for indicating her or his political leanings. Similarly, across most of the South at the time, politicians who claimed the title of Democrat were as likely to be one of the so-called "Blue Dog Democrats" or "Dixiecrats" – Democrats with particularly conservative leanings – as they were to be more liberal-leaning. The education reforms proposed by the governors in these case studies all were progressive in nature, a descriptor that was not universally applicable to the Democrats in their legislatures.

As noted in chapter 2, the case of Lamar Alexander was chosen for this study because it was assumed that his status as the lone Republican in the group would generate important contrasts with the other cases, and in some ways, that assumption turned out to be accurate. For the most part, however, the story of Governor Alexander (who Winter

aide Mullins referred to as “very progressive” [personal communication, January 21, 2009] and who Jesse White deemed “a kindred spirit” [personal communication, December 3, 2008]) and his relationship with the heavily Democratic Tennessee legislature is not much different from the stories of the other governors. The values in conflict during the debate about CERA did not line up along traditional or expected Party lines; instead, a Republican governor proposed education reforms that were based on underlying values that normally would be identified with a progressive administration, and he did so with the aide of a bipartisan work group: “Lieutenant Governor Wilder and Speaker McWherter, both Democrats, said to me, ‘You know, it’s about time we took a serious look at education.’ I said, ‘How should we do it?’ So we formed a bipartisan group, and asked Annabelle Clement O’Bryant to chair it, who’s a former Democratic state senator, chairman of the Education Committee, [and] sister of the former Democratic governor (L. Alexander, personal communication, June 3, 2009). Such bipartisanship was not necessarily restricted to the gubernatorial education reform period, either; Rhodes (2009) has argued that the national movement in support of federal standards and accountability that followed this period also involved partnerships among liberals and conservatives.

Alexander observed in 1982 at a conference of Southern governors that “[M]ost governors, regardless of party, believe there are some areas [in education] where we can do a better job, and we want that responsibility” (*Proceedings*, 1982, p. 64). The following year, at the same conference, he added, “I’m a Republican governor who has reduced government over the last four years, with the help of the legislature; but I recommended the biggest tax increase in the state’s history, and almost all of it will go to

education” (*Proceedings*, 1983, p. 59). Clinton characterized his approach to governance in a similar vein: To him, it was a “fusion of . . . conservative and liberal impulses,” which he defines as “the rise of a progressive liberal agenda that is married to [an] emphasis . . . on market solutions to problems and the importance of individual responsibility” (quoted in Newman, 1990). Riley attributed the primacy of values over Party to the fact that the public already had bought into education reform as a non-partisan issue: “The public was ready for that kind of thing [the reforms called for in *A Nation at Risk*]. . . . [H]ere was a Republican, a popular president, and [U. S. Secretary of Education] Ted Bell came down [to South Carolina] . . . [and] he and I were great friends, and he was, ’course, a Republican, and I was a Democrat, and we were trying to get a bipartisan movement going” (personal communication, July 2, 2009). As Jackson (MS) *Clarion-Ledger* editor Charles Overby observed, in hindsight “those really progressive governors didn’t really see themselves as Democrats or Repub[licans]. I mean, they did, but they didn’t as it related to their talking to one another, it wasn’t so much Democrat or Republican, they all had the same problems, and they were all looking for solutions that would work” (C. Overby, personal communication, June 3, 2009).

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