AN ADVOCACY COALITION APPROACH TO A STUDY OF THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION IN TENNESSEE

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1990, Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island and Tennessee were involved in school finance lawsuits (Augenblick, Gold, & McGuire, 1990). After four years of controversy, Tennessee policymakers resolved the conflict when they passed the Education Improvement Act of 1992, which made sweeping changes in school funding, governance, and education programs. The events surrounding policy change in Tennessee were of particular interest because the state was one of four served by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, where the researcher was employed. Thus, Tennessee was selected as the subject of this study primarily because of the state's dramatic changes in education policy and secondarily because the researcher had access to the state and its education policymakers.

Since its creation, Tennessee had a long history of low and inadequate education funding (Alexander, 1990). At the close of the 1980s, Tennessee ranked 39th in state and local government expenditures for education as a percent of total expenditures, 43rd in K-12 expenditures as a percent of the national average, and 38th in estimated current expenditures for public K-12 education per pupil (National Education Association [NEA], 1990). The NEA also reported that in 1988-89, the state ranked 45th in per pupil expenditures and 50th in per capita investment in education; and, in 1987-88, ranked 46th in per capita state government expenditures for all education, 39th in state expenditures for all education per $1,000 personal income, 51st in per capita expenditures of state and local government for all

education, and 41st in state and local expenditures for all of education per $1,000 personal income.

Economic growth across the nation during the 1980s resulted in school revenue increases for most states (Augenblick, et al., 1990, p. 1), but not Tennessee. Tennessee, which relied heavily on the state-level sales tax, benefitted little from a one-cent increase in the state sales tax in 1984, because the state sales tax increase was not accompanied by large local revenue increases (p. 3). Thus, total school revenues in Tennessee increased by only 57.7 percent during the decade (p. 17). The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (1988, July) reported that Tennessee teachers' salaries reflected the state's low levels of school funding. In 1980-81, the average teacher salary was $15,118, ranking the state 11th among the 15 SREB states and below the United States average of $17,602. By 1987-88, Tennessee's average teacher salary had increased to $23,241 and, although that figure elevated the state's ranking to 8th among the SREB states, it remained less than the national average.

While state revenues for education increased during the 1980s, states experienced a decline in federal funds for education (Odden, 1991; Verstegen, 1990). The average state share of school funding rose from 39.1 percent of the total in 1960 to 49.5 percent in 1988. In Tennessee, however, the state share fell below the national average to 45 percent (Tennessee State Board of Education, 1988). Nationwide, the local share of school funding declined from 56.5 to 44.1 percent (Odden), but in Tennessee, the local share rose above the national average to 44.9 percent, and the federal share increased to 10.1 percent (Tennessee State Board of Education). Further, the percentage of funding from Tennessee's foundation program had declined from 40 percent in 1978 to 35 percent in 1987, a level of funding that

was inadequate to meet the expenditure requirements of the local education agencies for the public schools (Alexander, 1990). In addition, the Tennessee State Board of Education reported:

> An analysis of Tennessee's relative commitment to supporting education indicates that the state lags behind the nation and the region in per pupil expenditures and per capita investment in education. Also, Tennessee's ranking of 46th in per capita investment in K-12 education lags behind the state's ranking of 36th in per capita income. (p. 1)

In 1991, the state experienced an economic decline, and revenues fell short of estimates. Tennessee responded by cutting its public school budget by 5 percent, including an 11.7 percent cut in the state's foundation program (SREB, 1991). Thus, the state's 1991-92 public school budget for Tennessee was below 1990-91 actual spending levels (SREB, 1992, February).

All shaded counties are rural.
All unshaded counties are nonrural.

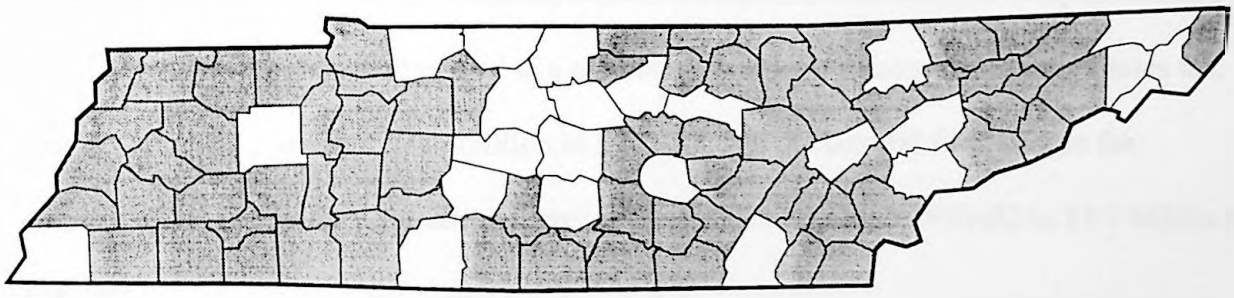

Figure 1. Rural Counties in Tennessee. The figure was reproduced from *The Condition of Rural Education in Tennessee: A Profile,* by P. Coe, C. Howley, & M. Hughes, 1989, p. 4, Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Economic changes in the state also affected the ability of local governments to raise funds for schools. They generally relied primarily on sales taxes that were levied locally, but

those sources of such revenues were unevenly distributed across counties. Rural counties, which are shown in Figure 1, suffered the most from this system. Faced with increasingly inadequate funds, superintendents of small, rural school districts formed a coalition in 1988 and filed a lawsuit "challenging the way the state finances public schools" (Associated Press, 1990, p. B4). In 1991, the general assembly attempted to change the funding system, but could not agree on how to fund the changes. The chancery court then ruled that the funding program was unconstitutional (SREB, 1992, April). The governor called the General Assembly into special session in January 1992 to consider education reform, equalization of funding, and a tax package that would impose a personal income tax and reduce sales tax. When the legislature did not adopt the governor's plan, a continuation budget for 1992-93 was released that would reduce state general fund spending slightly, but education budgets were held constant. In March 1992, the legislature passed the Education Improvement Act; created the Tennessee Basic Education Program, a new funding formula designed to equalize school spending across districts; and agreed to a temporary half-cent increase in the state sales tax. The tax increase generated $276 million in 1992-93, and the general fund budget for elementary and secondary education increased from $1.3 billion in 1991-92 to $1.7 billion in 1992-93.

Theoretical Framework

Since the early 1960s, education policy researchers have viewed education policies, such as the Tennessee Education Improvement Act and the accompanying tax increase, as political system outputs and have, therefore, used the political systems theory as the framework to examine the political process (Bailey, Frost, Marsh, & Wood, 1962; Berke &

Kirst, 1976; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Dye, 1966, 1972; Easton, 1965; Eliot, 1959; Iannaccone, 1967; Kirst & Mosher, 1969; Masters, Salisbury, & Eliot, 1964; Milstein, 1976; Sayre, 1963; Wirt & Kirst, 1989). Within the systems theory framework, Iannaccone was the first to develop a conceptual model that attempted to explain the decisionmaking process in the education political subsystem. He analyzed previously published descriptions of the political processes around education law-making in 11 states, using two factors: (a) the state legislature and (b) the education lobby (Bailey et al., 1962; Masters et al., 1964; Usdan, 1963).

Four types of organizational structures that linked the network of education groups to the legislature emerged from Iannaccone's (1967) analysis. The first type of structure to be identified by Iannaccone was called "locally-based disparate." This structure was characterized by localism. The association of education lobbyists was comprised of those who represented the interests of their locality, sought independence from centralized government, and united only with difficulty to influence the legislature.

The second type of structure identified by Iannaccone was "statewide monolithic." It was characterized by a statewide pattern of interaction in which education interests created an association that demonstrated a high degree of consensus when influencing the legislature on behalf of education.

The third type of linkage was called "fragmented." It was characterized by statewide interest groups and associations that exhibited a lot of conflict and submitted competing proposals to the legislature.

Finally, Iannaccone (1967) found one instance of what he called the "statewide syndical" linkage. In this structure, the organizational pattern of educator groups was statewide, but the linkage was unique to a governmental unit called the Illinois School Problems Commission, which had been created to find solutions for the education problems in that state. According to Iannaccone,

> . . . the structure is the focal point of component units of statewide educational groups, governmentally brought together, with representatives who are governmental officials in their commission roles originating from independent organizations. They are a coalition. (p. 50)

Iannaccone also observed that, over time, states tended to change from one type or stage to another, developing along a continuum from locally based (Stage I) to statewide monolithic (Stage II) to statewide-fragmented (Stage III) to statewide-syndical (Stage IV) structures. Although some researchers have found evidence to support Iannaccone's argument that the types were developmental stages, Stage IV (the statewide-syndical stage) has been a matter of debate and controversy (Kirst & Somers, 1981; Mazzoni, 1981; McGiveny, 1984; Rost, 1979).

Kirst and Somers (1981), who studied the politics of education surrounding Proposition 13 in California, argued that Iannaccone's stages were too limited to fit California. They believed that Olson's (1965) theory of collective action more accurately described California's political process to fund the state's schools. According to Kirst and Somers, state aid to schools was a collective good that benefitted all, regardless of whether the individuals contributed to the achievement of the good; collective action sought to maximize the level of

the collective good by increasing collaboration. Thus, Kirst and Somers proposed the addition of a fifth stage, called the "collective" stage, to Iannaccone's framework.

Similarly, Mazzoni (1981) observed that Minnesota also had progressed beyond Stage III. However, he concluded that Minnesota's educator groups were demonstrating characteristics of a statewide educational collective rather than a statewide syndical stage.

Wirt (1977) and McGiveny (1984) observed that educational policymaking systems and organizational structures were becoming increasingly bureaucratic, specialized, and centralized. McGiveny argued, therefore, that the stage that followed statewide fragmented was characterized by increased centralization of organizational linkage structures. According to McGiveny, the "centralization imperative" (p. 49) was based on the notions of Tonies and Weber, which predicted that over time the lobby would become more and more the bureaucracy, which would gain influence as conflict would be accommodated through an impersonal, rational, and legalistic process. By analyzing others' studies of state policy systems, McGiveny found support for his thesis that education policymaking was becoming more centralized at the state level and, thus, did not fit Iannaccone's statewide syndical stage.

Rost (1979) also sought to refine Iannaccone's model. He conjectured that the fourth developmental stage "may be nothing more than the complete politicization of education as just one of the many essential services the state provides for its citizens" (p. 7).

Finally, Mazzoni (1993) concluded that ". . . less and less insight will be generated by viewing the state education policy system through a lens of structural linkages" (p. 376). He suggested that Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework "appears to have unusual potential for capturing the kind of reality revealed by the Minnesota findings" (p. 377).

Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework, developed by Sabatier (1988, 1991), emerged from his studies of the environmental policy subsystem. According to the framework, policy change, such as education reform, is viewed as a variable that is dependent on three processes: (a) "the interaction of competing advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem", (b) "changes external to the subsystem", and (c) "the effect of stable system parameters . . . on the constraints and resources of the various subsystem actors" (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1993b, p. 5).

Policy subsystem. According to Sabatier (1993), subsystems normally contain a large and diverse set of actors, which can be aggregated into smaller and theoretically useful sets of categories (p. 25). Researchers of the education policy subsystem have concluded that it was composed of actors who specialized in education policy issues, such as government officials, business, education, foundation, parent, and civic actors (Eliot, 1959; Iannaccone, 1967; Kirst & Mosher, 1969; Wirt & Kirst, 1989). Sabatier concluded:

> The most useful means of aggregating actors in order to understand policy change over long periods of time is by "advocacy coalitions." These are people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc., who share a particular belief system—that is a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions—and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time. (p. 25)

The policy-oriented belief systems of coalition members include a deep core, "fundamental normative and ontological axioms" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 221); a policy core, "fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem" (p. 221); and secondary aspects, which Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith defined as

"instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement the policy core" (p. 221). Since advocacy coalitions are formed on the basis of beliefs and since people's core beliefs are quite resistant to change, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith concluded that coalition membership is relatively stable over time.

Within the subsystem, coalitions adopt strategies to advance their policy positions and these strategies come into conflict with one another. The conflicting strategies are mediated by a third group of actors called policy brokers, "whose principal concern is to find reasonable compromise that will reduce intense conflict" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 19).

Dynamic external events. According to Sabatier (1993), external to a policy subsystem are four factors that are dynamic in nature. They include (a) changes in socioeconomic conditions, (b) changes in public opinion, (c) changes in systemic governing coalition, and (d) policy decisions and impacts from other systems.

Changes in socioeconomic conditions in a state "can substantially affect a subsystem, either by undermining the causal assumptions of present policies or by significantly altering the political support of various advocacy coalitions" (p. 22). Because public opinion serves to constrain the range of feasible strategies available to subsystem participants, changes in public opinion can alter strategies that policymakers deem available to them (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 223).

Changes in the governing coalition at a given level of government typically have been seen as "critical elections" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 22). Such elections, which "normally require that the same coalition control the chief executive's office and both houses of the legislature," are quite rare.

Finally, because policy subsystems are only partially autonomous, the decisions and impacts from other policy systems—such as another level of government or its agency, other branches of government, or other policy sectors—can affect specific subsystems (Sabatier, 1993, p. 23).

Stable system parameters. According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, there are four factors external to the education policy subsystem that are relatively stable. These factors generally limit the range of feasible alternatives or otherwise affect the resources and beliefs of actors in the subsystem. They include: (a) basic attributes of education, (b) basic distribution of natural resources, (c) fundamental cultural values and social structure, and (d) the basic legal structure (Sabatier, 1993). The basic attributes of education are derived from constitutional provisions (Sabatier; Mawhinney, 1992, 1993), and the basic distribution of natural resources affects the viability of the various resource-dependent economic sectors. The fundamental cultural values and social structure include citizens' views of the role of government and the social standing of groups or individuals. The basic legal structure of education comprises the legislative bodies, governor, state board of education and the commissioner of education—those who have constitutional authority to make education policy.

Applying the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Three researchers have applied the Advocacy Coalition Framework to their studies of educational policymaking (Bishop, 1992; Mawhinney, 1992, 1993: Stewart, 1991). Bishop studied the takeover of the Community College of Baltimore by the state of Maryland. Her findings supported the assumption that

coalitions form within the education policymaking subsystem, and these coalitions are maintained on the basis of core values shared by the members.

Mawhinney (1992, 1993) examined the nature of the processes that affected policy changes in education for minority French-language students in Ontario. Her findings confirmed that the use of the advocacy coalition (defined on the basis of a shared belief system) to aggregate actors within a subsystem was an important contribution of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Mawhinney also found that (a) advocacy coalitions were stable over time, (b) members of a coalition showed substantial consensus on the policy core, (c) coalitions gave up secondary aspects of a belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core, (d) a high level conflict between coalitions diminished the ability of policy-oriented learning to be a primary force for change, and (e) policy change in the Ontario case was the result of exogenous forces.

Stewart (1993) studied equal educational opportunity policy changes at the national level. He found that ending school segregation in this country first required the formation of a competing coalition. The Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., called the "Inc. Fund," was formed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. According to Stewart, the Inc. Fund was "created to amass the resources to place demands on other institutions in a manner that would maximize the likelihood of producing public policy favored by the fund" (p. 169). Further, litigation was seen as a means of (a) minimizing costs while pursuing a benefit, education, which should improve the economic position of Blacks, and (b) testing and shaping public opinion that could facilitate policy change, increasing the costs of maintaining segregation and mobilizing the Black community. Thus, Stewart

concluded that (a) changes external to the policy subsystem had been of major importance in the outcome of the conflict, and (b) the group's use of mass media had expanded the audience of the debate from the local to the national level.

Thus, there was evidence in the literature that the need for developing a body of knowledge about education policymaking remained. More information was needed about state political systems and decisionmaking processes that determined state education policy (Burlingame & Geske, 1979). There was a need to examine the interaction of the variety of factors influencing policy change through the lenses of more general theoretical frameworks (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987) . There was a need for longer time-frame studies that could incorporate the knowledge that policy change is "steady work" occurring over time (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Kirst & Jung, 1982. Sabatier (1993) agreed, observing that "the literature on interest-group coalitions within subsystems over periods of at least a decade appears to be remarkably sparse and unsophisticated" (p. 39). Mawhinney (1992, 1993) concurred that "although a substantial body of research on education policy change has accumulated during the past decades, much of it has focused on specific issues and narrow time frames—and thus, has failed to provide guidance for policy development and change beyond a rather narrow setting" (p. 59). Finally, Mazzoni (1993) asserted that information was needed about the viability of the Advocacy Coalition Framework to explain state education policymaking.

In the absence of information about the long-term view of education policy change, a contribution to the body of knowledge about education policymaking could result from an investigation of the education policymaking in Tennessee between 1972 and 1992. Previous research on the education policymaking process in Tennessee has relied on Iannaccone's

(1967) structural linkages typology. In 1972, as part of the Ohio State Education Governance Project, Branson and Steele (1974) studied Tennessee and found a Stage II, statewide-monolithic structure. Their conclusions were supported by Wirt (1977), who developed a School Centralization Scale to rate state education statutes. Based on his rating system, Tennessee again was classified as a Stage II state. In 1984, Tennessee's policymaking process was examined by Lansford, who concluded that Tennessee had moved beyond the statewide monolithic stage to the statewide-fragmented structure, Stage III. The education policymaking process in Tennessee has not been studied from the perspectives embodied in the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Thus, the 1992 passage of the Education Improvement Act and the supporting tax rate increase presented a unique opportunity to determine whether a case, namely Tennessee, supported the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework.

Problem Statement

This study investigated the extent to which the education policymaking process that had resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act and the supporting tax rate increase in 1992 in Tennessee conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Research questions were developed to examine the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by Sabatier (1988, 1991). Although they were written in a form that requires a simple yes or no answer, the purpose of the questions was to guide the researcher to examine to extent to which the assumptions of the framework applied to the situation under examination. The seven questions were

1. In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992?

2. In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in either 1972 or 1984?

3. In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core?

4. In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects?

5. In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core?

6. In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects?

7. In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces?

Need for the Study

This study of the politics of education in Tennessee was designed to contribute to the development of a theory of the politics of education. It was also designed to provide information that could enlighten policymakers and policy activists (Dunn, 1981; Weiss, 1977). A discussion of how this study contributed to theory development and enlightenment follows.

Theory Development

Since Eliot first articulated the need to understand the politics of education in 1959, researchers have sought explanations for school funding policies and the policymaking process that produces them (Bailey et al., 1962: Berke & Kirst, 1976; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Dye, 1966, 1972; Easton, 1965; Iannaccone, 1967; Kirst & Mosher, 1969; Masters et

al., 1964; Milstein, 1976; Wirt & Kirst, 1989). The 1960s produced several studies, but the "abundance of unconnected explorations of almost any kind of politics has been a sign that the field needs more attention . . . no true theory has yet emerged" (Scribner & Englert, 1977, p. 27).

Although most politics of education researchers used systems models to describe their data, the theoretical contribution of the systems model was limited because it could not explain political behavior. Iannaccone's (1967) structural-linkage typology provided the conceptual framework that dominated studies of state-level politics for more than 20 years. As state political systems matured, however, the usefulness of the typology appeared to decrease. Scholars turned to political science for new theoretical bases to examine the politics of education (Kirst & Somers, 1981). However, according to McGiveny (1984), "The available data and conceptual models have yet to be completely integrated into a clearly articulated and theoretically based conceptual framework" (p. 49). By the 1990s, Mazzoni (1993) concluded that the complexity, context, and change in the politics of education had caused reality to "burst the conceptual bonds" of Iannaccone's structural-linkage typology (p. 376).

In contrast, Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework seemed to have "unusual potential for capturing the various intellectual strands and substantive findings from public policy research" (Mazzoni, 1993). Further, according to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993), the framework

> meets all the requirements of a causal theory . . . it has two primary forces of causal change: (1) the values of coalition members and (2) exogenous shocks to the

> system . . . it is testable/falsifiable . . . it is relatively parsimonious and fertile, that is, it produces a relatively large number of interesting predictions per assumptions . . . it may produce surprising results . . . it has the potential for contributing to a better world by helping policy activists understand the policy process . . . . (p. 231)

Therefore, this study had the potential to add to theory development, because it tested the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework by examining the politics of education in Tennessee.

In addition, this study contributed to theory development because it took a long-term view of the politics of education in one state. Most studies of state-level politics of education have been limited to a short time frame, often one legislative session. In contrast, this study of Tennessee took a long-term view of policymaking, and the availability of studies conducted between 1972 and 1992 made it possible to trace the existence of coalitions and their beliefs over a 20-year time period. This study also contributed to theory development because it expanded the view of the education policy subsystem. Previous studies tended to limit their investigation to interactions between education interest groups and the legislature. By using the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the study included interactions among government, business, and higher education, as well as education interest groups and legislators.

Finally, none of the previous Tennessee studies had investigated the policy process as competition between belief systems of coalitions. This study filled that gap in theory. Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework enabled the investigation of the belief systems of the various actors and the role of technical information and policy research in supporting or changing those beliefs.

Enlightenment of Policymakers

In the 1990s, school funding continued to be a major issue (King & Ramirez, 1994; Odden, 1993; Pipho, 1994). In particular, there was renewed interest in designing systems that promote equity, partly in response to activity in state courts. In July 1992, for example, the school finance systems of 27 states were being challenged in the courts (Gold, Smith, Lawton, & Hyary, 1992). Policy alternatives, such as redistribution of existing funds or raising taxes, were unpopular among wealthier districts and most taxpayers. A major challenge for state policymakers continued to be the identification of politically and economically feasible strategies to resolve the equity issue.

In addition to equity, some lawsuits were raising the issue of adequacy, particularly in light of state-mandated reforms (Augenblick, Fulton, & Pipho, 1991). Adequacy was becoming a concern due to uncontrollable and above-average costs that commonly were the result of several factors including high concentrations of students with special needs (language minority, handicapped, and poor); diseconomies of scale that small districts experienced when they attempted to provide a variety of academic courses or that geographically large districts incurred in their transportation programs; and prices of resources that varied across a state but were neither voluntarily paid by districts nor compensated by higher quality.

State policymakers were very interested in how other states had revised their funding systems to address the issue of adequacy and the range of possible solutions to these complex dilemmas. Policymakers also were under pressure from parents and educators who wanted to have a greater voice in decisionmaking at the local level. The local control issue created a

major challenge for state policymakers, who tried to balance the demand for local control with their need for a more accountable and efficient education system. State policymakers wanted to know how states had successfully changed funding policies to provide incentives for schools to maximize student performance while minimizing costs.

Education was taking a high percentage of the states' budgets (Augenblick et al., 1991). Collectively, the states provided about 50 percent of the more than $200 billion in revenue raised to operate the nation's schools. On average, state aid to public schools consumed about 28 percent of states' resources. Given the magnitude of state investment in public schools, it was not surprising that school funding issues had become political issues, competing for dollars with other state services. Rural and urban, rich and poor districts demanded equity in funding. Business and civic leaders argued for better prepared graduates. Teachers and administrators wanted more money to cover the education of students who require high cost services. Taxpayer groups lobbied for limits on property taxes and more efficient use of tax dollars.

In that competitive environment, state policymakers tried to create funding policies that would satisfy the various interest groups. To accomplish that end, policymakers needed data on the feasibility and effectiveness of different policy options and policy alternatives that have been pursued by other states (Fuhrman & McDonnell, 1985). State policymakers needed information on how to go about ensuring equitable access to resources for education, how much it cost to educate particular groups of children well, what alternative funding models were successful in other states, and what made some communities more willing to tax themselves to raise education revenues.

Policymakers were interested in comparing and contrasting their own states with others. They were interested in new ideas from other states. They used information about others to justify policies they proposed, urged colleagues to take new directions, validated claims about the appropriateness of policy, and bolstered their argument by pointing out other states that had done the same. In addition, state boards and state departments of education wanted details and data about the impact of various policy options. Legislators were interested in how various policy options would affect the state's education program. Governors were most concerned about budget issues and the fiscal implications of policy alternatives.

Finally, individuals who served as staff to policymakers were interested in research to assist in policy development and to prepare syntheses for their superiors. Research in this area of policymaking had the potential to contribute to the knowledge base of state policymakers. Thus, knowledge developed as a result of this study on Tennessee provided policymakers with new information about the extent and nature of one state's school funding policy and the process through which the funding policy was changed.

Definitions

The following definitions were based on the Advocacy Coalition Framework and were responsive to the research questions. Thus, the terms also were used to develop categories that would guide the analyses of data.

Advocacy Coalitions

According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, policy subsystems contain a diverse set of actors, who can be aggregated into smaller and theoretically useful sets of categories,

and the most useful way to aggregate these actors is by "advocacy coalitions" (Sabatier, 1993). Thus, for the purposes of this study, an advocacy coalition was defined as:

> People from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system—that is, a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problems—and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time. (p. 25)

Stable Coalition Membership

An assumption of the Advocacy Coalition Framework is that "on major controversies within a policy subsystem when core beliefs are in dispute, the lineup of allies and opponents tends to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 27). Thus, for the purpose of this study, the stable coalition membership was defined as individuals or groups who had been allies or opponents on major controversies over education reform in 1972, 1984, and 1992.

Belief System Structure

Belief systems are a central feature of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which describes the structure of a belief system as composed of three levels: (a) a deep core, (b) a policy core, and (c) secondary aspects (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The deep core consists of "fundamental normative and ontological axioms" (p. 221), and "The three structural categories are arranged in order of decreasing resistance to change, that is, the deep core is much more resistant than the secondary aspects" (Sabatier, 1993, pp. 30,32).

Policy core. Although the framework recognizes that not all members of an advocacy coalition will share exactly the same belief system, it proposes that members' deep core beliefs are the same, and therefore members are in substantial agreement on the policy core.

According to Sabatier, the policy core consists of "fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 221). For the purposes of this study, the policy core included policy positions taken by advocates to "translate their beliefs into public policies or programs" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 28), in 1972, 1984, and 1992.

Secondary aspects. According to Sabatier, secondary aspects consist of "instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement the policy core" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 221), and further, "An actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of a belief system before acknowledging weaknesses" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 33). Thus, for the purposes of this study, secondary aspects were defined as (a) policy positions on which the members of coalitions showed less that substantial agreement in 1972, 1984, and 1992, and (b) policy positions on which members were less resistant to change.

Policy-Oriented Learning

The Advocacy Coalition Framework emphasizes policy-oriented learning within subsystems—the process of seeking to increase understanding in order to achieve policy core objectives. Thus, for the purposes of this study, policy-oriented learning was defined as coalitions' "use of formal policy analyses primarily to buttress and elaborate" their beliefs (Sabatier, 1993, p. 19).

Exogenous Forces

The Advocacy Coalition Framework asserts that because policy subsystems are only partially autonomous, the decisions and impacts from other policy systems—such as another level of government or its agency, other branches of government, or other policy sectors—can

affect specific subsystems (Sabatier, 1993, p. 23). Thus, for the purposes of this study, exogenous forces were defined as (a) significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g., changes in socioeconomic conditions, system-wide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems); and (b) skillful exploitation of those opportunities by the (previously) minority coalition within the subsystem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, pp. 221-222).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Literature reviews vary in purpose and type (Cooper, 1988, p. 30). The nature of the literature review conducted for this study was an exploration of the extent of knowledge and theory development in the field of state education policymaking in general and education policymaking in Tennessee in particular. The intent of this literature review was to identify (a) questions that still needed to be answered about the politics of education at the state level and (b) additional research that was thought to be needed. The researcher made every effort to locate and review all relevant state-level politics of education research that has been undertaken in the past 35 years to assure that conclusions and discussions would be based on an all-inclusive information base. The researcher took a neutral perspective when conducting the literature review.

The audience for this review is researchers who specialize in either state-level policymaking or education policy. Theories discussed herein may have applicability to policy subsystems other than education. Thus, practitioners in state policy development could potentially be an audience for the literature reviewed in this chapter. In addition, those interested in advancing education funding or reform might also be an audience for this literature review.

Research in the education policymaking field emerged in the early 1960, stimulated by Eliot's (1959) declaration that educators were engaged in political activities "whether they liked it or not" (p. 1032). A theoretical basis did not begin to emerge until 1967, when

Iannaccone first synthesized the politics of education literature and developed a typology of the patterns of organizational linkages "between the legislature and the associational system of schoolmen" (p. 44). Since that time researchers have sought to confirm or refute his theoretical assumptions in order to refine the theory (Bailey, et al., 1962; Berke & Kirst, 1976; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Dye, 1966, 1972; Easton, 1953, 1965; Kirst & Mosher, 1969; Kirst & Somers, 1981; Masters, et al., 1964; Mazzoni, 1981; McGiveny, 1984; Milstein, 1976; Rost, 1979; Usdan, 1963; Wirt & Kirst, 1989). As past researchers tested Iannaccone's typology and extended the knowledge base on the state-level politics of education, a theory of the politics of education began to take form, new research questions emerged, and unanswered questions increased in importance. Those questions led the researcher to the research question that guided this study. In this chapter, the researcher distilled and described (a) the research about the development of a theoretical framework for the study of educational making, (b) the substance of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, and (c) the literature related to how Tennessee historically has made policies for public schools.

Theoretical Framework for a Study of Education Policy Change

This section presents a review of the literature on the state-level politics of education. Much research surrounding state-level politics of education policy relies on systems theory as a basic framework (Bailey et al., 1962; Berke & Kirst, 1972; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Cothron, 1987; DuRocher, 1987; Easton, 1953, 1965; Iannaccone, 1967; Jackson, 1987; Kirst & Meister, 1983; Kirst & Wirt, 1982; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989; Masters et al., 1964; Mazzoni, 1986; McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1985; McGivney, 1984; Milstein & Jennings, 1973; Mitchell, 1981; Peterson, 1983; Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981; Usdan, Minar, & Hurwitz, Jr,

1969). Systems theory allows state education policymaking to be viewed as a policy system—"a set of regularly interacting participants" (Mazzoni, 1986, p. 4).

Educator interest groups or coalitions were studied by Bailey et al. (1962), who surveyed the political process in New York, New Jersey, and the six New England states and concluded that:

> State aid to local school districts in the Northeast is the outcome of extended and highly complex political struggles which involve the interaction of group interests, parties, boards, commissioners, and departments of education, governors, legislative leaders and followers, courts, academic scribblers, opinion leaders and the mass media, and a host of lesser individuals and institutions. (p. 103)

Further, the researchers observed that the differences in policies, such as teacher salaries could not be explained by differences in state economic indexes alone; education received less support in states where traditions of localism were strong, political parties were lopsided and internally fragmented, educational interest groups were divided, populations were heavily rural and stable, tax-minded businessmen aided by conservative press created a strong ethos against state spending and state action, executive and legislative leadership was weak and uncommitted, state boards and state departments of education were inadequately staffed and divided, and state revenue systems were rigid and unviable. The most common handicap to increasing school revenues, however, was determined to be the "inability of school[persons] to work and speak as one for a responsible general school aid bill" (p. 52).

Similarly, Masters et al. (1964) studied state policy decisions on school matters in three states—Missouri, Illinois, and Michigan—and found (a) those who tried to influence public school policy worked within a framework or "an area of permissible negotiation" (p. 264) or political culture that had been established by the state leaders, including the legislature

and the governor; (b) public school policy proposals that were debated in the legislatures came from one or more educator groups—those that were likely to have a direct stake in the outcome of the decisions—not the general public (p. 268); (c) proposed increases in school expenditures were likely to activate competing groups that opposed any increase in state expenditures (p. 267); and (d) educator groups worked closely with legislators who tended to specialize in education issues to develop consensus on policies (p. 276).

Iannaccone (1967) examined the earlier studies by Bailey et al. (1962) and Masters et al. (1964) and identified four types of relationships between education lobbyists and legislatures: (a) locally-based disparate structures, where legislators and local lobbyists related to each other primarily on the basis of local school district needs (i.e., geography), rather than regional, statewide, or association (e.g., teachers, school boards, etc.) needs; (b) statewide-monolithic structures, in which the various education groups shared a considerable consensus about the political needs of the schools and approached the legislature as a united coalition; (c) statewide-fragmented structures, in which local interests were aggregated at the state level but, due to conflicts among representatives of teachers, school boards, and administrators, each approached the legislature with a different agenda; and (d) statewide-syndical structures, in which the education interests were aggregated at the state level and linked in a formal governmental unit, such as the Illinois School Problems Commission. Iannaccone concluded that education groups in all four types of structures had been successful in preventing the enactment of legislation they opposed and, in statewide-fragmented states, some groups had successfully blocked the enactment of legislative

proposals initiated by others. Except for locally-based disparate lobbies, all were capable of successfully initiating legislation.

Ten years later, Aufderheide (1976), who studied education lobby groups in 12 states, defined a coalition as a number of different organizations that have consciously worked together over a period of years to achieve some common purpose. He found such enduring coalitions in 9 of the 12 states and formal arrangements for establishing coalitions were reported in seven. According to Aufderheide, the typical coalition included the major education organizations, although some states' coalitions included related groups such as the PTA.

According to Iannaccone and Cistone (1974), an early view of education politics was the "iron triangle" (p. 45), with interest groups initiating policies and legislatures enacting them. According to this view, "politics of state education is a legislative game influenced to a large degree by traditional organized coalitions of established educational interest groups" (p. 46). Mazzoni (1991), who had spent more than 20 years studying the politics of education in Minnesota, however, viewed the politics of education as more complex than iron triangles and developed an "arena model" (p. 116) in which people, interests, and ideals contend for agenda status and policy preference. The arena model recognized a set of participants, established the institutional and social context, mediated the potency of resources and strategies, and encouraged some means of reaching some agreements. Further, argued Mazzoni,

> Moving an issue to a new arena can change the key actors, relevant resources, incentives for action, influence relationships, and governing rules—and hence winners and losers—in policy struggles (p. 116).

Thus, Mazzoni concluded that the complexity, the context, and the amount of change in the Minnesota education policy system, required new theoretical perspectives to guide future research (Mazzoni, 1976, 1985, 1986, 1991, 1993; Mazzoni & Malen, 1985; Mazzoni, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 1983). Further, Mazzoni (1993) suggested that the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988, 1991, 1993) might provide "a new conceptual synthesis of various intellectual strands and substantive findings from public policy research" (p. 377).

The Advocacy Coalition Framework

Sabatier (1988, 1991, 1993) developed and revised the Advocacy Coalition Framework. He concluded that policy change over periods of a decade or more is a function of three sets of processes: (a) the effects of stable system parameters on the constraints and resources of the various subsystem actors, (b) changes external to the subsystem, and (c) the interaction of competing coalitions with a policy subsystem.

Stable System Parameters

According to researchers, policy change at the state level has been constrained by a variety of historical, social, legal, and resource characteristics of the society of which it was a part (Heclo, 1974; Hofferbert, 1974; Kiser & Ostrom, 1982). In the Advocacy Coalition Framework, Sabatier (1993) labeled these factors, which were external to the specific policy subsystem, stable system parameters. They included (a) the basic attributes of the problem area, (b) basic distribution of natural resources, (c) fundamental sociocultural values and social structure, and (d) basic legal structures (p. 20). This assumption was supported by the research of Wildavsky (1987) who wrote, "Cultures (shared values justifying social relationships) post lookouts and give warnings just as surely as armies post pickets" (p. 8),

and of Marshall et al., (1989), who observed, "Cultures are durable and stable. They change slowly, and the changes seldom require veering away from a culturally stable and approved set of values and behaviors" (p. 50).

Basic attributes. According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the characteristics of a problem area, such as education, will affect policy options and the factors that influence policy change (Sabatier, 1988, 1991, 1993). For example, Mawhinney (1992, 1993) noted that the basic attributes of education vary between Canada and the United states. While the Canadian federal government granted rights to education and was responsible for protecting those rights, the United States had no specific authority over education—education is a activity reserved to the states (p. 63)—and, as a result, schooling is not uniform across states.

Basic distribution of natural resources. Sabatier (1993) predicted that the present and past distribution of natural resources would affect a society's overall wealth, the viability of different economic sectors, many aspects of its culture, and the feasibility of options in many policy areas. Mawhinney (1992, 1993) found that in Canada, the influence of Ontario's wealth, which derived from its geographical location and natural resources, on the provisions of public services such as education confirms the Advocacy Coalition Framework assumption that the distribution of such wealth influences the feasibility of options in many policy areas. During a period of prosperity, the province expanded educational services and increased spending by 454 percent, schools and universities were opened and a community college system was established, schools were permitted to teach a number of subjects in French, and complete secondary school programs were established. This assumption was also supported by Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt (1989) who found that policy actors believed that "available

resources will always drive policy," and that "more resources meant more policy options that were feasible, and less meant less" (p. 48).

Fundamental social structure and cultural values. According to Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1993), "political power in most countries tends to be highly correlated with income, social class, and organizational size" (p. 21). This assumption was supported by Elazar (1972), who found that states have distinguishable political cultures, developed from the influence of the histories, and they differ in their regional geography, migration patterns, and value orientations toward the role of government; by Mills (1956), who found that some view social class and income as the bases of political power, which, in turn, determines political outcomes; and by Pye (1968), Marshall et al. (1989), and Sharkansky (1969), who concluded that political culture theory provides a way to view the relationships among social, economic, and political variables and resultant policy change. Elazar defined political culture as:

> The particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political action is imbedded. Political culture, like all culture, is rooted in the cumulative historical experiences of particular groups of people. Indeed the origins of particular patterns of political culture are often lost in the mists of time. (p. 89)

Pye wrote that political culture is, " . . . the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system" (p. 218). Pye referred to this concept as the "rules of the game" (p. 127).

Elazar (1972) examined states' political cultures and concluded that there were three major political subcultures—individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic. In an

individualistic political culture, government is popularly conceived of as a marketplace in which policies emerge from the bargaining of individuals and groups acting out of self-interest. Governmental intervention in matters regarded as private (e.g., business enterprise) is limited, politics is viewed only as a tool for individual social and economic improvement, political parties seek to control office primarily to distribute rewards to party loyalists, and political activity is carried on by professional politicians. In a moralistic political culture, people believe that government exists to advance the shared interest of all citizens rather than their separate private interest. Since government exists to advance the shared public interest, it is believed that every citizen should participate. In a traditionalistic political culture, citizens perceive government to be paternalistic and elitist. Political power is reserved for a small and self-perpetuating elite with a right to govern because of family or social position, the role of government is to preserve the established social order, the preference is for a single political party (often divided into factions) that merely fills public positions with persons sympathetic to elitist politics, and the average citizen is not expected to participate in politics (not even to vote) but accept passively the will of the ruling oligarchy.

Similarly, Marshall et al. (1989) developed "A Model of a Cultural Paradigm as a Way of Understanding the Public Policy System" (p. 7), which viewed policymaking as the way that cultural values are authorized and confirmed. Actors in the policymaking subsystem, said Marshall et al., function in "assumptive worlds" (p. 10)—understanding that a particular set of rules must be learned in order to work in the culture of state education politics. The authors explained that in the assumptive-worlds paradigm, policy elite were elected or appointed to reinforce preferred ways of organizing schooling and acculturated to a distinctive assumptive

world with its particular understanding of power and processes. Assumptive worlds also determined who initiated policy action, what ideas were acceptable, what activity was appropriate, and what special conditions affected the policy process (p. 157). Thus, each of the three views of political cultures—stable parameters (Sabatier, 1993), political subcultures (Elazar, 1972), or assumptive worlds (Marshall et al.)—have demonstrated the stability and durability of understandings of social traditions and societal realities, which were translated into policymakers' perceptions of the feasibility of policy change.

Basic legal structure. The Advocacy Coalition Framework asserted that in most political systems, basic legal norms will be quite resistant to change (Sabatier, 1993; Mawhinney, 1993). Mawhinney found that the basic legal structures governing education in Canada and the United States had been stable, but they also showed the differences between the two nations. In Canada, the British North America Act of 1867 set forth the fundamental political values that emphasized the common good and promised peace, order, and good government. In contrast, the Declaration of Independence emphasized individualism by promising life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (p. 62). This assumption was supported by Marshall et al. (1989), who found that the role of the courts and the fundamental norms of administrative law tended to be rather stable over periods of several decades.

Policy Subsystems

Sabatier (1993) postulated that the most useful aggregate unit of analysis for understanding policy change would be a policy subsystem, that is, those actors from a variety of public and private organizations who were involved with a specific policy problem or issue such as air pollution control, mental health, surface transportation, or education. Several

researchers have agreed that actors concerned with a specific problem or policy area have tended to form relatively autonomous subsystems (Dodd & Schott, 1979; Fritschler, 1983; Griffith, 1961; Hamm, 1983). Early studies of the politics of education also supported the notion of an education policy subsystem. However, their definition of the education policy subsystem was limited to education lobbies and legislators. Later studies broadened the concept to include legislators, chief state school officers, teacher organizations, governors and their staff, legislative staff, state board of education members, school boards associations, administrator organizations, courts, the federal government, non-educator groups, and education researcher groups (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Iannaccone, 1967; Marshall, 1989; Milstein & Jennings, 1973; Mitchell, 1981; Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981; Wirt & Kirst, 1989). Sabatier's definition of policy subsystems also extended beyond the traditional notions of iron triangles or whirlpools, which were limited to administrative agencies, legislative committees, and interest groups at a single level of government, to include actors at multiple levels of government, as well as journalists, researchers, and policy analysts.

Competing advocacy coalitions. Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993a) maintained that policy subsystems would contain two or more advocacy coalitions that compete to dominate state policy outcomes. Further, members of each coalition "share a set of basic beliefs (policy goals plus causal and other perceptions) and . . . seek to manipulate the rules, budgets, and personnel of governmental institutions in order to achieve these goals over time" (p. 5). Over time, advocacy coalitions would revise their beliefs or alter their strategies based on their perception of the adequacy of government decisions, the impact of the decisions, or new information arising from search processes and external dynamics (Sabatier, 1993, p. 19).

Belief systems of coalitions. Sabatier (1993) asserted that coalitions within a policy subsystem would be organized around the belief systems of its members. Further, because subsystems were composed of policy elites rather than members of the general public, Sabatier argued that there were "strong grounds for assuming that most actors will have the relatively complex and internally consistent belief systems in the policy area(s) of interest to them" (p. 30). Sabatier organized beliefs into three levels: (a) "a deep core of fundamental normative and ontological axiom that define a person's underlying personal philosophy," (b) "a policy core of fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the system," and (c) "a set of secondary aspects, instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement the policy core" (p. 30). Sabatier further asserted that belief systems are translated into

> Public policies, which can be conceptualized in the same manner as political belief systems, that is, sets of priorities, perceptions of important causal relationships, perceptions of the seriousness of the problem, and perceptions of the efficacy of various sorts of institutional relationships as means of attaining those value priorities. (p. 35)

Thus, policies have been found to have a structure similar to belief systems in that they are composed of a very deep abstract core that tend to be stable, a policy core that reflected the deep core beliefs, and a large number of secondary aspects that were susceptible to change.

Studies in the politics-of-education field have supported Sabatier's notions of (a) a structure of beliefs and (b) policies that reflect those beliefs (Marshall et al., 1989; Wirt, Mitchell, & Marshall, 1988). Marshall et al., identified "four core social values" (choice, efficiency, equity, and quality) (p. 89), which were most similar to Sabatier's concept of deep core beliefs. Further, Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt described policies as the means by which

policy subsystems achieved one or more of the core values. Their understanding supported Sabatier's notion of a policy core. Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt explained that to achieve the choice value, policies gave local authorities the option of making or rejecting policy decisions. To achieve the core value of efficiency, policies expanded and centralized government functions in order to provide for the orderly and efficient delivery of education services. To achieve equity, policies supported the use of political authority to redistribute resources to close a perceived gap between human needs and available resources. Finally, to achieve the core value of quality, policies stressed the value of education for improving the quality of life for citizens.

According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, secondary aspects of policies would include specific strategies that are advocated by coalitions to implement their core beliefs (Sabatier, 1993), and because there are usually multiple strategies available to implement core beliefs, secondary aspects would be more likely to change over time. Further, Sabatier has found that coalition members tended to agree substantially on issues pertaining to their policy core, but less on secondary aspects.

Politics-of-education research has supported the Advocacy Coalition Framework assumption that multiple strategies exist to achieve core values. According to Marshall et al. (1989), strategies to achieve choice have included vouchers, school choice, alternative school programs, school-based decisionmaking, and decentralized budgeting. Strategies to achieve efficiency have included increased regulation of schools, centralization of governance, and adoption of scientific management principles. Strategies to further equity have included the standardization of educational opportunity within and across all school programs, the

provision of special educational resources to disadvantaged and handicapped children to enable them to achieve greater equity in society after they left school, and the elimination of broad disparities in per pupil expenditures among school districts. Finally, strategies to further the core value of quality have included increasing money and resources, increasing minimum requirements for teachers' and administrators certification, and increasing the number of required courses in the school curricula.

Sabatier (1993) explains that not everyone in a policy subsystem belongs to an advocacy coalition or shares the core beliefs that are in conflict. Some participants in the subsystem are policy brokers whose "dominant concerns are with keeping the level of political conflict within acceptable limits and reaching some 'reasonable solution to the problem'" (p. 27). The role of policy broker is traditionally filled by legislators (Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981, p. 102).

Stability of coalition membership. Sabatier's (1993) Advocacy Coalition Framework held that the composition of a coalition, which is organized around common beliefs in core elements that are stable over periods of a decade or more would be stable over time. According to Sabatier, this would be especially true on major controversies within a policy subsystem when core beliefs were in dispute (p. 27). Thus, Sabatier rejected Riker's (1962) notion that policy change is dominated by actors who are primarily motivated by their short-term self-interests to form "coalitions of convenience" that vary in composition over time. Sabatier's claim was consistent with the evidence from studies that argued the process of policymaking requires a time perspective of a decade or more (Wildavsky & Tenenbaum, 1981; Marmor, 1970).

Policy-oriented learning. The Advocacy Coalition Framework concept of policy-oriented learning—using policy research to better understand the world within a particular policy area in order to identify means to achieve their fundamental objectives—incorporated the notion of enlightenment (Weiss, 1977), that is, over time, coalitions learned about the effects of government policy and used that information to further their goals. According to Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993b), many aspects of a coalition's belief system would be susceptible to change on the basis of scientific and technical analysis. Such technical analysis would play an important role in "shaping the emergence of an issue as well as perceptions of its seriousness, its causes, and the likely consequences of various policy alternatives" (p. 41). However, that research has shown that such policy-oriented learning tends to effect change only in the secondary aspects of belief systems.

External System Events

Sabatier (1993) first identified three principal factors external to the policy subsystem that could effect policy change: (a) socioeconomic conditions and technology changes can either undermine the causal assumptions of present policies or significantly alter the political support of various advocacy coalitions; (b) changes in systemic governing coalitions through "critical elections" (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989, p. 104) that result in the control of the chief executive's office and both legislative bodies by the same coalition can lead to policy change; (c) policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems. Although the research of Marshall et al. (1989) also viewed courts, federal statutes, and non-education groups as actors involved in state policy formulation, especially in the area of school funding, they viewed these actors as part of the education policy subsystem instead of as external forces.

With new evidence from additional studies, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) found they needed to make three modifications to the Advocacy Coalition Framework. First, they concluded that external events alone would not cause changes in the policy core. Instead, those events provided opportunities that must be interpreted and exploited by those inside the policy subsystem, especially minority coalitions, in order for change to occur. Second, changes in system-wide governing coalitions need not be limited to critical or realigning elections in order to stimulate change; elections that change critical actors could inaugurate important changes. Third, they found that public opinion constituted a substantial constraint on the range of policy options available to policymakers; however, when public opinion changes, it can be of sufficient importance to include as a separate category of external events (p. 223).

Stable System Parameters of Education Policy in Tennessee

This section presents a review of the literature on the origins and tradition of education policymaking in Tennessee. It discusses the literature on the stable system parameters as defined by Sabatier in the Advocacy Coalition Framework.

According to Sabatier (1993), the concept of stable system parameters has included (a) basic attributes of the problem area, (b) basic constitutional/legal structures (rules), (c) basic distribution of natural resources, and (d) fundamental sociocultural values and social structure. These parameters have been found to be relatively stable over several decades. Much of the literature about Tennessee supported Sabatier's premises.

Basic Attributes

A basic attribute of education in the United States has been that it was an activity reserved to state governments (*Serrano v. Priest,* 1971, 1976). Tennessee, which became a state in 1796, did not provide for a system of education until 1834, when it adopted its second constitution. In 1924, the constitutional provision for education was revised, and it has governed public education in Tennessee for more than 70 years. It says,

> The state of Tennessee recognizes the inherent value of education and encourages its support. The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance, support and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools. (Tenn. Const., Art. XI, § 12)

Subsequent legislation enacted by the General Assembly in 1925 established a system of public education, created the governance structure, and provided financial aid to local school districts on the basis of average daily attendance with allotments varying inversely with the yield from the local property tax (Alexander, 1990).

Basic Legal Structure

The process for establishing educational policy in Tennessee was derived from legislation passed by the General Assembly. That legislation originated in the form of a bill in either the House or Senate. The bill must be introduced by the tenth legislative day of the session unless an extension is granted by two-thirds of the originating body. The bill, after introduction, must be passed by the House and Senate Education Committees. Any education bill that requires funding must also be passed by the Finance, Ways, and Means Committees. It is then considered by both groups' Calendar Committees and scheduled for debate. For a bill to become law, it must be considered and passed on three different legislative days in each house. On the third and final consideration, the bill must receive approval of a majority of the

members to which each House is entitled (50 votes in the House and 17 votes in the Senate). When this occurs, the legislation is signed by each Speaker and sent to the governor for his signature. The governor may veto such legislation, but that veto can be over-ridden by a simple majority vote in each House. In addition, education policy is developed by the Tennessee State Board of Education. The day-to-day administration of the state public school system is carried out by the state department of education. The chief state school officer is the commissioner of education, who is appointed by the governor (Tennessee Department of State, 1994, pp. 4 and 142-146).

Branson and Steele (1974) studied the education governance and policymaking structure in Tennessee as part of the Ohio State University Education Governance Project, a study of education governance in 12 states (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976). The purpose of the study was to expand the knowledge of how states determine policies for the public schools. They concluded:

1. The structure of education governance in Tennessee was inadequate. There was a tradition of political domination of the state education agency by the Democratic party, which was predominant. When the Republican governor attempted to end patronage, he met with resistance and had to abandon that goal in order to achieve his other political goals.

2. The legislature played a weak role due to "inadequate staffing, low pay, and short sessions." It did not have the capacity to formulate and initiate education legislation especially when the executive and legislative branch were dominated by different parties.

3. The state board of education was "overshadowed and dominated by the commissioner and governor" (p. 94). Although some board members were aware of the group's ineffectiveness, the members could not agree on the need to change.

Distribution of Natural Resources

Tennessee has been thought of as roughly divided into three general geographic areas known as the "grand divisions" or the "three states of Tennessee," which formed the basis of the primary political sections of the state. Represented by the three stars on the state flag, the three divisions were called East, Middle, and West Tennessee. The three divisions differed in geography and natural resources (Branson & Steele, 1974; Tennessee Department of State, 1994). East Tennessee contained the Unaka and Great Smoky Mountains, the Great Valley of the Tennessee River, and some of the Cumberland Plateau, which was settled by the British. By the early 1900s, the general poverty of the area, the need for flood control, and the desire for electric power was a consideration of politicians who created the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Middle Tennessee was composed of much of the Cumberland Plateau, the Central Basin where the capital, Nashville, was located, and the Highland Rim around the basin. The area was settled by pioneers from East Tennessee, who traveled through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky and then south to the Cumberland River to settle this area.

West Tennessee was composed of the Western Tennessee River Valley and the Mississippi River Flood Plain. This area was settled by the French, who gained access via the Mississippi River; it contained the best agricultural land. In 1795, East and Middle Tennessee joined to form the state of Tennessee, which then acquired West Tennessee from the Indians in 1818. Because Tennessee was situated on the border between the North and South, its citizens were divided on the issue of secession from the Union. Pro-Union citizens prevailed early in 1861, but, after Lincoln requested troops from Tennessee, separatists dominated and

the state seceded from the Union. However, East Tennesseans continued to support the Union, oppose slavery, and, following the war, led the state's efforts for readmission.

Fundamental Sociocultural Values and Social Structure

In his study of the political culture, Elazar (1972) classified most of Tennessee as traditionalistic—based on a paternalistic and elitist conception of government—and the Appalachian area in the eastern and southeastern part of the state as a mixture of traditionalistic and moralistic—people believed that government existed to advance the shared interest of all citizens rather than their separate private interests.

Summary

The literature review showed that the study of education policymaking was relatively new. Further, a satisfactory theoretical framework had not yet emerged from the state education policymaking research. Previous studies of education policymaking in Tennessee provided a historical perspective for the planning and execution of additional research. The review helped identify research questions that still needed to be answered and research that was thought to be needed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to investigate the extent to which the education policymaking process that resulted in the passage of the Tennessee's Education Improvement Act and the supporting tax rate increase in 1992 conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The Advocacy Coalition Framework was a theoretical framework that recognized the need for longer time frames that incorporated the knowledge that policy change would occur over time and, thus, required the investigation of policymaking processes that spanned a decade or more. During the past two decades, Tennessee had enacted and implemented three major education reform and school funding changes, culminating in the Education Improvement Act of 1992 and a supporting half-cent increase in the state sales tax. Given the long-term view of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the selected education policymaking processes of the past 20 years that resulted in the passage of the three major education reform bills and the supporting tax increases were the subject of investigation in this study. The research questions that guided this study included:

1. In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992?

2. In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in either 1972 or 1984?

3. In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core?

4. In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects?

5. In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core?

6. In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects?

7. In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces?

This chapter describes the design of the study—the unit of analysis, the data collection, and the data analysis—related to the investigation of the research questions.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was the education policy subsystem in Tennessee. This was a case study, which Huberman and Miles (1994) have defined as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 440), and which Stake (1994) has called "a choice of object to be studied" (p. 236). Further, the study was what Stake has described as an instrumental case study—one in which a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. According to Stake,

> The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed . . . because this helps us pursue the external interest. The case may be seen as typical of other cases or not. The choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest. (p. 237)

The use of an instrumental case study narrowed the focus of the researcher to the specific concerns defined by earlier researchers and theorists. Stake (1994) wrote, "The methods of an instrumental case study draw the researcher toward illustrating how the concerns of researchers and theorists are manifest in the case" (pp. 242-243). Case studies have traditionally been used by scholars of the politics of education who seek to understand the

political processes by which states set direction for their schools (Bailey et al., 1962; Berke & Kirst, 1972; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Marshall et al., 1989; Masters et al., 1964; Mazzoni, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1986, Mazzoni & Clugston, 1987; Mazzoni, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 1983; Milstein, 1976; Stewart, 1991; Usdan, et al., 1969). The case-study design for this study had the potential to provide insight into the refinement of theory (Stake) by limiting the research to the specific concerns defined by Sabatier (1993) in his Advocacy Coalition Framework and thereby advancing the understanding of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The choice of the Tennessee case was theory driven, not driven by a concern for representativeness. The education policy subsystem in Tennessee may have been typical of other cases or not. The case was selected not to achieve generalizability, but to gain an understanding of the conditions under which particular findings appeared and operated and the extent to which those findings conform or fail to conform to the theoretical framework.

Data Collection

According to Yin (1984), an important principle of data collection for high-quality case studies is the use of multiple sources of data—"evidence from two or more sources that converge on the same set of facts or findings" (p. 78). To collect data for this study, the researcher used two types of data sources: (a) personal interviews with well-informed respondents; and (b) printed documents including letters, memoranda, news releases, news clippings, and formal research studies of the Tennessee education policy subsystem.

Interview Data

Potential interview respondent role groups selected for this study have been variously defined in the literature as members of state education "issue networks" (Kirst & Meister,

1983), "policy subcommunities" (Kingdon, 1984), and "policy subsystems"(Easton, 1965; Sabatier, 1988). According to these researchers, members of the education policy subsystem include the governor and key advisors, legislative education committee chairpersons, key legislative education staff, the chief state school officer and key staff, members and staff of the state board of education, leaders and officials of educator associations, business and civic group leaders, and other key informants who have been long-time observers of education policy (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Iannaccone, 1967; Mitchell, 1981; Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981; Sabatier, 1988, 1993). To identify members of the education policy subsystem in Tennessee in 1991-92, the researcher used a "snowballing" technique (Kingdon, 1984, pp. 220-225; Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981, p. 5)—an adaptation of the reputational survey developed by Hunter (1953). Eight individuals who represented the legislature, the department of education, school administrators, teacher educators, the Democratic Party, and business interests were called, informed about the researcher's dissertation study, and asked "Who should I be sure to talk with about the Education Improvement Act when I am in Tennessee?" Twelve actors who were named by three or more of the individuals were selected to be interviewed. They included the governor's key education advisor, House Education Committee chairman, Senate Education Committee chairman and co-chairman, key staff person to the chief state school officer, executive director of the state board of education, executive director of the school superintendents' association, executive director of the Tennessee Education Association, executive director of the Tennessee Business Roundtable, ex-commissioner of education, developer of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, and one of three rural school superintendents who filed the lawsuit that resulted in the

decision that the state's school funding was unconstitutional. The number and positions of the actors identified through the snowballing process were consistent with the number and positions of key actors identified in previous educational policy subsystems research (Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Iannaccone, 1967; Mitchell, 1981; Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981; Sabatier, 1988, 1993).

Instrumentation. A review of the literature revealed no previously developed data collection instruments that could be used to collect the necessary data. Thus, the researcher developed a structured or standardized interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview questions, their sequence, and their wording were fixed (Kerlinger, 1973). Borg and Gall (1979), Good (1972), and Sudman and Bradburn (1983) indicated the necessity for a well-developed schedule for managing the interview. The researcher considered several elements when constructing the interview, including the sequence, questions, and topics to be included in the interview. To enhance the validity of the interview questions, the researcher established a chain of evidence—"explicit links between the question asked, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn" (Yin, 1984, p. 78). One or more interview questions were developed to elicit information about each research question. For this study, the purpose of the data collection was to obtain sufficient information to address the research questions using the data collected in Tennessee.

The first research question asked: In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992? To investigate whether advocacy coalitions existed in Tennessee in 1992 and, if so, what groups composed the membership of coalitions, the researcher developed the following four interview questions:

1. What were the major issues under debate? Which of these issues were the most controversial? What groups took opposing sides on these issues? Who was on which side of the issues?

2. Did you work with others to support or oppose any parts of the EIA legislation? What parts of the EIA legislation did you and the groups you worked with support? Oppose? Why? At what point in time did these groups decide to work together?

3. Did the groups you worked with meet to discuss their positions on the EIA? How frequently did the groups meet? What tasks were undertaken to further the groups interests in the legislation?

4. What resources did you and those you worked with use to advance their particular legislative positions?

The second research question asked: In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as it was in 1972 and 1984? To answer that question, the researcher developed three interview questions:

1. Of the groups that worked together to support or oppose the EIA, which groups are working together during the current legislative session? Have these groups typically worked together on legislative issues over the years? If so, could you please tell me about some of these past efforts?

2. Were you involved in the 1972 debate over the full funding of kindergarten? If so, do you recall what groups worked together in 1972 to support or oppose the full funding of kindergarten?

3. Were you involved in the 1984 debate over the Comprehensive Education Reform Act? If so, do you recall what groups worked together at that time to support or oppose the Comprehensive Education Reform Act?

The third research question asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core? To answer that question, the researcher developed three interview questions:

1. What are the most important changes you've seen in education as a result of the passage of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) in 1992?

2. Could you briefly tell me about your role in the debate over the EIA?

3. What positions did you or the group you represent agree with most? Why? What positions did you or the group you represent agree with least? Why?

The fourth research question asked: To what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects? To answer that question, the researcher developed two interview questions:

1. What positions did you or the group you represent agree with least? Why?

2. In your opinion, what affect did the opposition or support of these various groups have on the content of the final version of the Education Improvement Act?

The fifth research question asked: In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core? To answer that question, the researcher developed the following question:

1. Did the groups you worked with change their position to support or oppose any part of the EIA legislation at any time during the debate? Why? How important was that change?

The sixth research question asked: In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a primary force for policy change in the policy core or the secondary aspects? To explore that question, the researcher developed three interview questions:

1. What information about education reform or school funding did you have access to during the debate on the EIA?

2. Did your group publish, alone or with others, any information related to the EIA? If so, what was it? Why did you publish it?

3. Are you aware of any group or coalition that changed its position on education reform or school funding strategies as the result of new information? If so, could you briefly tell me about it?

Finally, the seventh research question asked: In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces? To answer that question, the researcher developed one interview question:

1. In your opinion, what was the impetus for the EIA legislation?

Validity. To assure validity, the interview protocol instrument avoided leading questions or questions beyond the respondent's knowledge. Further, questions were phrased to probe for reflective replies and indepth answers and to avoid response effect (Sudman & Bradburn, 1983). To assure construct validity, the content of the interview schedule was reviewed by an expert ethnographer. Revisions were made, and the instrument was then field tested by conducting two telephone interviews. The results of the test interview data were reviewed by the ethnographer, who agreed that the data were satisfactory and the instrument was ready for use in the study. To further reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation of the data, the researcher employed the procedure, "redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanations . . . procedures generally known as triangulation" (Stake, 1994, p. 241). Thus, the researcher compared data from one interview to data from another interview as well as to data from print documents about education policymaking in Tennessee.

Reliability. To assure reliability, the researcher arranged and conducted all of the interviews personally. In preparation for conducting the interviews, the researcher was trained and then observed during practice interviews by an expert in the field who was agreed upon by the doctoral committee. The expert confirmed the researcher's communication expertise, questioning techniques, and other skills needed to conduct interviews for this study. Finally,

to establish safeguards against bias, the researcher conducted two practice interviews under the supervision of the expert.

Procedures. A letter of introduction was mailed to each respondent (see Appendix B). The letter explained the nature of the research, emphasized the importance of the respondent's contribution to the study, and solicited the individual's cooperation with the study. The researcher then telephoned each respondent to arrange a convenient time for the interview. The interviews were conducted at a time and place that was convenient for the respondent. The researcher requested approximately 45 minutes for each interview.

The researcher arrived at the agreed-upon place for the interview and monitored the length of the interview by using a watch. In addition, the researcher took a microcassette recorder to record the interview. The use of a tape recorder was considered by Borg and Gall (1979) to offer a decided advantage to the interviewer in that it reduces interviewer bias and the tendency of the interviewer to make unconscious selection of data as could occur in note-taking. This procedure also minimized disruption and allowed the interviewer to be more attentive and interactive. To reduce the possible alteration of the environment by the introduction of a tape recorder, a small black (3" x 5" x 1") microcassette recorder was used.

The respondents were advised that the purpose of the recorder was to ensure accuracy in the communication and to shorten the time needed for the interview. The participants also were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and that no one other than the researcher and typist would have access to the tapes. Further, the respondents were told that the information and perceptions expressed in the report would be aggregated, summary information. Finally, the respondents were told that the recorder would be turned off if, at any

time, they wished to communicate sensitive information that they thought would be helpful to the study but preferred not to have recorded. Borg and Gall (1979) indicated the importance of following this procedure at the beginning of the interview as being helpful in promoting effective communications and establishing rapport with the respondent.

Document Data

Documents including formal studies of the Tennessee education policy subsystem, news clippings and other articles appearing in the news media, administrative documents, and other written reports of events were systematically collected by the researcher for use in this study. A review of the research literature was undertaken to find formal research studies that had been conducted. In addition, during field visits to conduct personal interviews, time was set aside to collect relevant documents from the Nashville library and the Tennessee State Library. Individuals who were interviewed were also asked to provide any relevant documents about their organization and its activities in the education policy subsystem. The most important use of these documents was to verify and augment evidence from personal interviews as a means of assuring validity.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of examining, classifying by category, and aggregating the evidence to address the research questions that guided the study (Yin, 1984). The analytic strategy for this study relied on the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which also shaped the research questions and data collection process. This theoretical framework was an example of grounded theory, a systematic statement of plausible relationships that "call for exploration of

each new situation to see if they fit, how they might fit, and how they might not fit" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 279).

Further, the Advocacy Coalition Framework provided the researcher a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data and developing categories that were "not mere labels, but compartments with explicitly defined boundaries into which material is grouped for analysis" (Budd, Thorp, & Donodew, 1978, p. 39). The Advocacy Coalition Framework enabled the researcher to create classification categories to code the raw data that were specific and comprehensive prior to data collection. One category was established for each research question.

Research question 1 asked: In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to research question 1 was "coalition membership."

Research question 2 asked: In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in either 1972 or 1984? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to question 2 was "stability of coalition membership."

Research question 3 asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to question 3 was "policy core of coalition beliefs."

Research question 4 asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects? The category developed for aggregating data related to question 4 was "secondary aspects of coalition beliefs."

Research question 5 asked: In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to question 5 was "policy positions relinquished."

Research question 6 asked: In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to question 6 was "policy-oriented learning."

Research question 7 asked: In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces? The category that was developed for aggregating data related to question 7 was "dynamic external events."

The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim from the tape recordings. Records of the transcribed interviews were kept on paper and in a computer file by name of the respondent. Paper copies of the raw data were examined and segments of the data were coded according to the interview question being answered. Responses of all respondents were aggregated first by interview question. Interview question data were then aggregated by category. Similarly, print documents were examined and relevant data were aggregated by interview question and then by category. Once the data were aggregated by category, the researcher summarized the data within each category. These summary findings are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presents the findings in the form of a description of major education policy change that has occurred in Tennessee between 1972 and 1992. This information provided the context for Chapter 5, which presented the findings by category as developed around the research questions. In Chapter 6, the researcher synthesizes the data

and draws conclusions that illustrate how the concerns of researchers and theorists about the Advocacy Coalition Framework as expressed by the research questions were addressed by this study.

Summary

The unit of analysis for this study was the education policy subsystem of Tennessee. Data were collected from multiple sources—respondents who were members of Tennessee's education policy subsystem and relevant print documents. Potential respondent role groups were identified based on a review of the literature. Specific respondents were identified using a snowballing technique. Relevant documents were identified by interview respondents and through a review of the literature. To collect information from the respondents, an interview schedule was designed explicitly for the purposes of this study. Each question on the interview schedule was linked to one research question. Relevant documents were used as a second source of evidence to verify and augment the evidence from the respondents. Interview data and documents were collected in a systematic manner, and relevant information was recorded, examined, aggregated by category, and analyzed. Categories, which were developed for analysis of the data, were linked directly to the research questions. Following the data analysis, the data were presented using a detailed narrative. Finally, the findings were summarized and synthesized, conclusions drawn, implications discussed, and recommendations for further study developed.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Education Policy Change in Tennessee Between 1972 and 1992

This chapter present the findings of this study in order to describe the context and chronicle major education policy change in Tennessee over a 20-year period. This description demonstrated that the study met the requirements of the theoretical approach of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which included at least one policy cycle (consisting of formulation, implementation, and reformulation) at a specific level of government and dealt with a period of time of sufficient length to incorporate the enlightenment function of policy research (Mawhinney, 1993, p. 65).

The unit of analysis for this study was the Tennessee education policy subsystem. According to procedures described in Chapter 3, data were collected from multiple sources—respondents who were participants in Tennessee's education policy subsystem and formal research studies that described interactions within the education policy subsystem over time. Between 1972 and 1992, Tennessee enacted three major education reform bills along with supporting tax increases. An analysis of those education policy changes between 1972 and 1992 in Tennessee was accomplished by examining multiple data sources.

The primary data sources for major education policy change in 1972 were two formal research studies, *State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Tennessee* (Branson & Steele, 1974) and "Educational Interest Groups and the State Legislature" (Aufderheide, 1976). The primary data sources for major education reform policy in 1984 were (a) a doctoral dissertation, *A Study of Conflict Related to the Development of the Comprehensive Education*

Reform Act of 1984 (Lansford, 1984), (b) the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* (Payne, 1982), and (c) "Strong State-Level Leadership for Education Reform: Tennessee's Example" (Achilles, Payne, Lansford; 1988). The primary data sources for major education policy change in 1992 were personal interviews and relevant documents such as newspaper articles and association publications. Analyses of the data from formal research studies and transcripts of personal interviews were conducted. Analyses of newspaper articles and government documents were used to verify and supplement the interview data. The data sources revealed extensive information about Tennessee education policy subsystem interactions and dynamic external events over the 20-year period.

1972 Education Reform and Tax Increases

According to Branson and Steele (1974), major education policy change came in 1972 when, after 12 years without a tax increase in the state, Tennessee enacted a half-cent state sales tax increase on the existing base to support education. The Branson and Steele study found that throughout his 1970 election campaign, Governor Dunn had promised full implementation of a statewide kindergarten program. Once elected, Governor Dunn proposed tax increases to pay for educator pay raises and statewide kindergarten programs. The kindergarten proposal was controversial, because between 1945 and 1960, it had been illegal to use state funds for kindergartens. In 1965, the state began to fund pilot kindergarten programs and, by 1971, the state was spending nearly a $1 million per year on such programs. The tax increase proposed by Dunn would have raised $17 million for kindergartens and $13 million for teacher pay increases. Dunn's first proposal was to increase the state sales tax

one-half cent and broaden the tax base to include services, automobiles, and commercial leases.

The controversy over kindergarten and tax increases was not the only controversy at that time. Three of the state's major cities—Nashville, Memphis, and Chattanooga—were under court orders to implement desegregation plans, which required busing. In 1971, the legislature repealed its compulsory attendance law in an attempt to resist busing and, in 1972, it prohibited schools from using state funds to transport children to any school other than the one nearest their home and also banned districts from using transportation facilities to achieve racial balance. Branson and Steele (1974), interpreting the legislative behavior, said,

> The actions of the General Assembly were symbolic in that little effort was made to carry out the intent of the laws or resolution. Such official actions, however, do tend to reinforce the attitudes of the general public and make change more difficult. (p. 47)

Thus, Branson and Steele concluded that public sentiment against intervention and change in its schools may have negatively influenced attitudes toward statewide kindergarten programs and tax increases, which were opposed by business interests and the Tennessee Taxpayers Association. In the face of this opposition, wrote Branson and Steele, Dunn revised his proposal to include a one-cent sales tax on the existing base, which satisfied business and the taxpayers group and was supported by Republicans in the General Assembly and the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), but not the Democrats, who feared a tax increase of that magnitude.

Democrats, long-standing allies of teachers, persuaded the TEA to oppose the one-cent tax increase in exchange for the promise of a pay raise (p. 41). Dunn then offered his third proposal, a half-cent sales tax increase on the existing tax base. Republicans, Democrats,

business interests, taxpayers, and teachers supported this measure. Teachers received the promised $400 pay increase, which cost the state $13 million. However, as a result of the smaller tax increase, only $1.6 million went to kindergartens instead of the $17 million that was originally proposed.

The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 and Related Tax Increases

According to Lansford (1984), the second major education reform and related tax increases came in 1984, when Tennessee enacted a one cent increase in the state sales tax, an increase in the state corporate franchise tax, a new gross premium tax on casualty and property insurance, a decrease in vendor compensation for sales tax collection, and a new 5.5 percent amusement tax designed to fund the new Comprehensive Education Reform Act. Lansford wrote that Alexander had spent his first term in office attracting new business to the state to create new jobs and was convinced that a better educated work force was important to the well being of the state.

Alexander also approved a legislative proposal to create a task force to study education in the state and develop recommendations for improvement (Lansford, 1984). The 27-member task force included representatives of the "entire public education system," including the TEA, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Tennessee School Boards Association, PTA, Vocational Educators Higher Education, and the Board of Regents, as well as Democratic and Republican legislators (Payne, 1982). The group's report, the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study*, which was released in December 1981, "recommended changes or improvements in the areas of educational goals, governance, quality, and fund distribution" (p. 452). Most educator groups supported the need for reform, but the TEA, a

member of the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study task force, refused to support the group's recommendation for "additional monies for outstanding teachers at all levels to make the profession more competitive in the market place" (Lansford, 1984, p. 226) and, to voice its disapproval, it submitted a minority report. Despite TEA's opposition, the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* formed the basis for the 10 points in Alexander's education reform proposal that he introduced in January 1983.

Although the TEA supported other components of the governor's proposal, it was "livid over his advocacy for a Master Teacher Program that involved incentive pay, performance evaluation, and a career ladder," (Lansford, 1984, p. 226). The TEA pressured its Democratic friends in the legislature. Members of the House and Senate Education Committees, who raised concerns that the governor's proposed State Certification Commission would be influenced by partisan politics, threatened to keep the bill from ever reaching the full General Assembly for debate. To allay their fears, Alexander created a non-partisan Interim Master Teacher Certification Commission, which began to develop a teacher evaluation process. He appointed four distinguished lay persons, a representative of one of the colleges of education and 13 representatives of various education groups to serve on the commission. The commission's work proved the feasibility and credibility of Alexander's plan (Lansford).

According to Lansford (1984), when the TEA saw that they could not stop Alexander's proposal, they acquired enough support to delay its passage and win a resolution to establish a joint Select Committee of the General Assembly to study the proposals for a year. After five months of study, the committee voted to recommend its draft of the

Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 to the General Assembly. This new bill also displeased the TEA, which reportedly sent 34 lobbyists to the hill to press for the inclusion of several TEA ideas that would make the bill more palatable. However, the TEA realized that the bill would be passed with or without their endorsement and began to work with the governor to create conditions such that the group could endorse it. During the controversy, the century-old TEA, which had won a fight for the Professional Negotiations Act of 1978, behaved more like a union than a professional organization; it relied on past alliances with certain legislators and did not form new alliances with others who had like interests (Achilles, Payne, Lansford, 1988). Thus, it was isolated from other education interest groups, such as the Tennessee School Boards Association, higher education, and administer groups—groups that supported the need for reform and even joined the governor's effort to improve education (Lansford).

Lansford (1984) concluded that Alexander worked hard to gain Democratic as well as Republican support in the legislature, which was needed to enact education reform. He built a coalition based on the basic bipartisan alignment in the General Assembly that resulted from the task force that produced the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study*, and he formed other alliances with the Speaker and with numerous Democrats (p. 169). Finally, when the education reform bill was sent to the Select Committee for further study between legislative sessions, Alexander took advantage of the delay by working to obtain additional support in the Senate while the Speaker sought additional support in the House. Alexander's coalition-building efforts proved to be successful. The bill was enacted in a special session in January 1984.

To fund the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, wrote Lansford (1984), Alexander proposed to raise more than $1 billion in new taxes, which included increasing the sales tax by one cent, extending the sales tax to amusements, increasing corporate franchise taxes, and a gross premium tax on non-Tennessee casualty and property insurance companies. The proposed tax increases were to pay for extensive improvements that included basic skills, computer skills, statewide kindergarten, increased requirements for mathematics and science, special residential schools for gifted juniors and seniors, redefined high school vocational education curriculum, alternative schools, reorganizing governance of adult job skill training, establishing centers of excellence at universities, and the career ladder program. However, it was an election year, and legislators were reluctant to pass any tax increase. Lansford said that to encourage legislative support, Alexander offered to "take the heat" for the tax increase.

> The governor's willingness to take the responsibility for tax increases may have been motivated by his knowledge of a general change in attitude toward financing educational excellence. The improvement in fiscal conditions, in public opinion polls, in the political context, and in the publicity associated with the need for educational reform served to support his position. (p. 148)

Early opposition arose from groups that were affected by the tax—amusement parks, movie theaters, TV cable companies, tourist attractions, and others, observed Lansford (1984). Eventually the committee retained the amusement tax and sent the tax bill to the House for debate. Facing an election, delegates hesitated to raise taxes and thus, readily approved an amendment introduced on the floor of the House to remove the tax on food over a three-year period. The tax measures then easily passed the Senate in February 1984.

The Education Improvement Act of 1992 and Related Tax Increases

The third major education reform and related tax increases investigated in this study occurred in 1992, when the state revised the school funding formula and increased the sales tax rate by one-half cent. While the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, which was passed in 1984, had initiated many education reforms, it had not changed the school funding formula—the manner in which state funds were allocated across districts (Green, Smith, & Hydorn, 1995). As Tennessee's economy evolved over the years, it had become regionalized. According to one rural superintendent, "the people who live in dozens of the smaller rural counties now commonly drive 40 or 50 miles to shopping malls as opposed to conducting all of the commerce on their local courthouse square." As a result, the rural counties suffered a declining tax base that made it impossible to adequately finance their schools even with higher tax rates. Dozens of counties did not have the sales tax base to provide good schools. Industries wanting to locate sites in Tennessee wanted a location with good schools—not schools "where the building leaked." In addition, rural school superintendents who were interviewed said that although they recognized the school funding formula, the Tennessee Foundation Program, had not been working properly, they had been unable to convince the legislature to make changes.

In 1986, three superintendents, one each from East, Middle, and West Tennessee, met and agreed that a lawsuit was the only way to remedy the inequity of school funding in the state. The three superintendents formed a group called the Tennessee Small School Systems and hired Louis Donelson to be their attorney because of his close link to McWherter. Donelson had been friend to the governor for years and his personal attorney on occasion. He

also served as finance commissioner under Governor Alexander ("Fighting for schools," 1990). A total of 66 superintendents joined the Tennessee Small School Systems when the group filed its lawsuit in July 1988. Eventually, 77 of 139 superintendents signed on. They sought a declaratory judgment that K-12 education funding was inequitable under the Education and Equal Protection clauses of the Tennessee Constitution (Green, Smith, & Hydorn, 1995).

Ten metropolitan system superintendents, however, opposed the lawsuit and formed a group called Metropolitan Area School Systems. That group joined the state as defendants in the lawsuit, *Tennessee Small School Systems v. McWherter et al* (88-1812-II). According to the rural superintendents, the urban superintendents were afraid that state funds would have to be redistributed—taking money away from urban districts in order to provide more funds to small, rural districts—to achieve equity.

Several respondents explained that despite their differences on the lawsuit, small system and metropolitan superintendents worked together through the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents. They began meeting once a month in 1986 intent upon developing a funding plan on which all of them could agree.

The state board of education, which had been restructured as a result of the Governance Reform Act of 1984, was required by statute to study the use of public funds for schools and prepare recommendations to the governor and General Assembly for the funding of public education (Lansford, 1984; Tennessee State Board of Education, 1988). The work of the state board staff was led by an executive director who was appointed by the nine-member board. The board's 1987 funding needs report concluded that the Tennessee

Foundation Program was inadequate and inequitable and that education appropriations were not linked to actual education costs. Further, it proposed principles for reform that would (a) define a basic education program for all children in Tennessee, (b) determine the total cost of that program, (c) determine an optimum state/local funding ratio, (d) develop an appropriate measure of local fiscal capacity, (e) develop an appropriate method of pupil accounting, and (f) develop an equalization funding program that would assure the fiscal incapacity of a district would not create educational disadvantage for children who lived in that district.

The state board of education and the superintendents began to work together on school funding problems in 1987. Several other members of the state education policy subsystem were invited to join the discussions. This coalition called itself the Tennessee Finance Study Committee. Members of this coalition who were interviewed said the group developed the Basic Education Program, a new formula for funding public education.

According to administration officials, Governor McWherter, whose first term began in January 1987, had previously served 13 years as Speaker of the House. He was a Democrat as were most of the legislators. From his first days in office, McWherter made education an important part of his strategy for improving the economy of the state, and he worked to gain public support for education. In September 1989, he released his "21st Century Challenge," a draft proposal that stated his 12 goals and 89 objectives for education reform in the state (Wissner, 1989). The goals included first grade readiness, achievement in primary grades, high standards for student achievement, school success for at-risk students, teaching profession enhancement, adult literacy, vocational education relevancy, standards for district performance, college-readiness for high school graduates, fiscal adequacy and accountability,

and school-based decisionmaking. However, it did not include a funding plan. The governor submitted the plan to the Legislative Oversight Committee for Education in February 1990. The following month, he submitted the plan to the state board of education.

Both interviews and news articles indicated that, in March 1990, following the release of McWherter's 21st Century Plan, the Tennessee Business Roundtable convened an Education Roundtable conference to discuss what action business interests would take with regard to education. As a result of that conference, the Tennessee Business Roundtable formed an education task force and established its position on education reform. Two concerns that they agreed must be addressed in education reform legislation were (a) to do away with the election of school superintendents and (b) strict accountability at all levels in the system—from the top down to the classroom level. These two things were absolutely necessary for the Tennessee Business Roundtable to support a tax increase that would increase funding for education. As the business representative explained, the group was willing to increase funding for education, but they wanted some accountability features put in place.

Interviews further revealed that although business groups had insisted on accountability, there was no accountability system in the draft bill that the governor sent to the legislature. Legislators understood that funding the Basic Education Program would take a tax increase, and they knew that the public, especially business interests, demanded accountability in return for support for a tax increase. Thus, they began to develop an accountability component.

Legislative education leaders said that they had learned about value-added assessment from Dr. Bill Sanders, a statistics professor from the University of Tennessee Knoxville, at a

meeting called by McWherter in the Fall of 1990. The legislators invited Sanders to present his research to the Joint Legislative Committee on Education. According to a state senator,

> We spent a lot of evening time trying to go through it. Tennessee paid for some people to come in to look at it to be sure it was sound, that is was statistically sound. He [Don Thomas] convinced the Senate Education Committee and the House Education Committee that this plan would work.

House and Senate leaders prepared amendments that included Sanders' value-added assessment model for consideration by the respective committees. By the end of April, the House and Senate Education Committees had approved the amendment. "This amendment is the heart of the bill," said the chairman of the Senate Education Committee (Davis, 1991, p. B2). The Senate had also voted to add a provision to appoint superintendents, but the House refused to go along with the measure. At a House Education Committee hearing on proposed amendments, business groups threatened to withdraw their support of the plan if it did not include the provision for appointing local superintendents (Davis & Fortune, 1991).

Interview data showed that throughout the debate in the General Assembly, "the TEA was always involved, the Tennessee Municipal League was involved, the Tennessee Association of County Commissioners—these local agencies had a lot to gain or lose; and so they stayed involved." Members of the Tennessee Small School Systems said they monitored the progress of the bill. Two or three of them were at the legislature every Tuesday and Wednesday, when the education committees met.

Legislators from both Houses said that they worked together on the bill. They also indicated that Democrat and Republican party members worked together and that rural and urban senators formed a coalition.

State board of education minutes showed that by the end of the 1991 legislative session, the House and Senate had passed different versions of the Education Improvement Act; the Senate version included appointed superintendents, a component insisted upon by business interests, but the House version did not (Tennessee State Board of Education, 1991, May 31).

According to interviews, the funding proposal in the Education Improvement Act was the Basic Education Program, which had been worked out by the education groups. The Basic Education Program necessitated a tax increase to achieve equity without taking funds from wealthy districts to give it to poor ones. Thus, McWherter proposed an income tax to pay for the funding reforms in the Education Improvement Act. The state had never had an income tax, and it was not a popular idea. In March 1991, the Tennessee Business Roundtable held Education Roundtable II to discuss McWherter's income tax proposal.

The state board of education passed a resolution supporting the income tax proposal, which it sent to the governor (Tennessee State Board of Education, 1991, May 31), but late in the 1991 legislative session, McWherter agreed to postpone consideration of his proposed state income tax in hopes of passing the education reform bill. One news story described how the governor met throughout the Memorial Day weekend with Senate Finance Committee members to discuss alternative ways to pay for reform should it pass, but they could not agree on the education reforms or the funding measure. The writer observed that

> Officials in the Governor's office acknowledged that their proposal may have overreached by challenging two longstanding political traditions at the same time. Not only did it call for creating the state's first income tax, in the midst of a worsening economic recession, but it also sought to abolish the widespread practice of electing local superintendents. (Harp, 1991, p. 15)

Interview data showed that throughout the debate about education reform, attorneys for the small school systems and the state in the school funding lawsuit had held the case in abeyance in order to let the legislative process work. News articles showed that in July 1991, Chancellor C. Allen High ruled the state's school funding system unconstitutional because of disparities in the quality of education offered in richer urban areas versus poorer rural systems, but he agreed to give the legislature more time to come up with a solution (Murray, 1992). Following the legislature's failure to pass the education funding reform, the case was back in court (Murray). By October 1991, McWherter was once again talking about the income tax as the "best solution for a school funding system" (Daughtrey, 1991, p. A1). In January 1992, McWherter called a 30-day special session. He reintroduced his school-reform measure based on the results of the House-Senate conference committee, which had met during the interim. He also called for a constitutional convention to address tax-reform issues and the establishment of a state lottery (Harp, 1992).

According to interviews with legislators, McWherter's reform proposal also included the controversial requirement that superintendents be appointed by elected schools boards. This was an important strategy because the House had not been able to come up with the votes necessary to include the appointed-superintendent measure in their version of the bill during the regular session. During the special session called by the governor, rules limited debate to the governor's proposal, which included the appointed-superintendent measure. Thus, the House was in the position of having to come up with enough votes to take it out during the special session. Unable to do so, the House agreed to the governor's proposal as did the Senate. Thus, the governor was able to satisfy the business interests.

The special session ended with education reform legislation, but no way to fund it. Interviews with legislators indicated that during the regular session that followed, the legislature offered an alternative—a temporary, half-cent increase in the sales tax and a phase-in of the reform program—which was approved. Legislators saw the temporary nature of the tax as a concession to business groups who wanted to make sure the accountability provisions stayed in place over time.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework

This chapter presents the findings of this study within the framework of the research questions, which were derived from assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The unit of analysis for this study was the Tennessee education policy subsystem. According to the procedures described in Chapter 3, data were collected from multiple sources—respondents who were participants in Tennessee's education policy subsystem and formal research studies that described interactions within the education policy subsystem over time.

The primary data sources for major education policy change in 1972 were two formal research studies, *State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Tennessee* (Branson & Steele, 1974) and "Educational Interest Groups and the State Legislature" (Aufderheide, 1976). The primary data sources for major education reform policy in 1984 were (a) a doctoral dissertation, *A Study of Conflict Related to the Development of the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984* (Lansford, 1984), (b) the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* (Payne, 1982), and (c) "Strong State-Level Leadership for Education Reform: Tennessee's Example" (Achilles, Payne, & Lansford, 1988). The primary data sources for major education policy change in 1992 were personal interviews, as well as relevant documents such as newspaper articles and association publications.

Analyses of the data from formal research studies and transcripts of personal interviews were conducted. Analyses of newspaper articles and government documents were

used to verify and supplement the interview data. The analyses of findings for this chapter were guided by categories that were constructed prior to the study and based on the theoretical assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework that were to be explored. Each category was linked directly to a research question. The research questions and related categories included:

1. The first research question asked: In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992? The category related to the first question was "coalition membership."

2. The second research question asked: In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in either 1972 or 1984? The related category was "stability of coalition membership."

3. The third research question asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core? The related category was "policy core of coalition beliefs."

4. The fourth research question asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects? The related category for data analysis was "secondary aspects of coalition beliefs."

5. The fifth research question asked: In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core? The related data analysis category was "policy positions relinquished."

6. The sixth research question asked: In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects? The related data analysis category was "policy-oriented learning."

7. The seventh research question asked: In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces? The related data analysis category was "dynamic external events."

Coalition Membership

This section presents findings that were related to the first research question, which asked: In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing advocacy coalitions in 1992? For the purposes of this study, an advocacy coalition was defined as

> people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system—that is, a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problems—and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time. (Sabatier, p. 25)

To address this research question, it was important to (a) examine what, if any, groups were involved in the controversy, (b) which groups shared essentially the same policy position in the controversy over education policy and (c) the extent to which those groups may have coordinated their activities.

According to interview data and print documents, the researcher found that Governor McWherter, who had been Speaker of the House during Governor Alexander's tenure, began his first term in 1987 with what he called "a 95-county strategy" for rebuilding Tennessee's economic base and dispersing jobs into all regions of the state. According to administration officials, McWherter believed that to be economically viable, every community needed access to interstate highways, affordable primary health care, a waste management system, and skilled labor for the workforce. A staff member from the governor's office said, "It was abundantly clear that if we wanted to raise our average personal incomes and attract quality manufacturing jobs, we simply had to make a serious investment in our schools."

Two administration officials indicated that to make sure his programs were closely linked to the needs of the citizens, McWherter directed the commissioner of education to

spend time learning what the problems really were in K-12 and to prepare a draft plan. McWherter took this early draft of the 21st Century Challenge Plan along with 26 Cabinet members and "top lieutenants" out across the state. They spent two days in each if the nine regions of the state. A news release from the department said,

> The state officials visited 38 of the state's 140 public school systems and stopped at 444 individual schools in the three grand divisions of the state. There they talked and listened to students, teachers, administrators and school board members, and witnessed first hand the great disparity in equipment, programs, and instructional materials being provided for students across the state. (Tennessee Department of Education, 1990, June; p. 1)

According to a key staff member, McWherter held a full-fledged Cabinet meeting to talk about the findings following each trip. By taking the entire Cabinet to the schools, the governor "built a base of support for education and avoided a battle of internal politics."

Using the 21st Century Plan and public input, governor's staff designed the first draft of the Education Improvement Act, which McWherter introduced in January 1991 at the beginning of his second term. Knowing that the new funding formula that was part of the Education Improvement Act would necessitate a large tax increase, McWherter proposed an income tax to fund it. Since the governor's strategy was to increase support for the bill, he introduced a "skeleton" bill that legislators could "flesh out." His staff person said, "We had seen other major initiatives by governors in the past and realized that the chances of legislative buy-in increased dramatically if the legislature perceived itself as having done something significant to improve the bill." He purposely left out accountability measures, which business interests had demanded, but he included the Basic Education Program, the new formula for school funding that had been developed by the education interests.

Legislators who were interviewed agreed, "The governor came with a bare bones bill on education. The Tennessee legislature took it step by step. We fleshed out the bones and began to plan it. We really added to the governor's plan and really made it much better." Members of the two Houses worked closely on the bill. According to the Senate education chairman, "We had regular conferences between the two Houses. We had that kind of relationship: it really worked well." The House Education chairman agreed, "Had we not had that relationship, the bill would not have made it through. It was constant communication."

The General Assembly continued to be dominated by Democrats, and the chairman of the House Education Committee was a Democrat. Although the Senate Education Committee chairman was a Republican and the vice-chairman was a Democrat, the two parties worked together. The Senate Education chair said,

> We went with each other to address our caucuses, and I think this is the first time that has ever happened. He literally came to the Republican Caucus, and I addressed the Democrats to be sure we explained the bill. We worked as a team.

A Democratic legislator added, "Democrats and Republicans alike worked on this. My counterpart at the time was a Republican. We worked hard. We looked at the issues."

Although splits developed between the urban and rural legislators over the appointed-superintendent measure and the funding formula, Riley Darnell—a Democrat who was leader of the rural delegation and later elected secretary of state—went to his delegation and negotiated a compromise. A senator who represented an urban area concluded that it was "the first time we ever agreed in Tennessee, urban and rural, and we agreed that the formula was fair."

According to administration officials, Commissioner of Education Charles Smith, who had served as chancellor of the University of Tennessee at Martin in the 1980s, had "traveled throughout the 20 Western counties promoting and selling the Better Schools Program [for Governor Alexander]." After being named by McWherter to serve as commissioner, Smith spent two years "learning what the problems really were in K-12." A member of Smith's staff said,

> We listened to students. We listened to teachers and administrators. We listened to superintendents. We listened to school board members. We listened to business people. We listened to government people. We listened to everybody we could.

A news article explained that the commissioner of education and his staff then used the information from public meetings to develop the draft 21st Century Plan for the governor (Pride, 1990). Once the plan was drafted, "he sought critique from a wide pool of people" (p. 1). Thus, Smith considered the plan to be the "people's document" (p. 1). An aide for the commissioner of education said that during the final stages of legislative debate over the Education Improvement Act, the commissioner and his staff:

> Worked hard with superintendents to make sure that they were giving the same message to their legislators. The assistant commissioner for finance and myself met with every single member of education and finance committees, one-on-one, to talk about how the finances worked for their school system.

Interview data showed that the commissioner's office was also instrumental in convening finance administration, state board of education, and department of education people, who "took a blood oath that these [funding formula] numbers would not change for a year."

According to interviews, various officials from the state department were involved in the discussions that resulted in the development of the Basic Education Program. They joined

these discussions in 1987, after the superintendents' organization and the board members began working together. The state department also convened the Superintendents' Study Council, which is a professional organization that includes every superintendent in Tennessee. The department had sponsored and paid for an annual conference of the Superintendents' Study Council in Gatlinburg (TN) for more than 50 years. This council was involved in discussions about the various components in the Education Improvement Act. State department officials, as well as a representative of the Superintendents' Study Council, also attended all the education committee hearings on the Education Improvement Act. Although department officials were extensively involved in the debates around the Education Improvement Act, apparently they did not have the data needed to determine how much money each district would get under the proposed Basic Education Program. Thus, legislators claimed they could not get the numbers they needed from the department and turned to the comptroller's office to get the necessary information.

Interview data showed that the state board of education members were also involved in the discussions about the Basic Education Program and the Education Improvement Act. Restructured as a result of the Governance Reform Act of 1984, the state board of education was required to prepare an annual report of funding needs for public education. According to the executive director, the 1987 report explained the problems with the Tennessee Foundation Program and defined a Basic Education Program and its components, which "became the basis of the legislation as far as the funding formula was concerned."

At least five of the respondents reported that the same year, the state board began working with the superintendents and other education interests. The Tennessee Organization

of School Superintendents hosted the meetings and the state board provided staff. Other participants included the department of education; TEA; Tennessee Association of School Business Officers; superintendents representing Tennessee Small School Systems, Metropolitan Area School Systems, and the Superintendents' Study Council; the Tennessee School Boards Association, and a group called the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, headed by Dr. Harry Green, "who really did all the calculations as far as the funding formula was concerned." They also involved principals, supervisors, the county executives, and the County Commissioners Association. The Tennessee Municipal League was involved and the Tennessee Association of County Commissioners—these local government organizations had a lot to gain or lose; and so they stayed involved. The group called itself the Tennessee Finance Study Committee, and it hammered out the details of the Basic Education Program.

Although the initial proposal did undergo a great many changes, the final proposal for the public education funding formula recommended equalizing education expenditures across districts and increasing the state share of funding to 66 percent (Tennessee State Board of Education, 1988). According to a state board official, the state board of education stood with the governor on income tax and supported the General Assembly as they considered all the different amendments that were tacked onto it. State board of education staff also conducted analyses as needed for the legislature.

According to interviews, a TEA member represented the group on the Tennessee Finance Study Committee, providing research about the wealth of districts, which helped the group develop the Basic Education Program. They also offered advice and assisted in drafting

the bill. The executive secretary at that time and the president of the organization were involved in early meetings with Commissioner Smith and people from the state board of education. Prior to that, the TEA assisted the systems that were in the small systems' lawsuit by providing some research to show that the wealth of individual districts resulted in disparity. TEA officials met with different people, offered advice, and contributed to the actual drafting of the bill. A TEA official said,

> We had meetings of different groups and determined who could do what to try to get support for the bill, and the same was true for the funding, because without the funding we would not have been able to implement the Education Improvement Act.

When asked about what resources they used, a TEA official said, "We lobbied very much in support of the sales tax and worked hard to see that pass. We worked and had meetings and did packets and kits trying to show how that income tax was the best way to go."

Interviews with superintendents from small, rural school systems indicated that they were frustrated about the inadequate and inequitable funding combined with the lack of legislative willingness to address the matter and thus formed the Tennessee Small School Systems, which filed the school funding lawsuit. In response, urban superintendents who feared a decrease in their funding formed the Metropolitan Area School Systems coalition and joined the state as defendants in the lawsuit. However, the two superintendent groups worked together to find a funding solution that satisfied both. They joined with the state board of education in 1987 to form the Tennessee Finance Study Committee. According to an official of the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, the group conducted surveys, collected data, and put their ideas together, however, because the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents was a very small organization with a small staff, it did not have

personnel to compile the data. The state board assumed that responsibility. An official of the superintendents' organization said, "We actually started working way back in the mid-1980s. After the bill was introduced, we had meetings of different groups and determined who could do what to try to gain support for the bill." One of the superintendents, explaining how the education interests worked together, said,

> This involved every educational organization in the state of Tennessee. We worked on this formula and worked out this process of doing that. After about a year, the state department and the state board joined the group, and so it was a consensus of almost everyone in the state that had an interest in education.

In April 1990, the Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration (TASSA)—a group created to address the educational, profession, and legislative needs of public school administrators—convened the first of three mini-conferences of 17 educational organizations (TASSA, 1990). The coalition included representatives of the Metropolitan Area School Systems, Tennessee Association of Administrators of Special Education, Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Tennessee Association of Elementary School Principals, Tennessee Association of School Personnel Administrators, Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals, Tennessee Attendance Supervisors, Tennessee Community Education Association, Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers, Tennessee Council of Directors of Vocational/Technical Education, Tennessee Education Association, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Tennessee School Boards Association, Tennessee School Food Service Association, Tennessee Small School Systems, and Tennessee Supervisors Association ("TASSA Sponsors," 1990).

TASSA-sponsored educator coalition published *Recommendations from Task Force of Tennessee Education Leaders* (1990), which reported that the education interest groups agreed that it would be in the best interest of each group to participate in a joint effort to evaluate three proposals under consideration. They included (a) the proposed Basic Education Program, which had been developed by the Tennessee Finance Study Committee; (b) the governor's 21st Century Plan; and (c) the Tennessee Equity Education Finance Act of 1991, draft legislation prepared by Donald Thomas, a consultant to the governor. According to their report, members spent the next two months studying the proposals. They then met in July to reach a consensus on education reform issues and to identify ideas that could be supported by all of the groups involved. The group continued meeting until February 1991, when they completed their discussion of the issues and determined the areas of agreement—the parts of the bill that they would support as a group.

According to interview respondents and a news release from the department of education, while business and education interest groups were discussing the governor's plan, he and 26 members of his Cabinet took the plan to the people to build public support. Meetings continued into the fall of 1990, when the governor was re-elected. He used information he gathered in the meetings to revise and refine the 21st Century Plan. In January 1991, the governor formally announced his school reform program—the Education Improvement Act—to the General Assembly. According to one of his staff members, the bill that was introduced by the governor was viewed by him and his staff as a "skeleton" to be fleshed out by the Education Committees in the legislature. The governor's tax proposals included tax increases to fund the Basic Education Program, a new school finance formula

that was based on the actual costs of running a school system and had been developed by the coalition of education interest groups, as well as education reforms, including a new value-added assessment system, reduced class sizes, increased graduation requirements, establishment of alternative schools, mandated kindergarten, and computer education. According to a McWherter advisor, the strategy of leaving the details of the legislation to the legislators was used by the governor to gain their commitment to education reform.

A superintendent explained that all the education interests participated in the legislative committee hearings,

> TEA would have four or five teachers, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendent, would have one person there, the executive director of the Tennessee School Boards Association would have two or three there every time, the state board of education, the state department of education, a group called the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, and the Superintendents' Study Council always had a representative there.

A state board official said,

> The TEA was always involved, superintendents were always involved, the school boards association was involved, and there were folks that we worked with all of the time, including on this case. The Tennessee Municipal League was involved, the Tennessee Association of County Commissioners—these local government organizations had a lot to gain or lose; so they stayed involved.

Interview data further revealed that, during the 1992 debate over the Education Improvement Act, business interests such as the Tennessee Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Tennessee Business Association were involved in the education policy subsystem. One business official noted, "the business community, had come to believe that the previous round of educational reform in Tennessee had not produced results. [The state] put in reform efforts in the early 1980s, and [it was] not seeing much

progress." After McWherter introduced his 21st Century Plan, business interests led by the Tennessee Business Roundtable held two education conferences. The first resulted in the formation of a task force that developed the groups' legislative position. They agreed that they would not support a tax increase unless certain accountability measures were included in the bill. The second conference also focused on the Education Improvement Act and related tax increases. Business interests used the opportunity to reinforce their position. Business representatives often were present during education committee meetings to reinforce their position. The business official explained,

> Every time the committee said "We want to take this appointed-superintendent thing out," they would trot us up before one of the committees to say, "If you do that, we're out of here; and we will fight you on your plan." We had drawn a very hard line in the sand on that.

Stability of Coalition Membership

This section presents findings that were related to the second research question, which asked: In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in 1972 and 1984? For the purposes of this study, coalition stability was defined as "the lineup of allies and opponents that is stable over periods of a decade or more" (Sabatier, 1993), p. 27). To address this research question, it was necessary to examine what interests had been involved in the education policy subsystem in 1972 and 1984 and compare them to the groups who were involved in 1992. This category was very closely related to the first category, coalition membership. However, while the coalition membership category emphasized the identity of groups and the extent to which they coordinated their activities, this category

emphasized the long-term nature of those relationships. The data for 1972 and 1984 came primarily from formal research studies.

According to Branson and Steele (1974), Governor Dunn (1971-1975) had promised statewide kindergarten and tax increases to fund it during his election campaign. Thus, it appeared that there was widespread public support for his programs. Once in office, Dunn turned to the department of education for policy information until disagreements arose between him and the commissioner, whom he had appointed. In addition, the governor indicated that the TEA and the PTA assisted his office in the development of education programs, but the Tennessee Municipal League and the Tennessee County Services Association contributed most to education finance policy development.

Branson and Steele (1974) found that although the Republican governor did not consult Republican legislators about policy development, they supported the governor's policy proposals and voted as a block. Republican legislators were outnumbered, however, by the Democrats who were in the majority and held key leadership positions. The legislators, who were hindered by a lack of staff, time, and resources, viewed their role as arbitrator among the competing demands from the TEA, governor, commissioner, and higher education. Generally, legislators viewed education interest groups as presenting a united front.

Branson and Steele (1974) reported that the commissioner of education and top department of education officials "work at the pleasure of the governor" (p. 86) but had "only minimal involvement in the finance-kindergarten issue" (p. 71). The commissioner reported that he felt the controversy between the governor and commissioner reduced the influence of the department on policy. The department, whose top-level staff were loyal to the Democratic

party and took no specific action to support the governor's proposals, nonetheless were viewed by the governor as "the most useful source of information" (p. 88).

According to Branson and Steele (1974), state board of education members were appointed by the governor and often referred to as a "rubber stamp" for the commissioner, who served as the chairman and voting member of the group (p. 71). Thus, during Dunn's term, the state board was viewed as a minor player in the policy process. State board members indicated that they discussed kindergarten programs, but were not involved in the proposed sales tax increase. Further, board members reported that they did not work with the governor's staff, as a group, when a legislative proposal affecting the public schools was being developed.

Branson and Steele (1974) observed that during the kindergarten-finance debate, the TEA worked most closely with the Democratically controlled legislature. The school administrators group, Tennessee Association of School Administrators, was part of TEA and had no staff of its own. In addition, most professional employees of the state department of education, including the commissioner, and a number of state board members either were or had been members of the TEA.

According to Aufderheide (1976), others in the policy subsystem saw the size of TEA's membership as its most important resource and its broad constituency as a major source of its strength, and due to its large membership, TEA also had substantial monetary resources that it used to maintain a political action arm that collected and disburse campaign monies to favorable candidates. Although leadership for the education coalition was provided by education groups, the coalition membership included a broad range of noneducational

organizations: "American Legion, the American Association of University Women, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens Committee for Better Schools, and the Federation of Business and Professional Women" (p. 199). The diverse membership exhibited a high degree of unity, endurance, and effectiveness and displayed few signs of internal stress. The Tennessee School Boards Association was the most visible education interest group at the state level that was not included in the TEA, but the Tennessee School Boards Association's resources were few and its involvement minimal when compared to the TEA.

According to Branson and Steele (1974), business interests who would have been affected by Dunn's proposal to expand the sales tax base to include a gasoline tax increase, a service tax, a tax on private sales of automobiles, and a tax on commercial leases also were actively involved in the education policy subsystem. Their opposition to the expansion of the sales tax base was directed at their local representatives. In addition, the Tennessee Taxpayers Association lobbied the governor to back away from his initial proposal. The controversy over education reform and related tax increase was resolved in 1972 when, faced with strong opposition, the governor withdrew his proposal to expand the tax base and instead increased the tax rate by one cent. This upset Democrats, who were afraid that the public would not support a large tax hike, but Republicans continued to support the governor. Democrats and the TEA, which maintained a traditional loyalty to the Democrats, made an "informal deal" to work together to defeat the one-cent sales tax increase in return for a pay increase for the TEA (p. 39).

According to Lansford (1984), the legislature initiated and Governor Alexander supported a proposal to study K-12 and higher education in the state. The study, the

Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study, involved 11 legislators; 5 K-12 education groups (TEA, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Tennessee School Boards Association, state board of education, and vocational educators); and 4 representatives of higher education (Payne, 1982). The governor used the report to formulate the education reform package that he announced at the beginning of his second term.

Realizing that he would not have the support of the TEA, Alexander worked with other education interests to build a broad base of support for the proposal. Lansford (1984) described Alexander as "hands on"—very involved in the day-to-day operations and progress of his education bill. Alexander strived to raise public awareness of the need for his Better Schools Program and "keep the spotlight on the idea" (p. 84). He and his team also barnstormed the state with public appearances in numbers that often exceeded election campaigns. They spoke to "every PTA, every Rotary Club, every civic club that they could" (p. 85).

In addition, Alexander urged the Tennessee School Boards Association to organize a bipartisan group called People Advocating Superior Schools (PASS). The Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents joined the coalition, and the former chairman of the Tennessee Democratic Party served as an advisor. Alexander also organized the Tennesseans for Better Schools, which was led by Democrats and claimed a membership of 40,000. The group raised money to finance the campaign for better schools (Lansford, 1984, p. 86).

Alexander formed a task force of persons from his staff and the department of education to conduct a campaign to generate awareness and support at the school and

community levels (Lansford, 1984, p. 87). He also sought national attention, hosting President Reagan at a Knoxville school and Education Secretary Bell at a Kingsport school.

In 1984, Democrats were a majority in both the House and Senate. They viewed their role as working out a compromise, "getting all you could and giving up as little as possible" (Lansford, 1984, p. 171). Commissioner of Education McElrath worked well with the governor's team, and the Alexander gave him credit for developing the Better Schools Program. Lansford wrote that McElrath "worked diligently to gain teacher acceptance of the proposals" and involved "classroom teachers in the process of developing the plans" (pp. 161-162). Further, Lansford noted, " . . . it was impossible to separate the governor's organization from the state department; all of the members of the state department organization expressed a strong agreement with the issues involved and an enthusiasm for the proposals" (p. 170).

The role of the state board in the education policy subsystem was minimal; a State Board member served on the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study task force and was assigned to the vocational-technical committee. There was no evidence however, that the board participated in actively supporting the measure once it was presented to the legislature.

The TEA was also represented on the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study task force, but was unhappy with the recommendations that the group made. Therefore, the TEA released a minority report stating the group's displeasure. When the governor later announced the Better Schools Program, the TEA supported some measures, but came out again against any type of merit pay. Thus, the TEA isolated itself from other education interests, and instead attempted to form numerous legislative alliances, relying on their friends in the legislature, many of whom were former TEA members and staff members. Legislators saw

the TEA as a group that could generate a lot of votes for or against candidates, contribute to political campaigns, and provide campaign workers (Lansford, 1984, p. 186). The alliance-building strategy was partially successful since they were able to delay the legislature's passage of the measure from 1983 to 1984.

According to Lansford (1984), the TEA had been perceived as "the chief originator of all education legislation in the past . . . the source of research in education, a resource for determining the needs of education, the spokesman for all teachers, and the defender of tenure (p. 171). However, during the 1984 conflict, the TEA merely reacted to Alexander's legislative proposals. Its "amendment machine" worked continuously to change the bill to the TEA's liking. In the end, the TEA resorted to identifying components of the bill that it could support and publicly announcing that it was in favor of the bill's passage.

Although differences arose among the education interests during the debate over the components of the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, the education interests were more unified on this issue of raising taxes for education. The extent to which they coordinated their activities to support tax increases was not clear, however.

According to Lansford (1984) taxpayer groups actively opposed the amusement tax, which Alexander had proposed as one of the new sources for the Comprehensive Education Reform Act. She wrote,

> There had been opposition and lobbying attempts from the groups which would be affected by such a tax. Representatives from the state's amusement parks, movie theaters, TV cable companies, tourist attractions, and other amusements descended upon both the House and Senate Finance Committees . . . . (pp. 149-150)

In addition, Knoxville-area legislators opposed the amusement tax because the area already taxed amusements. Fear of public opinion led House members to exempt food from the sales tax; their action was followed by the Senate. While the TEA opposed the education reform bill, it was reluctant to oppose tax increases, since its traditional position was to advocate additional revenues for education.

Policy Core of Coalition Beliefs

This section presents findings that were related to the third research question, which asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core? For the purposes of this study, the policy core is defined as the policy positions taken by coalitions to "translate their beliefs into public policies or programs" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 28), in 1972, 1984, and 1992. The intent of the research question was to guide the researcher's efforts to understand the structure of the coalition's belief systems by examining policy positions of the members of various groups involved in the education policy subsystem and the level of agreement among the coalition members on those positions. Evidence of the policy core and the extent to which coalition members agreed on policy core issues during the debates over school funding in Tennessee during the past 20 years was sought through analyses of interview transcripts, formal research studies, and print documents.

The study found evidence of the policy core that was advocated by the education interests who were involved in the education policy subsystem in 1972, 1984, and 1992. According to Branson and Steele (1974), the education interest groups in Tennessee supported tax increases to fund education reform in 1972. Governor Dunn had campaigned for

increased funding for education, and he pledged to fulfill a commitment to early childhood by achieving full implementation of a statewide kindergarten program (p. 37). His election was interpreted as evidence of public support. Dunn talked about his interest in vocational education, the need to improve the morale of school personnel across the state and his interest in giving his total commitment in advancing education throughout the state (p. 64). Further, education issues were given top priority in Dunn's legislative program (p. 89). Specifically, Dunn proposed a tax increase that would raise total revenues for education by $31 million. Of that, he asked for "$17 million for kindergarten programs (to include capital outlay and operational expense)" (p. 37) and "$13 million for a $400 per teacher pay raise" (p. 39).

According to Branson and Steele (1984), the governor's position on the implementation of a statewide kindergarten program was "significant." He made a considerable effort to get funding for the proposed kindergarten budget through the General Assembly. His statewide kindergarten proposal was supported by the department of education and the commissioner of education (p. 42).

Initially, the TEA supported Dunn's proposals, "but its support was clearly secondary to its desire for a teacher pay boost" (p. 39). The state board of education officially recommended the passage of statewide kindergarten, and the department of education and TEA, which included department of education staff, superintendents, and administrators as well as teachers, had helped develop the proposals. Republican legislators also supported Dunn, who was a Republican, and the PTA and Tennessee School Boards Association overtly supported teacher pay raises.

Evidence that the policy core of education interests during the education reform debate in 1984 was improving the quality of education was found in Senate Joint Resolution No. 56, which had been passed by the legislature in 1981. It said,

> Whereas, Tennesseans placed a high priority on quality educational opportunities that will lead to a higher standard of living for Tennesseans as well as progressive economic growth for the state. . . . Be it resolved that the task force shall develop a statement of the goals and objectives of Tennessee's public education system . . . including programs, staffing/personnel, facilities, finances, and organization. (pp. 1, 2)

The resolution established a task force that included 11 legislators, who participated in a year-long study.

According to Lansford (1984), Governor Alexander followed the lead of the legislature when he developed his 1983 legislative proposal around the task force's recommendations to improve education quality. The governor, department of education staff, and legislators supported the goals of the proposal, which included increasing Tennessee's economic development through better education; improving the quality of education through basic skills, computer skills, mandatory kindergarten, additional high school math and science courses, special programs for gifted students, and increased discipline; redefining vocational curricula, reorganizing job skills training, and establishing centers of excellence in higher education; and establishing an incentive pay program, a career ladder, and strategies to attract outstanding teachers (pp. 179-180). Alexander's proposals indicated that the state and its people were to be the obvious beneficiaries of education reform. Further, Alexander emphasized the urgency and importance of his proposals, appealed to the competitive nature

of the citizens to be the "first, a leader in education," and made the proposed policies concrete by mentioning specific locations in the state that would benefit (p. 180).

The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study task force included the TEA, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Tennessee School Boards Association, PTA, Vocational Educators Higher Education, and the Board of Regents, as well as Democrats and Republican legislators who had been involved in developing recommendations (Payne, 1982). Thus, these groups agreed to support "improvements in the areas of educational goals, governance, quality, and fund distribution" (Payne, 1982, p. 452). The TEA, which was in substantial agreement with the governor's proposals to improve the quality of education by funding new programs such as computer skills and more high school math and science, joined the governor to support the bill.

Lansford (1984) observed that while individual legislator's policy positions tended to be influenced by their party, associations, or geographical affiliations (p. 180), legislators passed the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, which included most of the components of Alexander's educational proposals. They also approved the tax increases that the governor requested, except they exempted food from the sales tax.

Evidence of the policy core of education interests was again found in data from interviews in 1992, which indicated that the coalition argued for adequate and equitable per-pupil funding to assure quality education for all students regardless of where they lived. Three rural superintendents kept their focus on the inequitable funding formula that left rural areas inadequately funded. Rural superintendents thought the problem was the local option sales tax. Jackson (Tennessee), for example, was a big regional shopping area that got to keep

the tax dollars of everyone that lived within driving distance of those areas and bought something there. Consequently, Jackson had a $20 million building program, and "they bragged in a full-page advertisement in the paper that the counties around would pay 60 percent of that cost through the local option sales tax." A superintendent explained,

> Because they received such a substantial flow of sales tax dollars, they were able to lessen their local support on the property tax. Whereas in counties like mine, the property tax was the almost sole source of support; and it was such a burdensome tax in Hickman County. We had stores, retail stores, grocery stores, etc., all over Hickman County 20 years ago; and in 1964 when the sales tax was passed, we were doing okay. But in 1985 and 1990, those stores were gone. We were Walmart-less, so we suffered immensely with sales tax. Our property tax had to cover the base; and if the state was not doing what it should be doing, then obviously that left the county insufficiently funded.

Another rural superintendent reported,

> The three of us, felt like we were three small fish in a big sea. But we also knew that a voice crying in the wilderness cannot be heard unless he screams loud enough. So we decided we would become the voice in the wilderness and scream loud enough. That's what we did and we saw that there was no other way to go. I mean we had appealed to everybody we could. We had legislators who had tried to introduce bills—they got nowhere. We did not have the clout. So the only way we felt we could do it was to just simply say, well when there's not anything else to do, bring the lawyers in.

The three superintendents talked with their colleagues about their plan to sue the state, and they "contrived a method of trying to collect money to pay the lawyer." They formed a coalition called Tennessee Small School Systems. Seventy-seven superintendents eventually agreed to join the rural superintendents' lawsuit. One of them revealed,

> I haven't said this publicly to anybody else, but I received phone calls during the time we were going through the process—and we really got the ball going—I received phone calls to my home threatening myself, and my family, and my home with destruction; threatening me with destruction of my professional name; threatening that I would be ruined if I continued on the pace that I was going; threatening that I would be sorry; my family would suffer from this; and all kinds of things like that went on. I never reported anything to anybody, and those folks would always hang up the

> telephone. They would just say what they wanted to say and quickly hang up on me. I just decided that the price was well worth the risk it involved.

The metropolitan superintendents took the position that school funding should not only be equitable, but it should also be adequate. Decreasing present funding levels of urban areas would harm their existing programs.

A state board of education official explained the policy positions of the newly reconstituted board and how the group had arrived at those positions. He said,

> We started in 1984 with nine board members—none of whom had direct experience in education. They were all private sector leaders. They arrayed all the issues people were bringing to them and from them, and concluded that there were two or three things that obviously needed fixing. One of them was funding; so we began immediately probing what is wrong and why and tried to come up with a concept at least that would fix it. That's how we got into it. The board organized a school funding committee of one. It consisted of Mr. Bill Swain, who is a businessman from Scott County just to the south of Kentucky. His background is in banking and other enterprises. We had staff specifically assigned to that topic and essentially identified the problem.

First, the state board official explained that the overall funding situation was inequitable. There was too much difference between schools systems in terms of resources available. Thus, the state board took the position that state policy should assure equitable funding across districts.

Second, in its 1988 *Annual Report of Funding Needs for Education in Grades K-12,* the state board concluded:

1. Current procedures for drawing upon state and local funding sources to support public education—primarily the Tennessee Foundation Program—are inadequate,

2. Tennessee must invest more in public education if it is to . . . establish an education program throughout the state that is competitive in today's world. (p. 3)

The funding needs report continued, "Inadequate resources surely do not contribute to achieving excellence" (p. 17). Thus, the state board official explained that the state board took the position that "there was simply not enough money going towards public education." The state board agreed that large urban districts should not have to lose their present state support in order to equalize funding, saying that they wanted a school funding policy in which "none of this Robin Hood business takes place." To accomplish funding equalization without taking state support away from wealthy districts required a higher level of state funding, which necessitated a tax increase. Further, the state board took the position that the tax system should be based on an income tax.

Third, the state board also recognized that the school funding formula was not based on cost. The state board official reported,

> We had a formula that had no relationship to any cost analysis. . . . If you look at what needs to go on in the school, I mean you can identify that you've got to have teachers and you've got to have books, and you've got to have materials, and pencils, and electricity, and roofs, and if you just look at all those things, then there are ways to put a cost figure to it. We know how much textbooks cost, that's fairly easy. You can always use experience to determine how much is actually spent on instructional materials and so forth.

Interview data showed that the state board worked with other education interests to develop the Basic Education Program, which was based on the essential elements for school operation, and that became the basis of the legislation as far as the funding formula was concerned. According to the funding needs report, "Fully funding the Basic Education Program will provide the resources needed by Tennessee's Educators if they are to have an opportunity to achieve excellence" (p. 17).

An official from the governor's office described the governor's position on school funding. He said that, without a tax increase, the wealthier systems feared that

> They would be "Robin Hooded" to a point where it would damage some decent school systems as a way of trying to get some revenues into ones that were already bad. Everybody, virtually everybody, conceded that was not an acceptable alternative. What we had to do was sell the legislature a new funding formula that, for the first time in Tennessee's history, stopped distributing money on the basis of how many warm bodies were in the school and instead took into account the relative wealth of a school system as measured by sales tax, property tax, personal income, which meant, in Tennessee's case, that Hancock County would receive 90 percent of its funds from the state and Nashville would receive roughly 55 percent.

The study also found evidence of the policy core that was advocated by the business and taxpayer groups that were involved in the education policy subsystem in 1972, 1984, and 1992. According to Branson and Steele (1974) when Governor Dunn first proposed increasing the sales tax and broadening the tax base "to include such things as a gasoline tax increase, a service tax, a tax on private sales of automobiles, and a tax on commercial leases" (p. 38), the businesses that would have been affected by the change lobbied legislators in opposition to the proposal. The Tennessee Taxpayers Association also lobbied against the broader tax base. This opposition "apparently caused the Governor to amend his bill so as to eliminate the need for an enlarged tax base" (p. 38). Opposition lessened when Dunn dropped his proposal to broaden the tax base.

According to Lansford (1984), when Alexander proposed some new taxes and increases in others, a proposed amusement tax stimulated "extensive opposition and lobbying attempts from the groups which would be affected by such a tax" (p. 150). Their opposition, however, did not deter the legislature or the governor, fear of retribution from the voters in an upcoming election led the legislature to exempt food from the sales tax. Apparently, due to

"the regressive nature of the sales tax and its hardship on poor people, a removal of the tax on food enhanced the public image of the sales tax increase" (p. 151).

A 1992 news article indicated that there was considerable resistance to the income tax proposed by McWherter. As House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh said, "People oppose an income tax. Many legislators are afraid to vote for it for fear they won't be re-elected" (McKnight, 1991).

Interview data provided new evidence to suggest that business interests were not simply opposed to taxes but, instead, sought improved efficiencies in education in 1992. According to a Tennessee Business Roundtable official, "Several agencies like the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and people like that said, 'Look, we are willing to put more money into education, but we want some accountability features put in there.'" First, they insisted that the state do away with the election of school superintendents. The Roundtable official explained,

> We could not have accountability if we did not have a rational management structure where the lines of authority clearly flowed from the electorate to an elected school board (elected by district) to an appointed superintendent responsible for carrying out the policies of the elected board. The idea that we had seen it too often where you have an elected superintendent and an elected board and nobody had responsibility for anything. They just pointed fingers at each other and passed the buck; and it was a dysfunctional method of organization.

Second, business interests demanded strict accountability at all levels in the districts—from the top down to the classroom—in exchange for their support of any kind of tax increase or increased funding for education. The accountability measures wanted by business interests included (a) dropout rates, (b) promotion rates, (c) percentage of students passing proficiency tests, (d) attendance rates, and (e) value-added assessments. Once those measures were

included in the legislation, confided the business official, "the Chamber, Business Roundtable, and all these people" joined the effort to get the legislation passed.

Secondary Aspects of Coalition Beliefs

This section presents the findings that are related the fourth research question, which asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects? According to Sabatier (1993), members of an advocacy coalition will show less agreement on secondary aspects than on the policy core. Thus, for the purposes of this study, secondary aspects were issues (a) on which the members of coalitions showed less than substantial agreement in 1972, 1984, and 1992, and (b) which were the least resistant to change in 1972, 1984, and 1992. This research question was designed to illuminate the researcher's understanding of the structure of a coalition's beliefs by exploring the issues on which the actors within the coalitions showed the least consensus.

There was evidence of secondary aspects of the education coalition's belief system in 1972, 1984, and 1992. In 1972, according to Branson and Steele (1974), Governor Dunn set out to improve the quality of education by establishing statewide kindergarten and teacher pay raises; initially, the coalition of education interests uniformly supported Dunn's proposals. However, the substantial agreement broke down under pressure from the Democrats in the legislature, who convinced the TEA that there was not enough support in the legislature to pass the proposed tax increase. The TEA agreed to withdraw its support for kindergarten, but continued to support a smaller tax increase that would provide funds for a pay raise.

In 1984, according to Lansford, the education interests had shown substantial agreement for a tax increase to fund education reforms that were proposed by Governor

Alexander. He wanted to improve the quality of education through basic skills, computer skills, mandatory kindergarten, additional high school mathematics and science courses, and special programs for gifted students, as well as establish an incentive pay program and a career ladder to attract outstanding teachers. The substantial agreement decreased when the TEA, which readily supported most of the proposals, vehemently opposed the merit pay policy. While the governor had proposed improving the quality of education by funding new programs such as computer skills and more high school math and science, the TEA advocated a reduction in class size as the means of increasing education quality. Nevertheless, when the TEA realized that it could not stop the passage of the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, the group's leaders publicly acknowledged their agreement with many of the proposals and endorsed the bill. The other members of the education interests maintained support of the governor's proposals throughout the controversy.

Finally, in 1992, interview data indicated that tax increases to pay for education reform were debated, and education interests generally agreed to support increased education funding. The primary objective of increased funding in 1992 was to equalize funding across districts so that all students would have access to quality education. Differences among the members of the education coalition emerged, however. A state board official explained that the differences existed between the "haves and have nots," and legislators and superintendents alike asserted that the differences were "rural versus urban." The urban areas in the state—Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis—benefitted from large shopping areas, and had more money to spend per pupil than rural areas that had no retail businesses to tax. While the rural superintendents formed a coalition to seek equitable funding, the metropolitan

superintendents formed a group to lobby to assure that funds were not redistributed from rich to poor districts, but that new funds were found to increase equity.

Throughout the same 20-year period, there appeared to be some evidence of secondary aspects of the business and taxpayer groups' belief system. In 1972, according to Branson and Steele (1974), when Governor Dunn's first proposal called for a half-cent increase in the sales tax coupled with a broadened tax base, opposition came primarily from local business interests that would have been affected by the new tax rather than business interests in general, which might have been represented by the Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the Tennessee Taxpayers Association lobbied against the increase. In the face of opposition, Dunn amended his proposal to call for a full one-cent tax increase on the existing base. This proposal created disagreement between Democrats and Republicans in the legislature. Finally, Dunn reduced his request to a half-cent sales tax increase on the existing base, which would raise slightly more than was needed for a teacher pay raise but not nearly enough to implement kindergarten statewide.

A similar situation developed in 1984, reported Lansford (1984), when Alexander first proposed the tax increase he wanted to fund his reforms. Business interests who would have been affected by the increase were the ones to appear at legislative hearings to oppose the increase, not business groups as a whole. Legislators who wanted to improve the quality of education but feared the voters reaction to tax increases hoped to ameliorate the voters response by exempting food from the sales tax.

In 1992, interview data showed that the governor proposed that the state institute a three percent income tax to raise the estimated $540 million dollars needed to fund reform,

especially funding equity. Opposition to the income tax appeared to come primarily from the public. A rural superintendent told of his experience when speaking to school bus drivers and cafeteria workers,

> When I started mentioning income tax, I noticed people squirming, but before I got through, there was open hostility. They were so much against the local income tax. With this present climate, there's no chance of getting an income tax now. Not in the foreseeable future.

A TEA official said,

> There was very little support and mainly the voters were very opposed to it. A state Senator had initially agreed to sponsor the income tax bill, but then there were protesters outside of this person's home; and he took his name off the bill. So there was so little support that they couldn't even find a Senate sponsor to put the legislation through on the income tax.

A department of education staff member said,

> The governor was a very effective spokesman, but he would have a single parent come up and say, "Governor, I have three kids. I'm barely making it. I am against your income tax." The governor would reply that she was the exact person that would benefit. "It's not fair for me to go buy feed for my cattle and not pay sales tax and you go buy food for your children and you have to pay it." And the parent would reply, "I know governor, but I just do not believe you."

A business official commented,

> We are one of nine or ten states that do not have a state income tax, and there is a lot of resistance to it. An income tax is fairer, but frankly, the public did not buy it because there is such a distrust that, given a new tax, government would just tax us more, not less. There were no controls.

Interview data showed that, in contrast to 1972 and 1984, business and taxpayer interests represented by the Tennessee Business Roundtable, when faced with a court decision that declared the school funding system unconstitutional, took the position that they would support a tax increase, but only if specific accountability measures were included in the bill.

As a business official explained, "when the decision came down that our funding was unconstitutional, we needed to fix it." In addition, business interests had come to believe in the importance of education to the workplace and the state's economy. Business wanted educators to have the ability and incentives needed to improve schools, and they felt that funding the Basic Education Program would accomplish that purpose. In return, they wanted the educators to accept accountability.

Policy Positions Relinquished

This section presents findings that were related to the fifth research question, which asked: In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core? For the purposes of this study, the policy core was defined as "fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 221), and secondary aspects were defined as (a) issues on which the members of coalitions showed less than substantial agreement in 1972, 1984, and 1992, and (b) issues which were the least resistant to change in 1972, 1984, and 1992. The purpose of this question was to further guide the researcher's understanding of the structure of the belief system of the coalitions in the education policy subsystem in Tennessee over time. To address the research question, the researcher sought evidence to indicate that coalitions in the education policy subsystem changed their position to support or oppose all or part of education reform and related tax increase legislation in 1972, 1984, and 1992.

Data collected for this study from formal research studies and interviews show that, on occasion, education interests changed their approach to implementing their policy core. For

example, Branson and Steele (1974) reported that, in 1972, education interests led by the TEA initially supported Governor Dunn's proposal to raise salaries and institute statewide kindergarten programs. Democrats in the legislature convinced the education interests that the tax increase required to fund the proposals would be too large to gain public acceptance. Further, the Democrats explained that the kindergarten program and pay raises might compete for the same state revenues. These arguments persuaded education interests to withdraw their support for the kindergarten proposal, although they maintained their support for increased funding for education and teacher pay raises.

According to Lansford (1984), prior to Governor Alexander's announcement of his education reform program, education interests had been extensively involved in the task force that conducted the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* and made recommendations for education reform. Thus, there was considerable agreement about the proposals among the education interest groups. Only the TEA voiced its opposition to the merit pay proposal, because it preferred an across-the-board pay raise for all teachers. The TEA persuaded several Democrats to fight the proposal in the legislature. While the TEA was unable to defeat the measure, it succeeded in postponing the legislation for one year while a Select Committee of legislators studied the matter. The TEA lobbied the Select Committee and insisted on a 20 percent pay increase for all teachers. The committee would only agree to a 10 percent increase, it kept the merit pay proposal, and named the revised bill the Comprehensive Education Reform Act. The TEA then decided to develop an alternative bill, the Education Excellence Act of 1984, with the help of a Democratic legislator. Two other legislators joined in sponsoring the bill, but it was never seriously considered by the legislature. Frustrated, the

TEA decided to try to modify the Comprehensive Education Reform Act by submitting amendments. This approach also failed. Finally, TEA officials concluded that there were enough votes to pass the Comprehensive Education Reform Act, and agreed to back both the teacher merit pay measure and the tax increases needed to pay for it. Its leaders "began the task of justifying their decision and helping their membership feel comfortable with the Comprehensive Education Reform Act" (p. 141).

Data from interviews showed that throughout the debate that eventually led to the passage of the Education Improvement Act in 1992, there were instances of decisions to change an individual's or group's approach to implementing their policy position as well as efforts to seek information about the seriousness of problems. According to a superintendent from a small, rural district, early in the discussions over school funding problems in the state, the lawyer for the superintendents of small school systems, Louis Donelson, went to the governor to inform him of the forthcoming lawsuit. Upon learning of the potential lawsuit, the governor sought additional information. The superintendent explained,

> To the governor's credit, he appointed a small group of his to go out and see if there was any legitimacy in our lawsuit. This group came back and told him they had surveyed ten school systems across the state of Tennessee and that we were absolutely correct in what we were doing. From that time on, he was on our side. Even though publicly he couldn't be. In his heart he knew what we were doing was the right thing. He was from rural west Tennessee, too, which made him check on it in the first place.

The governor also changed his approach on more than one occasion. When Governor McWherter first submitted the Education Improvement Act, there was no accountability component. The legislature added the accountability measures that the business interests demanded. One measure called for the appointment of local superintendents by elected

boards—radical changes from the status quo in most Tennessee districts. According to an official from Commissioner Smith's office,

> Governor McWherter at first was opposed to it, and then he said, "I became convinced that it was the right step to take," and so, consequently, when he threw his support to it, then that was the impetus for the whole package to move on.

A superintendent observed,

> He just became convinced that it was an important step. His reasoning behind it as I recollect was that, we can't expect superintendents to do what has to be done--to make the decisions that need to be made--and then be elected. So if we're going to have a clearly defined line of accountability, we need to put those superintendents in that line of accountability. You can't have two masters. See in the case of a superintendent as an elected superintendent, I could have chose not to have worked. I could have just chosen and said, "Well, I'll work when I want to." And the Board could say, "You're going to go to work." "I'm not going to do anything. How are you going to make me do it. I'm elected by the people just like you are. I don't work for you. I work for the people."

In addition, McWherter changed his approach to funding the Education Improvement Act. Initially, he proposed an income tax. He spoke out publicly, trying to get the public to accept an income tax, but as a TEA official observed,

> There was absolutely no support for it. . . . They had the bill up twice on the income tax, but then there were protesters outside of this person's home, and he took his name off the bill. There was so little support that they couldn't even find a Senate sponsor to put the legislation through on the income tax.

Administration officials explained that the governor really believed in the need for education reform and the fairness of an income tax, so he linked the two, arguing that there could be no education reform without new funds, and the best and fairest way to raise new funds was with an income tax. By the close of the 1991 session, the legislature had passed the education reform measure but not the funding for it. A source close to the governor commented,

> The income tax was just wearing us out. It is interesting, though, when we met with two focus groups with a true, trained professional leading those focus groups, income tax was the easier of the two sales for them. That's one of the lessons: We might have saved the income tax if we hadn't put the two together.

A news article reported that given the lack of support for the income tax and the information from the focus groups, the governor decided to give up on the income tax in order to save education reform (Harp, 1991).

Interviews with senators found that the rural senators changed their approach when the Senate was deadlocked over the appointed superintendent measure. The leader of the rural delegation, "went in with his people, the rural legislators, and he came back in and said, 'We'll give that point, and we'll take this point.' We ended up moving on. It worked out." On another occasion, the legislature changed the part of the bill that outlined the extent to which the value-added system would use student test data for evaluating teachers. That was changed at the insistence of the TEA to say that it ought to be viewed as one of several criteria for evaluating teachers. The business interests had pressed for accountability "all the way down to the classroom," and a news story reported that a senator said, "What we want to know is who's teaching and who's not" (Davis, 1991, p. B2).

Interviews revealed that education interests initially were divided over the school funding formula. According to a state board official, the differences were between ". . . the folks who needed the money on the one side and the folks who had the money on the other side: cities and rural areas." Divisions were exemplified by the superintendents. Seventy-seven rural superintendents joined as plaintiffs in a suit against the state's school funding

mechanism. Ten urban superintendents joined the state as defendants. As a rural superintendent reported,

> There were ten of them, and some of the superintendents in those groups were there, and they actually met and discussed whether they would join Tennessee Small School Systems or join the state. They came within one vote of joining Tennessee School Systems in the lawsuit. Nashville, Memphis, and Chattanooga bulldozed their way through, since they were the three largest to join the state in this. They were very adamant. They fought the small schools every way they could.

Their intent was to "fund this without the Robin-Hood effect—without just taking away from the rich counties," explained a rural superintendent. Faced with these differences, education interests, rural and urban, formed a school finance study group. After months of discussion and study, the group reached an agreement. A state board official said,

> We found a way that we didn't have to redistribute the funds; there's none of this Robin Hood business. You've got to keep in mind that this is a matter of gathering up the money where it is and distributing it where it needs to be.

An official of the superintendents' organization reported,

> Everyone was trying to make sure that what they did would satisfy and meet the needs of those poor school systems without coming up with a "Robin Hood Bill," so to speak—taking away from one and giving it to the other.

The School Finance Study Group developed the Basic Education Program, the new school funding formula, which Governor McWherter then introduced as part of the Education Improvement Act. With the Basic Education Program in place, rural and urban education interests alike changed their positions and supported the Education Improvement Act.

Analysis of data from formal research studies and interviews showed evidence of change over the 20-year period in the position taken by the business and tax payer interests who advocated efficiency. It appeared that after decades of opposition to tax rate increases

and efforts to broaden the tax base, business interests had adopted a new approach. In 1992, they supported the governor's agenda to improve the quality of education and agreed to support tax increases as long as the reform bill included several accountability measures including (a) decreased dropout rates, (b) improved promotion rates, (c) higher percentages of students passing proficiency tests, (d) better attendance rates, and (e) value-added assessments that assured adequate student learning annually.

Policy-Oriented Learning

This section presents findings that were related to the sixth research question, which asked: In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects? For the purposes of this study, policy-oriented learning was defined as coalitions' "use of formal policy analyses primarily to buttress and elaborate" their beliefs (Sabatier, 1993, p. 19). To address the research question, it was important to examine the information to which various interest groups had access, what publications were produced by the interest groups, and whether coalition members perceived that groups changed their policy positions as a result of new information.

When asked what information about school funding or education reform was accessible to them during the debate on the Education Improvement Act, three respondents—a legislator, a TEA official, and a rural superintendent—said that they had access to a report, *Fiscal Capacity of Public School Systems in Tennessee* (Green, Gregory, & Brady, 1991), "which was used to determine the extent to which the funding formula addressed the court's concerns about inequitable funding." A state board official mentioned that the state board's annual reports, beginning in 1988, cited a series of funding problems and proposed a general

way to fix them. Legislators and the superintendents said that they relied on the head of finance for the Chattanooga schools to run calculations. Administration officials said that they got their information from state finance and administration officials, rural superintendents indicated that they got help from the County Technical Assistance Group, and the House Education Committee got information from the commissioner of education. Legislators and administration officials complained about the difficultly of getting accurate figures, as well as figures that were comparable to other group's calculations. Finally, three respondents—a superintendent, a legislator, and an assessment expert—reported that they had access to and used professional journals, articles, and association meetings. They got ideas for legislation or support for their policy ideas from those information sources.

Interviews with business interests indicated that they had access to information about the link between education and the economy in the mid-1980s as a result of their connections to the Alexander administration. Further, Tennessee Business Roundtable publications analyzed by the researcher cited data from national publications, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress, to demonstrate the need to be involved in education policy issues.

When asked what, if any, documents their organization or agency published, five documents were mentioned. Each document was used by the individual or the group that produced it to further their legislative agenda. An assistant to the commissioner said that the department of education put out press releases that "were trying to show what we were doing and why we were doing it. . . We were trying to educate as well." The legislature had the

figures to show each district "what it would mean to them" and "the fact that the money was going to the children . . . and not going into salaries." "That was a selling point."

The governor's office spokesperson said that the basic document from that office was the 21st Century Plan. The department produced lots of copies of the plan and a video. The purpose was to have ". . . the same message being pumped out—consistency and an upbeat message."

The state board of education published an annual funding needs report. Those reports, said a state board official, "became the basis of the Basic Education Program."

A senator said that early during his term on the Senate Education Committee, he had prepared a one-page report that showed per pupil spending, student grades, teacher salaries, number of teachers, and student test scores in each school system. He used the report to show the public and other policymakers the lack of a relationship between expenditures and test scores.

When asked if they were aware of any group or coalition that changed its position on education reform or school funding strategies as the result of new information, nine respondents indicated that they were not. Three respondents reported that the governor changed his position on three occasions. First, a spokesperson for the commissioner's office reported that the results of focus group interviews, which revealed the political problems underlying the linking of the Education Improvement Act and the income tax initiative, led the governor to give up the fight for an income tax and to support the legislature's plan for increasing the sales tax and phasing in full-funding of the Education Improvement Act over six years. Second, two respondents mentioned that the governor at first opposed the uniform

appointment of superintendents, but when he learned that business groups would not support the tax increase unless superintendents were appointed, he agreed to support it. Finally, a small school system superintendent said that the governor, who was a defendant in the lawsuit, agreed to support the small school systems lawsuit after he got information from his task force, which had looked into the legitimacy of the lawsuit.

A superintendent and an administrative official reported that the superintendents of 10 metropolitan systems initially opposed changing the school funding system, but later agreed to support the Basic Education Program, when they learned metropolitan systems would not lose any of their funds under the new formula.

Interview data show that 7 of the 12 respondents agreed that throughout the debate over the Education Improvement Act, the elected versus appointed superintendent issue was the most controversial and thus, the issue on which most groups eventually changed their minds. Their position change came as a result of new information about funding. As an administration official explained,

> As long as that issue remained, a very simple, highly emotional issue . . . like attracting bugs on your deck, everybody focused on that issue while we moved around with everything else. And when we reached that final agreement on how to fund the program—when the money was laid on the bed—then the issue of how you choose a superintendent took care of itself.

In addition to interview data about 1992, evidence from formal studies and a search of the literature indicated that policy analyses were conducted over the past 20 years to provide support to education interests' claims that funding for education should be adequate and equitable. For example, in a study of finance equity, Gibbs (1979) asserted that the General Assembly had not appropriated sufficient funds for the funding base to meet actual school

costs and, as a result, local systems were required to provide more and more funding each year to make up the difference between base level appropriations and actual education needs.

Further, the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study* (Payne, 1982) described economic and financial factors affecting public education. It also reviewed legislation and its shortcomings and recommended goals for education and strategies for improving the quality of education in the state.

Peach and Reddick (1985) conducted a study to "assess the attitudes of educators and public officials regarding funding patterns and revenue sources for educational services in the State of Tennessee" (p. 1). They reported that the tax system that funded schools was regressive and that all groups responding to the survey expressed dissatisfaction with the present level of education funding and indicated that acceptable revenue sources included parimutuel betting, sumptuary taxes, severance taxes, and the retail sales tax.

According to state law, the state board produced its *Annual Report of Funding Needs for Education in Grades K-12* for the legislature, beginning in 1987. Each report outlined the inadequacy and inequity of school funding in the state.

Peevely and Ray (1989), conducted a study, *Tennessee School Finance Equity as Determined by Locally Funded Teaching Positions,* that was funded by the Tennessee Department of Education. The study revealed that the

> local option sales tax revenue accounted for the greatest variability of local teacher positions which were beyond the foundation formula . . . and the variation in revenue rendered its use in the financing of public education inequitable across the school districts of Tennessee. (p. 18)

Young (1990) wrote a report, *Perspectives on School Funding Priorities,* which was sponsored by the Tennessee Municipal League and the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations to articulate their view of fiscal disparity issues and to suggest that the solution was not the redistribution of present funds but the influx of new money to support education. Green (1990) prepared an article to show how the "40-year reliance on the sales tax is being threatened by it growing inadequacy" (p. 8).

Dynamic External Events

This section presents findings that were related to the seventh research question, which asked: In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces? For the purposes of this study, exogenous forces were defined as (a) significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g., changes in socioeconomic conditions, system-wide governing coalition, or policy outputs from other subsystems) and (b) skillful exploitations of those opportunities by the previously minority coalition with the subsystem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 221-222). To address the research question, it was important to explore exogenous or dynamic external forces that might have provided the impetus for education reform and related tax increase in 1972, 1984, and 1992.

Data provide some evidence of exogenous forces for policy change in 1972. According to Branson and Steele (1974), "When Dunn campaigned for the gubernatorial office in 1970, he pledged to fulfill a commitment to early childhood education by achieving full implementation of a statewide kindergarten program" (p. 37). He was the first Republican to have been elected in 50 years. At that time, total expenditures for education were low when compared to other states, but Tennesseans at the local level had been reluctant

to increase funding for education. Although the state distributed over 90 percent of education funds on an equalization basis, it did not rank high in its equalization effect because it ignored local ability, but expenditure disparity between districts was not significant. The state's ability to finance education as indicated by personal income was below the national average and the state's level of effort to support education also was lower than most states. As a result, schools in Tennessee had very limited budgets. It had been 12 years since the previous tax increase. Since they elected Dunn, the public appeared to be ready to support a tax increase.

When Alexander began his first term as governor in 1978, he was serving on the Task Force on Education For Economic Growth coordinated by the Education Commission of the States (Lansford, 1984). He set out to attract new business and industry to Tennessee, which uncovered problems with the "state's lagging education system" (p. 232) and their relationship to the economy. When the legislature initiated the *Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study*, Alexander supported it, and soon after his re-election, he proposed his education reform program based primarily on that study's recommendations, an action that helped build legislative support. He also surrounded himself with an energetic and capable staff. When resistance developed around the state role in teacher evaluation, Alexander took the initiative to establish an Interim Certification Commission, which served to calm the fears of opponents. Early on, he sought the support of the Democratic Speaker of the House and took other measures to build bipartisan support. During the delay between the 1983 and 1984 legislative sessions, Alexander worked to gain additional support. Then he surprised most by calling a special session during which the Comprehensive Education Reform Act was passed. According to a public opinion poll conducted in 1983, voters favored Alexander's ideas about

education reform, but not tax increases for across-the-board pay raises for teachers. The findings had credibility with the Democratic majority in the legislature (Lansford, p. 113). According to Achilles, Payne, and Lansford (1988), "It seems that the energy and commitment of the governor provided the sparkplug to start and drive the machinery of educational reform in Tennessee" (p. 242).

When asked what they thought the impetus for the Education Improvement Act of 1992 was, 10 of the 12 respondents mentioned the lawsuit. Three legislators acknowledged the role of the lawsuit. One said that the lawsuit "gave the legislature the courage to do something." A staff person for the governor said, "There was a lawsuit looming in the background, which we sought to use to our advantage." A state board staff person said,

> The impetus was the fact that the funding formula in Tennessee was wrong; and the fact that until we fixed that, real improvements in schools was not going to be possible. Now having said that, the point was made even clearer by the fact that there was a lawsuit which said the same thing. It would be incorrect, though, to conclude that Tennessee policy apparatus in Tennessee didn't recognize the problem before the courts did. We did, and we were acting upon it; and the proposals were appropriate. The lawsuit sustained concern and commitment to do the right thing.

Rural superintendents also reported that changes in the socioeconomic condition of the rural areas of the state was an external force that played a role in policy change. Rural areas that had at one time been economically viable and therefore able to raise adequate local funds for education were no longer able to do so. This situation gave rise to concerns of the rural superintendents who first joined together to plan the lawsuit.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Purpose and Research Design

In this chapter, the researcher synthesizes the data and draws conclusions regarding the research questions that guided this study investigating the extent to which the education policymaking process that had resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act and the supporting tax increase in 1992 in Tennessee conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. In addition, the researcher discusses the implications of the study and makes recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to address the research questions, which were developed to guide the exploration of the Tennessee case. The research questions sought information about (a) the presence of advocacy coalitions in the education policy subsystem, (b) the stability of advocacy coalition membership over time, (c) the extent of agreement among coalition members on issues pertaining to the policy core of their belief systems, (d) the extent of agreement among coalition members on secondary aspects of their belief systems, (e) policy positions that were relinquished by coalitions, (f) policy-oriented learning that may have been a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects, and (g) exogenous forces (dynamic external events) that provided impetus for policy change.

The rationale for the study emerged from the researcher's observations that a significant change in education policy occurred in Tennessee when that state passed the Education Improvement Act of 1992 as well as a half-cent increase in the state sales tax to

fund the reforms. The state had traditionally lagged behind most other states in its funding of public schools and had actually cut the public school spending by 5 percent in 1991. The researcher was also aware of the need for a theory that could provide insight to researchers' and policymakers' understanding of policy change like that in Tennessee, and the Advocacy Coalition Framework emerged as a potential theoretical explanation of policy change, but that more information about its viability was needed.

The unit of analysis for this study was the education policy subsystem of Tennessee. The respondents were selected to be interviewed using the snowballing technique in which eight individuals to whom the researcher had access in Tennessee were called and asked to name key individuals who should be interviewed for this study. Individuals who were named by three or more individuals were selected to be interviewed. Twelve individuals qualified to be interviewed. They included the governor's key education advisor, House Education Committee chairman, Senate Education Committee chairman and co-chairman, ex-commissioner of education (who also had served as the superintendent of a small school system), key staff person to the ex-commissioner of education, executive director of the state board of education, executive director of the school superintendents' association, executive director of the Tennessee Education Association, executive director of the Tennessee Business Roundtable, developer of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, and one of the three rural school superintendents who filed the lawsuit that resulted in the decision that the state's school funding was unconstitutional.

To investigate the extent to which the education policymaking process in Tennessee that had resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act and related tax increases

conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, this study employed data collection procedures using multiple sources of data. Data sources included personal interviews with well-informed respondents; formal research studies of the Tennessee case; and printed documents including letters, memoranda, news releases, and news clippings. To conduct the personal interviews, the researcher developed an interview protocol specifically for the purposes of this study. The content of the instrument was reviewed by an expert ethnographer, revised, then field tested by conducting two interviews. To augment and verify the data collected through the interview procedures, each respondent was asked to provide print documents relevant to the policy change. These interview and document data were analyzed systematically, and data were aggregated by category; each category was related to a specific research question. Additional print data were sought as needed to clarify, augment, or verify interview data.

The data from interviews, formal research studies, and relevant print documents were aggregated according to the categories that had been predetermined. Data from the multiple sources were then analyzed for consistency, summarized, and presented in two ways: (a) as a chronological description of the Tennessee education policy subsystem from 1972 to 1992 (Chapter 4) and (b) within the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Chapter 5).

Conclusions

Findings from this study were sufficient to support the following conclusions. Research question 1 asked: In Tennessee, did the education policy subsystem contain competing coalitions in 1992? Data show that at least two advocacy coalitions competed in the Tennessee education policy subsystem in 1992. The first coalition was composed of at

least eight education role groups that supported education reform and the related tax increase. Those interests included: the governor, commissioner of education and other department of education staff, state board of education, school boards association, TEA staff and members, superintendents, school administrators, and PTA members. Examination of the data also reveals that, in 1992, most of the education interests were represented on the Finance Study Group, which met over a year or more to develop the new school funding proposal. The governor was indirectly involved in the School Finance Study Group through the commissioner whom he appointed. However, the governor's energies were directed primarily toward carrying the education message to the public. Once the legislature began to debate the proposal, it held hearings at which education interests testified on behalf of their positions.

The competing coalition during the debate over the Education Improvement Act of 1992 was composed of at least five groups that advocated improved efficiency in the education system by opposing tax increases and seeking increased accountability in the education system. The groups included Chambers of Commerce, Tennessee Business Roundtable, Tennessee Municipal League, Tennessee County Administrators Association, and Tennessee Taxpayers Association. Coordinated activity among groups was indicated in 1992, when the Tennessee Business Roundtable served as an umbrella group for business interests and convened the statewide Education Roundtable conferences.

Research question 2 asked: In Tennessee, was the composition of coalitions, if any, in 1992 the same as in either 1972 or 1984? Data shows that eight education role groups had been involved as allies in the 1972 and 1984 in the controversy over the passage of education reform and supporting tax increases. Those interests included: the governor, commissioner of

education and other state department of education staff, state board of education, school boards association, teachers, administrators, superintendents, and PTA members. Thus, the groups that had been involved in the education policy subsystem as allies in 1972 and 1984 were generally the same as the groups that were allies in 1992 in support of education reform and related tax increases, suggesting that the coalition of education interests was stable over time.

Further, several business and taxpayer interests had been involved in both 1972 and 1984 as opponents of tax increases for education reform. Interests that were present in 1972 included Tennessee Municipal League, Tennessee County Administrators Association, Tennessee Taxpayers Association, American Legion, American Association of University Women, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Concerned Citizens for Better Schools, and Federation of Business and Professional Women. Business and taxpayer interests that opposed tax increases for education reform in 1984 were vaguely described by Lansford (1984) as representatives from the state's amusement parks, movie, theaters, TV cable companies, tourist attractions, and other amusements.

Thus, in 1972, 1984, and 1992, the competing coalition that opposed tax increases for education reform was generally composed of business, taxpayer, and non-education government agencies active in the education policy subsystem. Specifically, the Tennessee Municipal League, the Tennessee County Administrators Association, and the Tennessee Taxpayers Association were named as involved in 1972 and 1992. It was difficult to identify a particular group that took the lead in the competing coalition in 1972 and 1984. However, the Tennessee Business Roundtable took the lead in 1992. This coalition appeared to be the

dominant one in Tennessee, in that it seemed to be so closely connected with the status quo that in most legislative sessions during the past 20 years, even discussion of substantial increases in funding for education was thwarted. This may account for the perception that it was essential to employ the strategy of litigation in order to even begin discussion of policy change in 1992. The courts provided the only forum where the education quality coalition could appeal to the constitutional "right" to adequate and equitable funding.

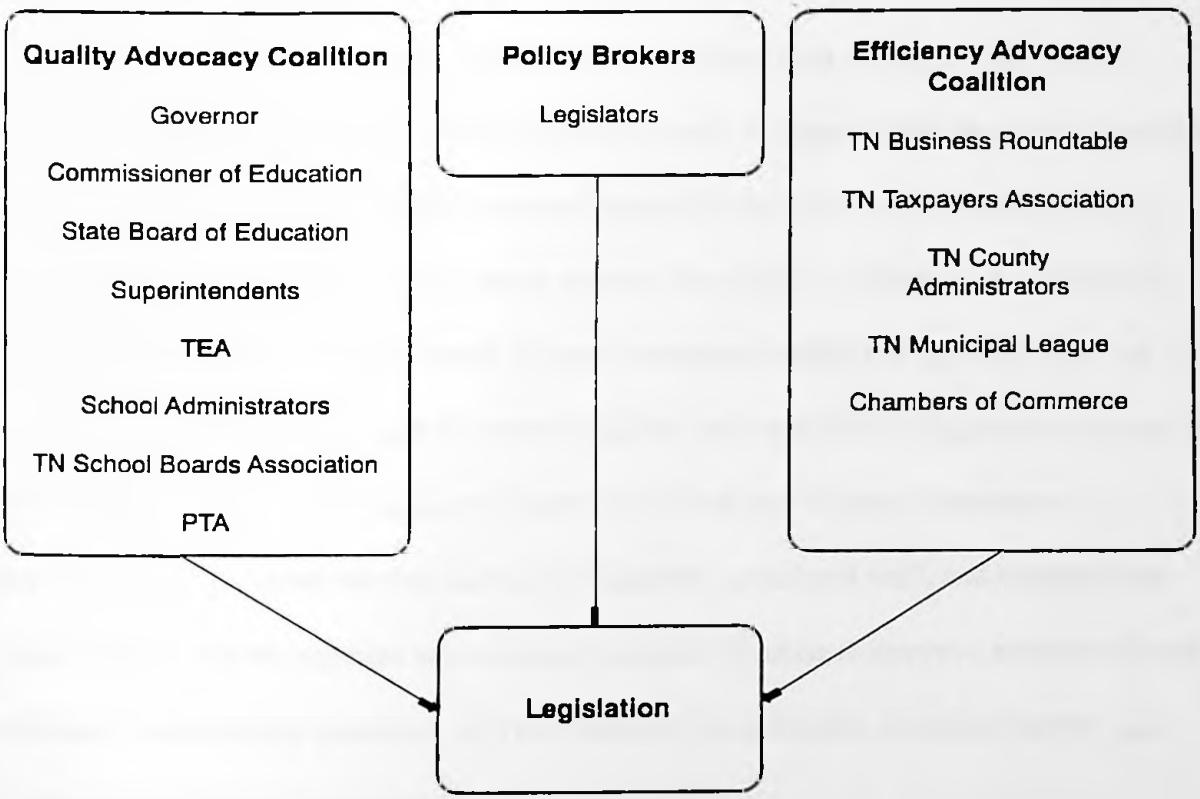

Figure 2. Model of the Tennessee Education Policy Subsystem Interactions. This model was adapted from *Policy Change and Learning,* by Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 224, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Figure 2 depicts the education policy subsystem that was found exist in Tennessee between 1972 and 1992. Within the subsystem, actors were aggregated into two advocacy coalitions, the quality advocacy coalition and the efficiency advocacy coalition. Conflicting strategies supported by the two coalitions were mediated by legislators, which Sabatier (1988) calls policy brokers, those "whose principal concern it is to find a reasonable compromise which will reduce intense conflict" (p. 133). The results of conflict were the 1972, 1984, and 1992 changes in education legislation.

Research question 3 asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the groups within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the policy core? It appeared that the policy core, the fundamental policy position of the education interests in the Tennessee education policy subsystem during the past 20 years, was to improve the quality of education by providing adequate and equitable funding, which required increased funding through a tax increase. In 1972, the tax increase was to pay for teacher salaries and expanded kindergarten programs. In 1984, additional education funds were to pay for reforms that included curriculum improvements, increased salaries, curriculum materials, additional staff, and reduced class sizes. In 1992, the tax increase was to pay for equitable funding to improve education for all students by establishing programs such as mandatory kindergarten, computer literacy, and improved high school curriculum.

In contrast, it appeared that the policy core articulated by business and taxpayer groups was to operate an efficient system of education by keeping taxes low, increasing regulation of schools, and instituting scientific management principles. This position reflected the fundamental cultural values of the state or the stable system parameters, which are an

important element in the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The fundamental values were incorporated in the status quo, which appeared not only to constrain the education quality coalition, but to become the focus of the conflict. While one coalition wanted to significantly improve the quality of education for all children in Tennessee, the other coalition defended the status quo.

Research question 4 asked: In Tennessee, to what extent did the actors within coalitions agree on issues pertaining to the secondary aspects? The data showed that the coalition of education interests agreed substantially over time on the need to improve the quality of education and to increase funding for education to do so, but there was less agreement on the aspects of education that needed to be changed and for what purposes new tax dollars should be spent. Differences were greatest between the TEA's positions and the remainder of the education interests in that the TEA persisted in its demands for higher salaries and smaller classes, while others had a broader view of how money should be spent to improve education quality. The secondary aspects of the belief system of the coalition that advocated education quality included statewide kindergarten, basic skills, increased high school graduation requirements, special programs for gifted students, merit pay, career ladder, and class size.

During the past two decades, the coalition of business and taxpayer interests that advocated efficiency in the education system agreed substantially on their desire to keep tax rates low, but there was less agreement on what tax structure was least onerous. For every tax proposal, different groups would have to bear the burden of the increase. These groups were the ones to appear before legislative committees to protest and, thus, the opponents to tax

increases appeared to change from time to time, which suggests that the various tax alternatives served as secondary aspects of the belief system of the coalition that advocated efficiency.

Research question 5 asked: In Tennessee, did coalitions, if any, give up on secondary aspects of their belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core? Over time, the coalition that advocated improved education quality had given up on certain aspects of its policy positions in order to sustain its policy core. The primary example of this was the TEA, which regularly gave up its demands for across the board pay raises and smaller class sizes in order to support increased funding for other measures that would improve the quality of education. The governor and superintendents also changed their positions on funding and governance issues in order to maintain the policy core. Thus, it appeared that secondary aspects also included specific funding allocations and governance issues, especially the issue of elected versus appointed superintendents.

Over time, the coalition that advocated education efficiency also gave up certain aspects of its policy position in order to sustain its policy core. The primary example of this was the business interests who gave up their anti-tax stance in exchange for accountability measures. They viewed both as strategies to increase efficiency in the education system. Low taxes and accountability measures, especially the implementation of scientific management procedures, therefore, were secondary aspects of the coalition's belief system while the policy core appears to be education efficiency.

Research question 6 asked: In Tennessee, was policy-oriented learning a force for change in the policy core or secondary aspects? Members of the coalition that advocated

improved education quality and the coalition that advocated efficient education used formal policy analyses to buttress and elaborate their policy positions. Both advocacy coalitions in the education policy subsystem had access to policy-relevant information and several of the coalition members had published information designed to explain their position and persuade others. Some evidence was found that individuals and groups changed their position on secondary aspects of their belief systems upon learning new information, but no evidence was found to suggest that policy-relevant information led to changes in state policies.

Research question 7 asked: In Tennessee, was change in the policy core the result of one or more exogenous forces? There was some evidence in the Tennessee case to support the Advocacy Coalition Framework hypothesis that changes in the policy core required both dynamic external events and "the skillful exploitation" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 222) of those events by the minority coalition in the subsystem. In 1972, the dynamic external event appeared to be the election of the first Republican governor in 50 years. Then-Governor Dunn appeared to have exploited this opportunity by appointing key individuals to top-level positions, such as the commissioner of education and the state board of education members. Further, he pursued his agenda for education reform and a related tax increase because he believed that public opinion was on his side. In 1984, high national interest in education may have served as an exogenous force for education policy change in Tennessee. Then-Governor Alexander exploited the opportunity by working closely with his political appointees who supported his ideas, gaining bipartisan support in the legislature, and working very hard to mobilize public opinion. In 1992, the Tennessee Small School Systems lawsuit was found to be the exogenous force that brought about policy change. Further, Governor

McWherter exploited the opportunity by mobilizing public opinion by traveling across the state to sell his program, gaining "buy-in" from the legislature by inviting its members to "flesh out" his "bare-bones" legislative proposal, and using his political skill to gain broad-based bipartisan support.

Implications of the Study

The controversy over the Education Improvement Act and related tax increases proved to be a fertile test of the Advocacy Coalition Framework assumptions. Competing coalitions were identified, and their membership over time established. In addition, a number of policy positions that came into play during the 20-year period were investigated and, as a result, structures of the belief systems of the coalitions were identified, providing an opportunity to analyze how these beliefs shaped the political debate over time. Finally, the Advocacy Coalition Framework provided the opportunity to investigate the effects of policy-oriented learning and dynamic external forces on the policymaking process and the potential for policy change demonstrated by each.

First, by defining an advocacy coalition as composed of "people from a variety of positions . . . who share a particular belief system . . . and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time" (Sabatier, 1993, p. 25), the Advocacy Coalition Framework expanded the view of the education policy subsystem beyond that of many politics-of-education researchers. Iannaccone (1967), for example, limited his investigation to the education lobby, which he defined as the "schoolmen, professional educational groups, and school boards association" (p. 41), and Mazzoni (1991) limited subsystems to "a small and stable group of committee-based lawmakers, agency bureaucrats, and established group

representatives" (p. 117). The Advocacy Coalition Framework policy subsystem appears to be much more like the "broad macro arena . . . [where] top-level elected officials, such as executive heads and legislative leaders, seek to promote and publicize policy positions" (Mazzoni, p. 117). Given that the Advocacy Coalition Framework expands the potential number of actors who might be involved in a controversy in an education policy subsystem, the Tennessee case confirmed the utility of focusing on advocacy coalitions as a viable means of simplifying dozens of actors involved in policy change over time. By aggregating actors within advocacy coalitions, the Advocacy Coalition Framework approach did not overwhelm the researcher with an impossibly complex set of actors to investigate, which Heclo's (1978) concept of issue networks (which views individuals as largely autonomous) tends to do.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework also enhanced the investigation of policy change by assuring the pursuit of competing coalitions, which in earlier studies of Tennessee had been overlooked. In particular, the two formal research studies used as the basis for investigating the policymaking process in Tennessee in 1972 (Branson & Steele, 1974) and 1984 (Lansford) had not investigated the opponents in the controversy over proposed education reform legislation and related tax increases on those occasions. While the presence of opposition was acknowledged by the researchers, no effort was made to determine the extent to which the members of the opposition shared beliefs, coordinated their activities, or established a policy agenda. In this study, however, opponents were identified and data were collected from them, which enabled the researcher to gain insights into the structure of the beliefs of the opponents and the motives for their actions. Guided by the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the analysis of educational conflict in Tennessee revealed a rather cohesive

education quality coalition composed of education interest groups and elected officials. The competing coalition, which might have been overlooked if other theories of policy change had guided the research, was the long-dominant business and anti-tax efficiency coalition, which was less cohesive than the education quality coalition. The less cohesive nature of the dominant coalition was consistent with Mawhinney's (1993) findings. Also guided by the Advocacy Coalition Framework, Mawhinney had found that minority coalitions had a greater incentive to remain cohesive in order to have any change of gaining power, while those in a long-dominant coalition had become less cohesive over several decades. In the Tennessee case, it was not clear whether the opponents were less organized than the allies or the researchers had failed to collect and report sufficient data about the extent of coordinated activity of the opponents.

The long-term view of the activities in the education policy subsystem taken by the Advocacy Coalition Framework was a major contribution toward understanding the internal dynamics of the subsystem and the structure of the belief systems of the competing coalitions. Lansford (1984) concluded that the education interests in Tennessee had become fragmented during a single controversy over education reform and, in 1992, it appeared that the superintendent group was fragmented. However, the longer time frame of the Advocacy Coalition Framework provided a different perspective of the disagreements. It appeared that those disagreements were over secondary aspects, while the groups remained cohesive on the policy core.

The Tennessee case also conformed to the Advocacy Coalition Framework view that shared beliefs, rather than shared interests, constitute the fundamental "glue" holding

coalitions together (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 223). Policy core beliefs of the members of advocacy coalitions in Tennessee were found to be substantially the same and remained relatively constant over time. Thus, the Advocacy Coalition Framework was useful in guiding the researcher's efforts to understand policy change in the Tennessee case.

One of the most confounding aspects of the investigation of the structure of beliefs was the school funding equity lawsuit, which appeared to indicate that equity was a policy core belief. Upon further investigation, however, it became apparent that equity in this case was an instrumental goal or strategy for accomplishing a more important value, which was quality. Although the Advocacy Coalition Framework led the researcher to uncover the various policy positions and, thereby, the beliefs of coalitions engaged in controversy, the framework was inadequate for describing the structure of the belief systems that were found. In order for the researcher to frame the findings of this study, it became necessary to supplement the Advocacy Coalition Framework with political culture theory articulated by Marshall et al. (1989), who explicated the four core social values—choice, efficiency, equity, and quality—and the strategies for achieving those values,.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework made a unique contribution in that it emphasized policy-oriented learning within subsystems, the process of attempting to increase understanding in order to achieve policy core objectives, whereas traditional politics-of-education research tends to ignore the topic altogether. The Tennessee case supported the Advocacy Coalition Framework's argument that technical information and formal policy analysis are generally used in an advocacy fashion, that is, to buttress and support a predetermined position. Further, the Tennessee case also seemed to support the assumption

that policy-oriented learning would not be a primary force for policy change. Abundant information produced over nearly a decade repeatedly demonstrated the inadequacy and inequity of school funding in the state. Yet, these published arguments were not sufficient to produce a change in the policy core. The technical information that was reported therein, however, provided information that was needed for the education professional interests to develop the Basic Education Program, the new funding formula. Technical information about the new funding formula and exactly how much money each district would receive played an especially important role in assuring that the educational professional groups were united in their cause for equitable and adequate funding to improve the quality of education. The split between the rural and urban superintendents on the funding issue became evident when the lawsuit was filed and was not resolved until the two groups could see the amount of money they would get under the new formula, and that the new amount would not harm the funding of metropolitan districts but would establish equitable funding for small, rural districts.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework provided a useful conceptual lens to clarify the complexities of policy change for Tennessee education through its emphasis on the analysis of dynamic external forces. The Advocacy Coalition Framework argues that changes in the policy core of public policy within a subsystem will not occur solely because of activities internal to the subsystem. Changes of that magnitude require some exogenous shock that alters the resources and opportunities of various coalitions and the minority coalition within the subsystem to skillfully exploit the opportunities. The evidence presented in the Tennessee case generally supported this assumption. The exogenous force was the court's decision that the system of funding was unconstitutional, which created an opportunity for the education

quality coalition to exploit. The governor, upon learning of the lawsuit and that the superintendents who filed the suit had a legitimate complaint, seized the opportunity to mobilize public opinion. According to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993, p. 222), public opinion can constitute a substantial constraint on the range of feasible strategies available to subsystem participants if it persists for some time and demonstrates some recognition of value tradeoffs. As a result, the policy change did not simply redistribute funds from wealthier to poorer school districts to equalize funding, but increased the adequacy of funding for all schools.

Recommendations for Further Study

Although the Advocacy Coalition Framework offered a new and useful lens with which to examine the complex process of policy change over time, and while this study confirmed the utility of this lens in focusing on the significant factors that had influenced policy change directed at improving the quality of education in Tennessee, certain concerns about the theoretical approach have emerged. For example, the relationship among the stable system parameters, the status quo, and the dominant coalition are difficult to separate. Each appears to reflect a state's fundamental cultural values. However, it may also explain the difficulty in accomplishing policy change beyond marginal or incremental changes. Given this circumstance, past politics of education have tended to take too narrow a view of the education policy subsystem, and future research may need to take an even closer look at the advocacy coalitions that oppose educational change and improvement efforts.

Another issue that emerged from this study was the role of the state courts. Sabatier (1993) viewed them as external to the education policy subsystem, but Marshall et al. (1989)

viewed them as part of the subsystem. Additional information is needed to clarify the role of courts. It would be useful to know whether courts tend to be aligned with the dominant coalition and whether their role is related to states' methods of selecting judges.

Although no questions addressed the issues specifically, the researcher wondered why the effects of court-ordered busing and the expansion of private schools on the willingness of taxpayers to fund public schools were not raised during the interviews with key actors in Tennessee. It would be important to investigate the views of various interest groups about those issues and whether those perceptions would conform to the Advocacy Coalition Framework.

Finally, a concern that emerged from this study was that the application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework did not appear to suggest an exclusive explanation of the phenomena observed in the Tennessee case. It seemed that the data could be viewed by other researchers armed with a different theoretical framework as supporting their preferred framework. For example, a researcher looking for evidence of leadership on the part of the governor may find sufficient data to support an argument that policy change requires the leadership of the governor. Data might also support the hypothesis that the use of power theory or social exchange theory would have explained the Tennessee case.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

Hello, I'm Pat Ceperley. Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. As I explained previously, I'm collecting information for my dissertation. The purpose of my study is to test a theory on political processes, and I want to see if Tennessee supports the theory. The process that I'm studying is the one that resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act in 1992. You were selected for this interview because of your interest and involvement in that process. Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and you have the right to **not respond** to any question. Your answers will be confidential and you will not be quoted by name. Further, the information and perceptions expressed in the report will be aggregated, summary information.

To save time today, I would like your permission to tape record this interview. No one else will have access to the tapes and I will erase the tapes upon completion of the study. You are free to turn the recorder off at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

(1) What are the most important changes you've seen in education as a result of the passage of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) in 1992?

(2) In your opinion, what was the impetus for the EIA legislation?

(3) Could you briefly tell me about your role in the debate over the EIA?

(4) What were the major issues under debate?

Which of these issues were the most controversial?

What groups took opposing sides on these issues?

Who was on which side of the issues?

(5) Did you work with others to support or oppose any parts of the EIA legislation?

What parts of the EIA legislation did you and the groups you worked with support?

Oppose?

Why?

At what point in time did these groups decide to work together?

(6) What positions did you or the group you represent agree with most? Why?

What positions did you or the group you represent agree with least? Why?

(7) Did the groups you worked with meet to discuss their positions on the EIA?

How frequently did the groups meet?

What tasks were undertaken to further the groups interests in the legislation?

(8) Did the groups you worked with change their position to support or oppose any part of the EIA legislation at any time during the debate?

Why?

How important was that change?

(9) In your opinion, what affect did the opposition or support of these various groups have on the **content** of the final version of the EIA?

(10) What **resources** did you and those you worked with use to advance their particular legislative positions?

(11) What **information** about education reform or school funding did you have access to during the debate on the EIA?

(12) Did your group publish, alone or with others, any information related to the EIA?

If so, what was it?

Why did you publish it?

(13) Are you aware of any group or coalition that changed its position on education reform or school funding strategies as the result of new information?

If so, could you briefly tell me about it?

(14) Of the groups that worked together to support or oppose the EIA, which groups are working together during the current legislative session?

Have these groups typically worked together on legislative issues over the years?

If so, could you please tell me about some of these past efforts?

(15) Were you involved in the 1972 debate over the full funding of kindergarten?

If so, do you recall what groups worked together in 1972 to support or oppose the full funding of kindergarten?

(16) Were you involved in the 1984 debate over the Comprehensive Education Reform Act?

If so, do you recall what groups worked together at that time to support or oppose the Comprehensive Education Reform Act?

That completes the interview. Thank you again for your cooperation and time.

APPENDIX B:

Initial Letter

Dear _____:

I will be calling you soon to ask if I might interview you to collect information for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of my study is to test a theory about the politics of education, and I want to see if the Tennessee experience supports the theory. The event that I'm studying is the passage of the Education Improvement Act in 1992. You were selected for this interview because of your interest and involvement in that process. Your answers will be confidential, and you will not be quoted by name. Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and you have the right to **not respond** to any of the questions I ask.

I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,
Patricia E. Ceperley

ABSTRACT

This was an instrumental case study that examined the extent to which the politics of education in Tennessee that resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act of 1992 and related tax increases conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The framework viewed education policy change as the result of the interaction of (a) competing advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem over a decade or more, (b) changes that are external to the policy subsystem, and the (c) effects of stable system parameters.

The researcher used a snowballing technique to identify 12 key education and political leaders in Tennessee, who were interviewed using a protocol developed specifically for this study. Data about the policy subsystem over the previous two decades were collected using formal research studies. Interview and document data were aggregated by predetermined categories and analyzed systematically.

Findings were presented chronologically and according to research question. The study found two competing advocacy coalitions that had interacted in the education policy subsystem throughout the past two decades. The coalition of education groups valued quality and advocated increased spending for education to improve the quality of education and, in turn, their quality of life. Coalition members advocated measures such as, teacher pay increases, statewide kindergarten programs, improved curriculum materials, a career ladder and reduced class sizes for teachers, and equitable funding to improve education for all students. Over time, coalition members disagreed on specific strategies but consistently agreed on the policy core of quality.

The other coalition, whose members were primarily business and tax payer groups valued efficient delivery of government services. They opposed tax increases and advocated centralized control, regulation, and scientific management to increase efficiency of the delivery of education.

Members of both coalitions published studies and held conferences to bolster their arguments, but the studies did not lead to policy change. Consistent with the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the skillful exploitation of dynamic external events appeared to have been the impetus of policy change in 1972, 1984, and 1992.

VITA

Patricia E. Ceperley directs applied research projects at Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) in Charleston, West Virginia. Ceperley has B.S. degree from Purdue University, an M. Ed. from the University of Houston, and an Ed. D. in educational administration from West Virginia University. Ceperley is an educator, having taught at the secondary and college levels. She has also worked for the West Virginia legislature and school boards association. She has authored several publications on state policy issues.

An Advocacy Coalition Approach to a Study
of the Politics of Education in Tennessee

Patricia Ehle Ceperley

ABSTRACT

This was an instrumental case study that examined the extent to which the politics of education in Tennessee that resulted in the passage of the Education Improvement Act of 1992 and related tax increases conformed to the assumptions of the Advocacy Coalition Framework as articulated by Sabatier. The framework viewed education policy change as the result of the interaction of (a) competing advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem over a decade or more, (b) changes that are external to the policy subsystem, and the (c) effects of stable system parameters.

The researcher used a snowballing technique to identify 12 key education and political leaders in Tennessee, who were interviewed using a protocol developed specifically for this study. Data about the policy subsystem over the previous two decades were collected using formal research studies. Interview and document data were aggregated by predetermined categories and analyzed systematically.

Findings were presented chronologically and according to research question. The study found two competing advocacy coalitions that had interacted in the education policy subsystem throughout the past two decades. The coalition of education groups valued quality and advocated increased spending for education to improve the quality of education and, in turn, their quality of life. Coalition members advocated measures such as, teacher pay increases, statewide kindergarten programs, improved curriculum materials, a career ladder and reduced class sizes for teachers, and equitable funding to improve education for all

students. Over time, coalition members disagreed on specific strategies but consistently agreed on the policy core of quality.

The other coalition, whose members were primarily business and tax payer groups valued efficient delivery of government services. They opposed tax increases and advocated centralized control, regulation, and scientific management to increase efficiency of the delivery of education.

Members of both coalitions published studies and held conferences to bolster their arguments, but the studies did not lead to policy change. Consistent with the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the skillful exploitation of dynamic external events appeared to have been the impetus of policy change in 1972, 1984, and 1992.