

An analysis of K-12 education reform in Kansas: A case study of state-level policy actors and neoliberal policies

by

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B.A., University of Kansas, 2001
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

At the national and global levels, education policy is widely considered to be increasingly framed by market-oriented ideas often pushed by elite special interest groups. These groups use their collective power to influence legislators' decisions, often stifling improvement efforts and contradicting research evidence. Public choice theory contends that elected-officials seek personal benefit in policy decisions, framing the role of special interest groups as a malevolent force. The purpose of this study is to better understand state legislative policy making, with a specific focus on the role of special interest groups, their policy preferences, and the strategies they employ. This research answers the question: *How do special interest groups influence K-12 education policy at the state-level?*

The State of Kansas' 2013-2018 House and Senate Education Committee sessions provide material for this qualitative multi-case study. Three hundred eighty-three pieces of testimony were analyzed for content. Sixteen semi-structured interviews with lobbyists, state-elected officials, bureaucrats, and public, private, and religious school leaders were conducted to explore differing perspectives and further understand policy discourse strategies. Data were analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Themes in testimony were aggregated as well as compared by special interest group and policy position on six key issues.

Shifts toward a neoliberal framing of education at the state-level is evident, including efforts to deregulate the teaching profession, policies that allow the state to fund private education, and public appeals for less government. Findings indicate policy discourse is dominated by education-affiliated special interest groups who often work in tandem toward securing resources, with primary opposition preferences promoting free-market ideology and low taxes. Discourse illustrates that public opinion is shaped by mainstream conservative ideology

slowly moving education toward market-based principles. Educators resist change through the discourse of local control while strengthening public accountability of elected officials through insistence on checks and balances in government.

Results indicate that many special interest groups undertake a democratic process open to their members to determine their collective policy position and remind lawmakers of their collective voting power. Professionals utilize scientific dialect on occasion to make rational arguments, but ideological discourse about the perceived role of government and personal stories and experiences dominate testimony.

A lack of reliance on research evidence is perhaps due to the complexity of policy issues or possibly reflects the power of storytelling as a strategy to influence elected officials. However, interviewees shared that distrust amongst special interest groups and perceived bias of information sources conceptualizes facts and evidence-based data as subjective. Ultimately, the legislator ends up relying on inductive processes to affirm beliefs that tend to align with the majority of the electorate. This supports the premise that public choice theory, rather than research-based evidence guides state-level policy decisions.

Implications for policymakers include developing policy that supports student achievement above all else and increase the utilization of evidence-based research in decision-making. Results indicate a need for more effective methods to shape public opinion in support of education. Suggestions for education advocates to successfully engage in political discourse are provided.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This study explores the phenomenon of public education development at the state legislative level. The purpose is to better understand the role of special interest groups in neoliberal policy education reform. The language, strategies and motives of these groups are identified through analysis of discourse they provide to legislators as well as the perceptions of lobbyists, educators, bureaucrats, and elected officials engaged in state legislative education reform processes. This study provides readers with a summary of policies, policy actors, and their perceptions to interpret whose interests are being served through public policy. The research takes a qualitative multi-case study methodological approach that includes multiple and diverse sources of data and policy actor perspectives, providing rich description for deeper reader understanding.

This chapter provides the background and context for this education policy study, followed by the problem statement, research purpose and questions. Next, an overview of the research methodology and assumptions is provided, then the rationale and significance are discussed. The chapter concludes with key terminology.

Background and Context

American democracy was built on a Jefferson's foundation belief in an educated citizenry capable of self-governance (as cited in Coates, 2017) and the ideal that all individuals require a certain amount of basic education to live together in society (Dewey, 1916). This belief led to the development of state-level constitutional responsibility for providing public education within a common school system governed by locally elected officials-the model of schooling that still proliferates to this day (Mondale, Patton, Streep, & Anderson, 2001). However, long standing public distrust of government combined with a narrative of failing students (Rothstein, 1998) as

well as a demand for accountability continues to push ongoing education reform efforts (Grosskopf, Hayes, & Taylor, 2014; Hursh, 2005a; Hursh, 2007).

Modern education reform at the broadest level is driven by finance and budgets (Crampton, Wood, & Thompson, 2015) and has been framed by academics as a move toward neoliberal policies that fundamentally change public education (Ball, 2012a-b; Ball, 2016a-b). The past several decades have resulted in reform that increasingly moves provision of education services to private markets and reshapes policy to model business sector practices (Hursh, 2005b). These neoliberal policy reforms are based upon ideas of liberty (i.e., freedom from government control) as well as a strong anti-tax, small government political movement (Spring, 2010). However, research on the global effects of the neoliberal movement have shown dismal economic outcomes at the price of living under a regime of “endless economic growth and capital accumulation no matter what the social, ecological or political consequences” (Harvey, 2005, p. 121).

The movement towards school choice was popularized by economist Milton Friedman’s suggestion that private markets were better than public institutions and that a voucher system would force schools to compete for students and thereby improve the quality of education (Friedman & Friedman, 1962). Chubb and Moe’s (1990) subsequent seminal work on school choice was influential in capitalizing on growing public sentiment that American schools were failing and furthering a political movement towards school choice. Their study, funded by a conservative political think tank, convinced many that the problem was the school system and the only cure was a competitive education market that incentivizes institutions to change. As a result, many states adopted new policies expanding alternatives to the district-assigned

attendance system that characterized public education (e.g., charter schools, magnet schools, virtual schools).

This has led to much research undertaken in the study of school choice and its effect on academics (Davis & Raymond, 2012; Green, Navarro-Paniagua, Ximenez-de-Embun, & Mancebon, 2014; Ladd, 2001) and individual social mobility (Ball, 2011; Godwin & Kremer, 2002; Murray, 2016) in the United States and across the globe (Chumacero, Gomez, & Paredes, 2011). Studies on school choice have been conducted that assess opinions (Davis & Livingston, 2002; DiPerna & Catt, 2016) and look at a variety of economic dimensions, such as the effects of choice policies on residential property values (Brehm, Imberman & Naretta, 2017). These studies highlight both positive and negative implications of school choice, with most disagreement on whether gains in achievement are real and, maybe most importantly, are worth the inequalities that the privatization of education present. But as Lubienski (2008) observes, the evidence on school choice outcomes simply does not matter to policy makers. They are instead interested in furthering ideas proliferated to the public by think tanks, special interest groups, and media sources, as well as adopting policies developed by such groups (Desmarias, Harden, & Boehnke, 2015; Lewis & Hogan, 2016).

Problem Statement

The study of policy maker behavior reveals the incentives and motives behind policy choices. Buchanan's (1999) theory of Public Choice explains that elected officials make voting decisions based upon their own best interests rather than majority preference or evidence-based policy decisions. That is, the lawmaker will vote for the policy that will bring donations, the votes of important voter blocs, or other incentives of personal interest. Special interest groups serve as a mechanism for lawmakers to understand certain constituent group power and policy

preferences, thereby influencing the individual elected official's decisions on public policy.

While there is much research on national and global special interest groups involved in education policy, much less is known about state-level special interest groups and the role they play in shaping education in Kansas

As Lindblom and Linblom (1959) aptly described, all policy reform happens through small, incremental steps. In the case of the marketization of education, these incremental policy shifts are moving towards creation of more school choice options for students, including private provision of education funded with taxpayer money and tenuous education budgets. Similarly, the steady momentum of conservative and libertarian ideological calls for smaller less government have led to fiscal stress on the state's largest budgetary expenditure. The study of how special interest groups seek to change or fight to maintain the institutions and rules that exist provides deeper understanding of whose interests are served in state-level policy.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe a case of state-level neoliberal education policy reform through better understanding how special interest groups influence policy. Taking the assumptions of Public Choice theory, a critical analysis reveals motives and describes the battle for power among policy actors who engage in education reform. This study places special interest groups in a dichotomous opponent/proponent taxonomy and focuses on neoliberal policy reform issues that expand school choice options or privatize provision of education services, reduce the size of government, or introduce business-sector practices into public education. Specifically, this research analyzes state-level education policy actors who seek to move toward neoliberal ideals and those who oppose this agenda. The State of Kansas is the context, representing both a typical and unique case. Typical in that state government bears many

characteristics of other states having primary responsibility for educating its citizens. The historical, social, political context as well as the current extent of market-based education make this case unique. This review of recent (2013 – 2018) legislative reform efforts documents the shift in public education toward market-based practices and policies.

Legislative testimony was analyzed to describe state-level neoliberal policy discourse, policy actors and their positions, as well as the language and strategies these actors use to influence education reform. A review of special interest group websites provided mission statements and other contextual information to understand policy actors and motives. This data was supplemented with the perspectives of sixteen policy actors with direct experience in education lobbying who shared their experiences with and perspectives of education reform and the role of special interest groups in Kansas.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: *How do special interest groups shape K-12 education policy at the state-level?* To answer the primary question, four key questions were explored:

- 1) What, if any, are the neoliberal policies advocated by interest groups and debated by elected representatives?
- 2) Who are the policy actors engaging in these debates?
- 3) What language do special interest groups use toward social change?
- 4) What strategies do special interest groups pursue to gain policy preference?

Research Approach

The research is framed by a constructivist approach that maintains reality is a subjective concept, and that individuals create and interpret meaning (Cheu-Jey, 2012). It does not seek to

prove a hypothesis, but to bring further understanding to how special interest groups influence state education policy. A case study design framework was utilized to structure data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Hays, 2004; Rossman & Rallis, 2016; Yin, 2017). Collection of data from multiple sources (i.e., public testimony, organizational websites, and interviews with key informants) brought multiple perspectives to the study and allowed for data triangulation to assure the rigor and validity required of qualitative inquiry.

Qualitative methods were used to interpret discourse. A document review of the 2013-2018 Kansas Legislative Committees on Education was undertaken first to identify policy actors and to document legislative issues and discourse surrounding neoliberal education policies. A search of websites associated with participating special interest groups provided an overview of policy motives. Purposive sampling of actors identified in documents was used to identify interview participants who had direct experience lobbying legislative education committees. Further, several interviewees were identified through snowball sampling and included in the study based upon recommendation regarding the policy actors' ability to add diversity of perspective to the study.

All data were analyzed through a system of qualitative codes that detail content and magnitude, and themes were developed to describe common content found in the data (Saldana, 2016). Codes were first established to organize data by policy issue and then a second "versus" coding was used to identify dichotomous issue positions. Versus coding is appropriate for policy studies that focus on understanding conflicting goals and motives. Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) was used to illustrate how different groups use language to gain or maintain policy preferences and power. First cycle coding was done by hand and further coding

was completed using NVivo software. Data was analyzed to answer research questions and provide exemplary quotes and contextual details that allow the reader to engage in interpretation.

Assumptions

Based upon the literature review, these primary assumptions underlie the basis of this study. First, education is a right given to citizens through legal doctrine. This system of public education was designed to uphold individual rights and democratic ideals. While shifting societal and political beliefs have called for education to solve economic woes, any efforts to move towards private, competitive markets diminishes citizen rights and jeopardizes the ideal of education as the common equalizing variable of liberty. Second, with any type of policy reform there are opponents and proponents who work in small groups against each other to achieve their preferences; preferences which often do not align with research evidence, the needs of the mass population, or democratic ideals. Finally, to understand why policy is often instituted that does not meet public needs, opinion, or ideals, one must look to the motives and strategies that individual policy actors embody.

Rationale and Significance

Education is the largest state budget item for taxpayers; in Kansas, the statutes contained in Article 6 of the state Constitution represent 63.2% (Kansas Division of Budget, 2018) of all expenditures. In this contemporary era of what has been dubbed ‘post-truth politics’ wherein “appeals to emotion are dominant and factual rebuttals or fact checks are ignored on the basis that they are mere assertions” (Suiter, 2016, p. 25), a systematic study of the policy making process can add unbiased facts that allow for individual interpretation. The value of a qualitative approach is it allows for multiple interpretations, which can serve to inform individual decisions on policy preferences.

This research adds to the body of knowledge on K-12 education policy development and fills the void of scholarship on how special interest groups, particularly those who have an interest in market-based, neoliberal policy solutions, work at the state-level (Grossman, 2014; Moe, 2011). This research compliments the dearth of outcome studies on school choice with better understanding of how and why state-level education policies come into existence. Finally, the research is intended to shed light on the extent to which the global phenomenon of neoliberalism and networked policy-making is transforming the public education system in the central United States.

Definitions

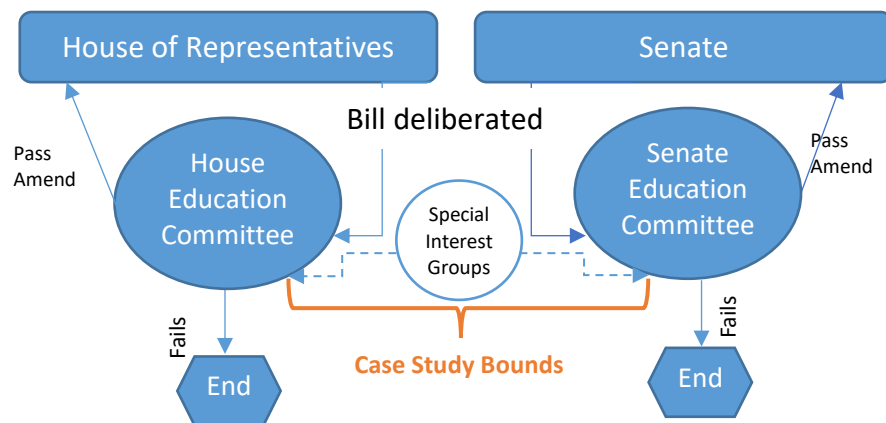
Neoliberal Education Reform: Any policy proposed to the legislature that seeks to implement private sector practices, reduce the influence of government, or increases school choice options.

Reform Process: This study defines the reform process as the discourse amongst state elected legislative officials and special interest groups. Policy discourse that is the reform process takes place through the rules governing prior to any votes on the proposed legislation. The first step in the process of a bill becoming a law is its introduction in either the House of Representatives or Senate (Kansas Legislative Research Department, 2018). The bill is then referred to an appropriate committee for hearings, deliberation – including any amendments – and is then either approved by the committee to move forward to the next chamber (e.g., moves from the floor of the House to the second chamber) or dies in committee.

The next chamber then undertakes the same process of hearing and deliberation. If a bill passes both chambers, it is then forwarded on to the Governor to sign into law (or veto). If there are any differences between chambers, the bill goes to a Conference committee composed of House and Senate members who work out the differences prior to Governor review. It is the

process of hearings and deliberation within both chambers (House of Representatives and the Senate) that is of interest to study (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 Policy Reform Process



When a bill is in committee, the group reviews the proposal to determine whether to pass, amend, or let the bill die (Kansas Legislative Research Department, 2006). If the bill is amended or passes the committee, it moves on to the full House or Senate for deliberation. During this review process, the public can provide testimony either in support or opposition of the bill through in-person or written testimony. However, in practice, the committee chair controls the agenda, ultimately determining what and who is heard.

Kansas Statute 46-225 defines lobbying as “promoting or opposing in any manner action or nonaction by the legislature on any legislative matter or the adoption or non-adoption of any rule and regulation by any state agency.” In practice, this means providing testimonial to the elected body. Lobbying is also defined as spending more than \$40 in one year on government officials. Legislative procedures outline the rules of engagement for lobbyists, as well as any individual who wants to observe the process. According to procedures, any person can present

arguments to a committee about a bill under consideration and can secure a place on the committee's weekly agenda to ensure they are heard.

Special Interest Group/Lobbyist: Kansas Statutes 46-222 defines lobbyists as persons employed by or appointed by an organization to lobby on state property, as well as people who spend over \$1,000 per year for lobbying (Kansas Ethics Commission, 2018). The law also states six specific groups that are not considered lobbyists, such as government employees acting in official capacity, academics providing non-partisan research, and certain members of councils, boards, and the judicial branch.

Special interest groups refer to groups of individuals organized around a similar cause, while lobbyists are the individuals employed by special interest groups to represent their cause in front of the government. This study uses these terms interchangeably.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

This study explores the phenomenon of public education reform at the state legislative level. The purpose is to describe a case of state-level neoliberal education policy reform through better understanding how special interest groups influence policy, with a focus on reforms that move toward smaller government and more private school choice. The literature is divided into three main topical sections that provide the background and context of neoliberalism and public education reform, state-level education policies that have dominated legislative agendas over the past decade, and what is currently known about special interest groups engaged education reform. An overview of the historical context of this case concludes the chapter.

The first section discusses the founding ideals that shaped public education and the proceeding socio-political changes that shift conceptions of the role of schools and government in society, increasingly installing business sector practices and incrementally moving provision of education to private markets. Neoliberalism is the shift in political-economic culture from a socially-democratic system wherein the government's role is to ensure equality and well-being to what is described as a society marked by individualism and unwavering belief that prosperous societies are best built through free-market economic principles. An overview of evolution of neoliberalism and its underlying principles is provided. The section ends with a brief discussion of the political process.

The next section defines education reform through the variety of school choice programs that exist in the states providing a synthesis of existing knowledge on academic and societal outcomes resulting from choice, and an overview of contemporary teacher employment issues. Additionally, the national controversy about the Common Core Standards is discussed. Next, an

explanation of Public Choice theory and the role of special interest groups in policy reform is given. Philosophical economic reasoning reveals why policymakers pass laws that often do not align with the interests and needs of the mass public. A discussion of special interest groups who legislators seek to woo with their policy and spending decisions is given. Further, the section details special interest groups as the unit of study, describing what is known about interests that work nationally on education reform issues, their motives, and strategies to gain policy preferences.

To set the unique context of the study, the chapter concludes with an historical overview of public education in Kansas against important national milestones that have dramatically shaped conceptions, expectations, and hopes for education.

Neoliberalism and the Shifting Ideals of Public Education

The public education system in the United States was conceived as both necessity for individual prosperity and as an equalizing force in a new country made of immigrants, many of whom came to the country with no wealth nor education. This social democratic conception of education was challenged in the mid twentieth century with the rising belief in new economic-based philosophies regarding the role of government in society. Based upon a premise that too much government interferes with individual liberties, neoliberalism is a political ideology that asserts the market and outcomes achieved through individual choices are best (Gerrard, 2015; Giroux & Giroux, 2009; Harvey, 2005; Saltman, 2009). This section outlines the progression of ideological influences on education reform.

Social Democratic Education

Public education in the United States was designed to instill morality in young children and fulfill the Jeffersonian political ideal that an educated public is necessary to sustain

democracy (Mondale et al., 2001). In the mid-nineteenth century, a system of ‘common schools’ arose to fulfill political and societal goals to provide all children a basic standard and free education at the public expense. The founders’ emphasis on the value of education, and particularly on its relationship to religion and morality, is recognized as stemming from the view that the establishment of a new nation required “an educated, moral, sober citizenry in the new states that would have the stability and civil responsibility of a republican society” (Souder & Fairfax, 1996, p. 32). A goal of education embedded in the social democratic philosophy is that common citizens be educated so that they are able to engage in political discourse to avoid oligarchy in which government is controlled in the interests of only a few. As the United States expanded westward, state governments formed and adopted Constitutions with provisions for public education based upon the Confederation Congress. Through the Land Ordinance of 1785, President Lincoln ordered the federal government to grant land to new territories specifying that a portion of that land be set aside to either house education facilities or, if sold, fund public education.

Social Ideals of Public Education

The U.S. education system is built upon strong beliefs in the power of education to improve individual economic opportunity. Led by Horace Mann (1796-1859), early public education proponents sought for children of all races, religions, and incomes to be taught together in one ‘common’ classroom (Spring, 2010). Daily interactions among children of different backgrounds provides socialization to follow rules as well as learned cooperation, contributing to a strong American democratic republic. Mann’s school improvement reform was focused on efficiencies, improving teacher training, creating a common curriculum, and separating children by age into grade levels to accommodate learning. Education was supported

by public funds, and local governance ensured schools were accountable to its tax base (Mondale et al., 2001). These ideals are the basis of education as it exists today.

The early twentieth century was a progressive era of education reform. While school administration adopted Frederick Taylor's (1911) Scientific Management principles of uniformity for efficiency and Weber's (1947) system of hierarchical bureaucracy, Dewey's (1916) philosophy promoted education as a social equalizer and schools as the common institution that shapes culture to produce citizens who can live together in a democracy. A common education is the socialization process required for individuals to develop a shared understanding of the world and foster the trust and cooperation needed for economic trade. Dewey's philosophies continue to support growth of publicly provided adequate education as a fundamental right.

Since the 1960s there has been a political shift towards ideals of limited government. In education, the movement allows for consideration of which institution should have responsibility for socializing children. This new consideration requires rethinking governance and funding systems. In response to this new policy landscape, public-private partnerships, wherein a government agency gives authority to another entity to provide some part of the educational need (Meyer & Boyd, 2001), have begun to emerge as common practice. Often starting with services such as transportation, food service, and janitorial, public-private partnerships were designed to spare the government and the taxpayer the expense of higher wages and benefits. In contrast to the social-democratic main concern of democracy and equality, neoliberalism shifts education to focus on individualism and profit. In this environment, policy solutions are considered for merit based upon economic gains rather than democratic outcomes (Brown, Lan, & Jeong, 2015).

Education Policy Reform

Meyer and Boyd (2001) frame education reform as a political struggle between centralization (federal and/or state-control) and decentralization (state and/or local control). It is, at the same time, a battle for power and resources. Although the federal government shapes education through law, reforms, and focused funding (e.g., school lunches, special education), education is primarily the task of states. States provide the majority of education funding, certify teachers and school leaders, develop curriculum and tests, provide standards and guidelines under which schools operate, and determine governance structures (Mitra, 2018). Therefore, it is extremely important to understand ideologies, education policy issues, and the policy actors working at the state-level.

While states grapple with budgets and reducing this size of education outlays (Mitra, 2018), the most important issue in neoliberal policy discourse is how much, if any, should government or the market shape education (Meyer & Boyd, 2001; Starr, 2015). The focus on cost and returns has had a profound impact on education policy research (Carnoy, 2009), pushing legislatures to value studies on economic benefits in relation to academic gains while sidelining research on social outcomes. Instead of being a decision process, education policy-making has turned into a struggle over power to shape society (Mitra, 2018).

Evidence-based, scientific research is often emphasized as the most important element in analyzing the merits of policy. However, the way that the media, policymakers, and public consume education research leads to public argument over who is right and why, rather than policy improvement (Henig, 2008). Decision-makers are inundated with conflicting studies that extol the virtues of certain programs based upon claims to have the best research designs and statistical methods. But policy makers and the public are not (as a whole) versed in research

methods, and therefore, research that fits the rigorous paradigm of federally accepted standards ends up as a debate, not over policy and program merits, but of which research has selected the right design and methods or the political biases of the researcher (Henig, 2008; Lykins, 2011).

Neoliberal Education Reform

Latin America gave rise to neoliberalism in the 1970s through advice of economists trained at the University of Chicago who helped rebuild Chile from a democratized to a capitalist state under a new dictatorship (Connell, 2013). It was the rise of Reaganism in the U.S. and Thatcher in the U.K. during the 1980s that fueled neoliberalism's spread across the world. Across the globe, neoliberal education reforms shared five similar elements (Ball, 1998): 1) New focus on economic gains through tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade; 2) Less focus on critical thinking and more employment-related skills and competencies; 3) More government oversight of over curriculum content and assessment; 4) Emphasis on reducing government costs of education; and 5) Introducing market pressures to create direct democracy in school choice decision making.

In the late 1970s, the U.S. economy began to decline, and education was pinpointed as the cause (Foster, 2011). Reagan's famous commissioned report on education titled "A Nation at Risk" (1983) assigned blame to America's decreasing share of global economic gain on public education, saying that government schools were failing to properly educate students when, in reality, economic policies favored moving American jobs to low-wage countries (Hursh, 2007). The Reagan Administration (1981-1989) reacted by focusing on reducing the size of government through cutting taxes for the wealthy, while decreasing funding to schools in high-poverty areas and cutting social programs meant to alleviate poverty (Foster, 2011). Neoliberals created a narrative of failing schools to further reduce the role of government in education, while

simultaneously attacking teacher unions (Hursh & Martina, 2016). As criticism of student learning rose, the status of teachers declined in public opinion (Wirt & Kirst, 1997). A new political strategy emerged promoting the virtues of privatization in efforts to convince policy makers to stop funding failing schools, and a new emphasis on testing and accountability began. This newly identified ‘education problem’ set the stage for an onslaught of policy reforms at the state, local, and federal levels.

While Friedman and Friedman (1962) is credited with introducing the idea of school choice in the 1960s, the current market-centric, small government movement can be traced back to Adam Smith (1723-1790) and Fredrich Hayek (1899-1992). Smith was a strong advocate for society to be shaped by individuals making decisions in a market, unfettered by government control. Hayek is a constructionist who asserts that there is no absolute perfect knowledge to guide collective decision-making (1937). His work furthered Smith’s philosophy but focused on the ills of government and economists as society’s planners (1942), in opposition to the U.S. embrace of Keynesian economics which directed the government to

Wealth and the Origins of Political-Social Ideology

Proliferation of Hayek’s neoliberal political ideals and influence in the U.S. was largely financed by the Volker Fund, founded by wealthy Kansas City industrialist William Volker (1859-1947) and later managed by his nephew, Kansas State University graduate Harold W. Luhnow (1895-1978). Along with grants to other prominent economists of the 1940-50s, the fund paid Hayek’s salary at the University of Chicago. Luhnow’s strategy to fund academics and scholarship to influence public and government ideology is considered pioneering. His organization engaged strategies to disseminate free-market ideology such as book distribution to college students and funding to the create the Foundation for Economic Education to educate the public (McVicar, 2011). Funding academics and scholarly programs to further libertarian philosophies in public policy remains a strategy of wealthy industrialists and native Kansans Charles and David Koch.

shape the economy and develop policy to reduce inequality (i.e., ‘the welfare state’) and “safeguarding conditions that could enable people to flourish” (Hursh, 2007, p. 495). Hayek warned that when government acts as a social engineer, individual freedoms are eroded. Not only does government disable individuals from pursuing and achieving their own destinies, society ought to be careful granting government too much influence because its leaders cannot always be trusted. Hayek popularized the neoliberal political ideal that only an individual knows what is best for him/her and should be able to make decisions based upon their own knowledge and not be controlled by government.

Neoliberalism values a free market approach to society that asserts individuals, not the government, are best positioned to make choices that maximize liberty and prosperity. This belief provides logic for less government and lower taxes, while building a foundation for distrust of government in support for private provision of education. Concepts dominating the neoliberal socio-political shift in the current era of education reform are based upon these economic ideas rather than academic priorities (Devine, 2004). The role of government is shifting from education provider to education market place moderator (Ball & Juneman, 2012).

Basic Concepts

Neoliberalism is an ideological response to historical and social events of the 1960-70s that resulted from the incongruence between the welfare state and global capitalism (Gerrard, 2015). It is capitalists’ s grappling the masses for policy hegemony. Neoliberalists want government out of education delivery and see that the unfettered marketplace is the best option for improving quality and efficiency, while reducing costs and allowing individual citizens freedom to determine their destiny (Hall, 2017). Basic concepts that define neoliberalism are

competition, small government, and privatization. Advocates also describe neoliberalism as a push towards direct democracy (Hall, 2017; Wells, Slayton, & Scott, 2002).

In the market, *competition* is the ultimate goal. Individuals seek the best product that will maximize their personal benefits, forcing institutions to continuously improve to attract customers. Beyond the concept of freedom of choice, the free market approach to education theorizes it will improve academic achievement for all students (Wells et al., 2002). Excellence thrives on competition and results in collective impact: if you are in a thriving, high achieving environment you will achieve more, which also means that if you are in low achieving environment you will be on same level as low-achievers (Starr, 2015).

Neoliberals prioritize education goals that develop economic competitiveness. At the state-level, education is viewed through a lens of business sector practices that focus on efficiency and reducing the size of government. All policy is designed done with competition in mind, providing school services through competitive contracts and treating financial outlays as a prize. The competition to attract students, requires standardization, testing, and new marketing schemes to ‘sell’ education (Angus, 2013; Hess, 2009). Within the market, scarcity increases value and to meet this need, access to education is commodified (Connell, 2013).

Critics contend that competition in education creates disagreements about the purpose and goals of education (Hess, 2009). Additionally, in practice, quality reputation schools may have constraints on the number of children they can serve leading to a need for more schools and creating competition-based political struggles for more public resources (Hess, 2009). For students, competition has consequences when they change schools and face transaction costs, such as losing friends or extracurricular activities, that are greater than potential benefits. Although some schools focus on improving academics to compete, others lure students through

specialized extracurricular activities, having selective enrollments, and direct marketing (Jabbar, 2015).

When considering the effects of competition, public school districts have the additional financial burden of transportation, reducing perceptions of economic competitiveness in the school choice market (Hammond & Dennison, 1995). Additionally, in a competitive environment some schools may “cherry-pick” opting to have selective admissions or “skim the cream” to attract high performing students and leaving the harder, more expensive to teach students in traditional public schools (Hess, 2009; Lacireno-Paquet, Holyoke, Moser, & Henig, 2002; Lubienski & Garn, 2010; Walsh, 2009; Welsh, Duque, & McEachin, 2016). Finally, if the public funds education and the state uses an equal per pupil funding formula, providers have no incentive to lower costs to the public, although for-profit education providers have an incentive to lower their expenditures (Hess, 2009).

Regardless of actual economic savings, neoliberalism’s focus is on creating *small government* in terms of institutions, regulations, and financial outlays. The expansion of competition is intended to lower the costs of government services and therefore reduce public spending (Connell, 2013). In theory, small government permits individual freedom through less regulation, which should result in decreased need for the government to take taxpayer money and allow the individual to choose how best to invest their own capital (Friedman & Friedman, 1962).

Privatization started in a pragmatic fashion by local governments wanting to provide low-cost, efficient services, but is now a systematic practice applied to almost all government programs regardless of potential outcomes and the actual reduction of public expenditures (Feigenbaum, Henig, & Hammett, 1999). The movement is based on the belief that the private

sector can provide the same services as a government institution but can do it in a more effective and efficient manner. What was once the purview of government services, such as education, social welfare or environmental protection, is now outsourced to corporations competing against each other to present the best bid (Connell, 2013). Privatization separates decision-making from the provision of services (Feigenbaum et al., 1999) creates new avenues for entrepreneurs to gain entry and capture government expenditures and is often couched in economic terms such as efficiency, liberty, competition, and the market (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). With privatization, an optimized small government only needs institutions that maintain social control. However, to maintain global economic competitiveness, government must continue to invest resources to improve knowledge (Feigenbaum et al., 1999), creating a lucrative market backed with public financing.

Billionaires, private contractors, financial investors, and even religious organizations lead the march towards privatization, using the rhetoric of quality improvement through choice (Hall, 2017). They seek to defund public schools and put those resources into new models of schooling that can be corporatized to make a profit. Feigenbaum et al. (1999) argue that privatization has not actually resulted in the shrinking of the state. Instead the system is now more reliant on additional policy actors, especially private sector actors, and subjected to market processes, particularly competition.

Privatization provides business opportunities. In education reform, it means that those who know and can make the rules have unique opportunity to capture state spending on education (Wells et al., 2002). Financial analysts have publicly declared an interest in the growth of charter and private schools maintaining that their biggest competitor is government

and declaring that industry will prevail in taking a larger share of the education assets offered through public financing (Foster, 2011).

From a public administration viewpoint, privatization is a one available option to deliver government services (Feigenbaum et al., 1999). While there may be many reasons for privatization (e.g., government may not have the resources or capability), privatization is often framed as the most politically feasible policy. From a political viewpoint, privatization is primarily a tool to shrink government – or at least provide the illusion to some voters that is the intent.

Criticisms

Although Americans have experienced the painful effects of neoliberalism in the economic crash of 2008 and resulting taxpayer bailouts, culture, politics, and education systems are so entangled with economic assumptions that citizens are no longer able to question or reject the systematic weakening of public institutions through neoliberal policy shifts (Giroux & Giroux, 2009). In addition to the false pretense of fiscal savings, perhaps the most profound negative effects of neoliberalism education are rooted in its focus on individualism. Neoliberalism's focus on self-maximizing behavior means individuals have sole responsibility for their own successes or failures (Hursh, 2007). If a parent makes the wrong decision for education, then he/she is solely responsible for that failure – schools are no longer held accountable to parents nor the public. There is no longer consideration for education to be a moderating force for social and economic equality (Gerrard, 2015).

In the market there is little to no consideration for the common good and the public's sense of civic responsibility and engagement has eroded (Hall, 2017). In essence, neoliberalism changes democracy. Decisions that previously relied on citizen deliberation of what is the

common good and how best to achieve this state are now worked out in the marketplace through individual selection among a variety of commercial options (Hursh & Henderson, 2011).

With every move towards market-based education, citizens are made more subject to the desires of those who create the system. The neoliberal shift has been heavily influenced by business-friendly special interest groups and we now live in a capitalist society where corporations focus on profits more than employee economic security. Public education in American was designed to liberate individuals from oppression. Marxist theory asserts that capitalism is the driving force behind inequality (Anyon, 2011) that perpetuates generational poverty and is evidenced by the lack of wage growth even among college-educated individuals. Capitalism can only thrive if there is inequality, as people at the top must exploit the labor of workers to obtain wealth.

Ball and Juneman's (2012) study of education networks found extensive business interests connected to governance decisions. Resulting rhetoric of governmental leaders promote education policy as the means to reduce poverty while simultaneously allowing corporations to dictate how education is delivered and for what ends, as well as not pay workers their fair share of profit and keep wages stagnant while shifting wage-inequality burdens onto taxpayers in the form of welfare benefits. As a result, richest 1% of the nation continuously increase their share of wealth while the poor get poorer (Anyon, 2011).

Public education takes equity into consideration when determining funding and provision of adequate services. Children have different abilities and needs; therefore, schools must provide resources to ensure each child meets standards and it may cost more for some children to reach that goal (Starr, 2015). In contrast the neoliberal perspective accepts that, due to chance or birthright, some children will have more, and some will have less, and some people will

succeed at the expense of others, but there is no need for the government to spend more on one child. Rather the public should spend an equal amount for each child and the parent is responsible for making other choices that assure the child succeeds. In the neoliberal world, the quality of education a child receives is shifted to parental responsibility only, and if the parent selects the wrong school choice only the parent is to blame (Lassig, Doherty, and Moore, 2015; Walker, 2014).

Another critique of neoliberal education is that it fundamentally resituates students from learners to monetary units (Jabbar, 2015; Wells et al., 2002) and school leaders refer to students in terms of economic gains. When school leaders operate in a competitive market, students become a commodity to produce revenue. School leaders in market-based systems must now focus time and resources on attracting students to institutions (Jabbar, 2015), at the opportunity cost of investing in classrooms.

One of the most contentious aspects of neoliberalism and market-based education is its relationship to democracy. Many see a move towards choice and privatization as a reduction of equity and a shift away from this American ideal and a common education for all children that perpetuates democratic ideals (Anyon, 2011; Connell, 2013). While some parents, particularly those in urban environments, see choice as a democratic mechanism (Wells et al., 2002), shifting education to private markets reduces transparency and democratic mechanisms of control, which may have long-term impact that results in less support for government funding of education (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005).

Perhaps the most consequential criticism is on the influence of wealthy individuals, corporations, and foundations in controlling education policies that dramatically alter social systems and destabilize democratic institutions. Charter and private schools are founded on the

economic, social, and political concepts of the people who create them and are designed to further their founders' agenda tailoring student education to these realities (Wells et al., 2002). The government is increasingly being morphed from a democracy protecting the rights and needs of the masses, to a biased system designed to maintain a status quo of serving elite economic interests (Gilens & Page, 2014). In considering the economic crash of 2008, European countries have noted deficiencies in neoliberalism's ability to achieve positive social change. Like many other countries, they found significant differences in school choice between socio-economic classes. As a result, these countries are now shifting to behavioral economics or 'paternal liberalism', devising programs such as 'choice advice' to counter market flaws and encourage the public to make good choices (McGimpsey, Santori, & Bradbury, 2013).

Effects on Education

In the neoliberal world, schooling is no longer intended to provide a base of knowledge that increases critical thinking skills. Instead modern public education focuses on standardization and rote learning, which teaches children to conform in the workplace (Foster, 2011). Curriculum is designed to serve corporate needs, and creation of human capital to build corporate wealth is the goal. This framework perpetuates class distinctions and prepares individuals for low-skill, low-level jobs wherein low-pay can be defended (Anyon, 2011).

Neoliberal education now begins at the preschool. Today's early childhood curriculum no longer focuses on developing an understanding of democratic processes, but "constructs of costs and benefits to society" (Brown et al., 2015, p. 148). Although teachers believe they have freedom to instruct children with what they believe are best practice, they are constrained by the state's Pre-K standards and student learning goals that reflect skills needed to become successful lifetime earners and consumers. Education is now seen as the factory for producing human

capital to fill the demands of capitalism while keeping the mass of workers at the bottom (Connell, 2013). No longer is critical and creative thinking valued, but conformance to skills and attitudes required for the market-based economy.

Neoliberalism also changes individual and societal relationships to schools. Marketization influences everyday school practices, competition dictates practice (Angus, 2013; Bosetti, 2005) and “parents are now consumers, educators [are] technicians, and students [are] metricized outcomes” (Hall, 2017, p. 406). This focus towards technicity, economics, and monetary gains have lessened local influence in schools as the standardization required for accountability dictates curricula designed by national governments in cooperation with business sectors groups (Hursh & Henderson, 2011).

Neoliberalism and Democratic Ideals

Neoliberalism has been normalized to an extent that some make the argument that to have free choice on the market is the best form of democracy (Angus, 2013). Proponents of neoliberal education reforms view choice as a market or equity approach to education (Viteritti, 2010), suggesting it is a policy solution to the inequity of funding, and having a choice and less government intrusion is a path towards social justice. This equity approach is believed to solve issues of unequal funding, and therefore school quality, for poor children who are assigned to their neighborhood school whose level of funding and resources reflect the lower-income and tax status of its citizens.

Although some believe that private schools are more responsive to parents because schools are accountable to parents not the government (Cheung, Randall, & Yam, 2005), research has shown that schools dependent on taxpayer funds are more responsive to public opinion than independent schools (e.g., private and charter schools) (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005).

Public education was designed as a democratically run institution and education is essential in developing citizens who can self-govern in a democratic society (Jacobsen, 2009). Dissatisfaction with public schools is putting at risk the principles of equity and equality, through segregation and exclusions that result from school choice schemes. Whether choice creates segregation or if it is designed as an opportunity at equality, there are still unknown consequences. Federal law 42 U.S.C. § 1983 allows citizens to sue government if they believe their constitutional rights have been violated by a state actor. A case in Arizona found that although charter schools are publicly funded, they are not government actors and, therefore, not bound to the same laws (Hulden, 2011). This has implications for selective admissions policies and providing special education services for students, as well as due process for teachers, and other federally protected rights.

The following section presents an overview of recent neoliberal education policy issues in the United States.

Neoliberal Reform and State-Level Education Policies

State constitutions were written to give their governing bodies responsibility for educating its' own citizens. These constitutional provisions make states laboratories for experimentation and state legislatures that target for policy change efforts that can be spread across the country. Most publicly visible is the school choice movement to privatize education through voucher programs and charter schools. However, the past decade has seen new state policy strategies that simultaneously decrease the influence of public schools while expanding private education options. This section presents an overview of recent neoliberal education policies that state legislatures have been debating including school choice and teacher

employment laws, as well as the controversy surrounding the nationalization of curriculum through the Common Core Standards.

School Choice

The belief that education has economic value became popular in 1950s-1960s, and education policy began to be analyzed through an economic lens (Carnoy, 2009). Economist Milton Friedman's (1962) influential writings in the mid-twentieth century that promoted the virtues of capitalism for advancing individual freedom, exemplifies the beginnings of neoliberal political discourse in education reform. Friedman believed the government's role in providing school is legitimized by the need for citizens to be educated to secure a stable and democratic society. The cost of schooling may be too great for some families, but the effects of non-educated citizens on their 'neighbors' may be so detrimental that the government ought to provide opportunities for a basic education to all children. However, he does not find any justifiable bases for the government to operate schools.

Friedman acknowledges that a system of government funded education is acceptable but suggests vouchers are the best policy for delivering the best education. Government should give parents vouchers for their children to attend the schools that they believe are the children's best interest. Friedman envisioned a voucher system would lead to new schools entering the market, giving parents more freedom to choose how their child is educated. These new schools would create a marketplace wherein each school continuously improves its education offerings, competing with other schools to attract students.

Friedman theorized school choice would lead to less segregation because children would not be confined to neighborhood schools. The voucher system he envisioned would pay for a minimum standard of education and leave parents the choice whether to pay for 'non-

educational' learning such as arts, humanities, and physical activity. This would also reduce the taxpayer's burden of funding, what Friedman believed, are unnecessary programs. Proponents of school choice assert it is the way to improve all education because even public schools will need to compete and improve to attract students (Weil, 2009). One of Friedman's assertions is that it creates competition that requires continuous improvements for schools to thrive or even stay in business. In theory, school choice could be the "tide to lift all boats" (Hoxby, 2003, p. 288) but that would mean that the benefits for every student must outweigh any negative effects. Unfortunately, given that individualism and competition are key traits of neoliberalism, some must lose if others are to gain.

The first school choice program began in 1991 in Minnesota (Weil, 2009). Presidential education reforms since No Child Left Behind (2001) have increasingly emphasized choice. In 2004, the U.S. Government funded a school choice experiment in Washington, D.C. for low-income children to attend private school. Shortly after in 2005, Hurricane Katrina gave federal education reformers the opportunity to redesign New Orleans education into a choice system that included both public and private options (Welsh et al., 2016). This incremental shift in policy has led the current U.S. Department of Education's push for larger investment in school choice and less funding for existing education programs (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2017).

State-Sponsored Private School Choice

Prior to the late nineteen nineties, private school choice was virtually non-existent (EdChoice, 2018). With the Supreme Court decision in *Zelman v Simmons-Harris* (2002) concluding that public money can be used for private education, even within religious institutions (Saiger, 2013), states are now designing their own laws regarding the extent these

school types will receive public funds. State policies that allow private school options have increased from ten in 2000 to 63 in 2017. Critics say that both charter and private schools lack accountability and utilize vast sums of public money with no transparency on how these funds are spent (Hall, 2017).

The adoption of state charter school laws is “significantly related to partisan gubernatorial control, classroom spending, private schools, education finance litigation, and minority representation” (Wong & Langevin, 2007, p. 440). States with Republican Governors and states that have experienced finance litigation are significantly more likely to adopt these policies, and states that have lower classroom spending are more open to policies that reduce government oversight of education. Since the rise of the school choice movement, 30 states now have between one and five different types of private school choice programs. Arizona, Ohio, and Wisconsin each have five: four in Arizona are tax credit scholarships, all in Ohio are vouchers, and four in Wisconsin are vouchers.

Vouchers

Most private school choice programs are vouchers (EdChoice, 2018). Vouchers let parents use government funds to pay for any school of choice for their child, including private and religious schools. There are different types of voucher programs in the U.S. (EdChoice, 2018). These include programs that finance school choice for any child and any school following Friedman’s vision for vouchers, as well as targeted programs that include limits on participation such as income and geography. Similarly, voucher programs can also be limited to public schools and serve as a method to transfer among schools within a district or between public school districts.

Vouchers are promoted as a method to move away from public school monopoly (Witte, 2009). Improving education is dependent on eliminating teacher unions, school administrators and other bureaucrats. Proponents of vouchers insist schools are directly accountable to the public through market mechanisms, and that they promote greater equity through improved student outcomes influenced by parental ability to determine a child's fate (Witte, 2009). As parents and schools seek to maximize individual benefits, quality will continuously improve.

There are 26 voucher programs in fifteen states, and most do not consider income as a qualification for participation. Most schools that participate in voucher programs are considered lower-quality based upon tuition, enrollment, and higher minority enrollment (Wolf, Maloney, May & DeAngelis, 2017). Religious affiliated schools are more likely than non-religious private schools to participate in voucher programs. However, some religious schools may opt to not accept vouchers because they believe it could fundamentally change the education they provide to children (Witte, 2009).

Witte (2009) provides three arguments against vouchers. First, most benefits will accrue to the most well-off in society at the expense of the least well-off by leaving the most difficult and expensive children in public schools while draining public funds available for all children. Such a shift would exacerbate socio-economic and racial segregation. Finally, those who chose private schools are the individuals who would have done so without a voucher, increasing the total cost of publicly funded education.

Tax-based School Choice

Tax Credit Scholarships are designed to provide scholarships to private schools and in return, receive a tax deduction. Both individuals and businesses can donate to non-profits that provide scholarships to private schools (EdChoice, 2018). There are 22 of these programs in

eighteen states. Parallel to this program are individual tax credits and deductions. This program gives parents a tax deduction for qualifying education expenses, including private school. It is the most utilized program by students, but there are only eight states that offer this mechanism. All but one state program have no income limits on participation.

While overall voucher type program participation numbers are small in comparison to the student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), the important aspect is that these state-level privatization education policies have been steadily growing over the past 20 years. Cowen (2012) says that parameters to conduct a truly experimental design on school choice are imperfect and measuring the effects that vouchers and other school choice policies is complicated by too many confounding variables. It may be next to impossible to understand if it is indeed non-government-controlled schools or simply the choice that makes a difference in outcomes, but that has not slowed research efforts to seek this answer.

Positive and Negative Outcomes

In an early critique of the school choice reform movement, Levin (1991) asserted that market-oriented schools did produce superior private benefits, including greater academic achievement, but predicted that the social benefits of public education, particularly equality, were too costly to instigate large-scale implementation. With school choice and privatization spreading across the nation and world, research on the topic is found across many fields such as economics, sociology, and political science (Wilson, 2016), and within many geographic, socio-demographic contexts (Mills & Wold, 2017). In considering the merits of school choice policies, it is important to know what results have been achieved in places that have implemented these policies.

A meta-study of school choice research found overall mixed results on student academic achievement (Hubbard & Kulkarni, 2009). Much of the research on school choice leads to the conclusion that private schools are not more efficient, nor do they produce better student outcomes than public schools (Carnoy, 2009; Paquette, 2005). Dynarski and Nichols (2017) share that four recent studies on voucher programs in Washington, D.C., Indiana, Louisiana, and Ohio all showed that students using vouchers performed poorer than their peers in public school, and there is a lack of evidence that vouchers improve long-term outcomes such as graduation rate and college matriculation. Similarly, a report on Milwaukee and Racine, Wisconsin voucher program found that although use of vouchers had almost doubled, schools with high concentrations of vouchers students performed lower on tests (Carlson & Schmidt, 2014). In a previous study on the Milwaukee Choice Program (Greene, Peterson & Du, 1999), researchers find that student characteristics of choosers did not differ from non-choosers – therefore, test scores are not attributable to individual characteristics, but instead it is schools that make the difference.

While economists provide political fodder with predictive models on how various spending levels affect academic achievement (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Taylor, 1996; Moulick & Taylor, 2017), some economic studies do not support an education choice system. Research points to other intrinsic problems in school choice environments. Opportunity cost is rarely considered in economic studies of school choice although in competitive, choice environments schools must shift resources out of the classroom and towards marketing and attracting students (Walker, 2014). Opponents of school choice argue that it perpetuates unequal access to education (Lubienski & Garn, 2010) and there are potential negative effects on traditional

education as scarce resources are moved from public to private schools (Teske & Reichardt, 2006).

Small schools (typically in rural communities) cost more to operate due to lower enrollment levels and decreased economies of scale (Walker, 2014) and policy makers often dismiss the benefits a public school brings to a community, which is particularly troublesome for rural communities where schools serve as a larger role in the social system. In low-density communities, the competitive nature of school choice makes chances of school survival fewer and may lead to less choice (Walker, 2014). In all choice environments, the problem is that parents (largely) do not have the information required to understand if their choice is actually better, and most informational resources for parents are dominated by research created and distributed by ideological driven think tanks (Lubienski & Garn, 2010).

Because there is mounting evidence of lack of academic gains combined with issues of inequality and scarce public resources, Paquette (2005) argues that there are no viable political arguments that validate public funding of private institutions. Because markets are not capable of self-correction, government intervention will always be a necessity (Viteritti, 2010) and school choice will become, much like the current public system, a market by chance much more than choice. With conflicting evidence of the effectiveness of competition on academic achievement, Hursh (2007) cautions that we should be wary of replacing the social democratic foundations of education.

Empirical information regarding the effects of school choice on academics ought to be considered by policymakers, but the almost unending contexts of research on the subject make transferability of any positive outcomes questionable. For this reason, McLaughlin (2005) asserts that we should care about more about social outcomes than academics when considering

the merits of choice. Common conceptions built into public education are citizenship and equality, the long-term implications for society losing interest in public education rest heavily in this common socialization mechanism (McLaughlin, 2005).

Teacher Employment Laws

There is a long and rich history of legislative controversy regarding employment laws for teachers (Moe, 2011; Spring, 2010). Teachers Unions have been identified as resistant to change, rent-seeking entities that increase spending on education while stifling improvement in American education (Marianno, 2015; Moe, 2011). Ushered by the 2008 recession, conservative leaders concerned with state budgets began to propose legislation that changed some aspect of teacher employment law. Between 2011-2013 every state proposed some change to existing statute, with the majority focused on restricted bargaining rights (Marianno, 2015). The federal *Race to The Top* program pushed by the Obama Administration heightened state legislators' efforts to improve academic achievement through holding teachers accountable for student performance (Marianno, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Due Process, also known as Teacher Tenure, is practiced in many states and has been targeted by reformers who widely believe this state-granted right prevents the firing of bad teachers (Kahlenberg, 2015). Teacher tenure and due process terminology have a wide array of meaning amongst the public as well as practice (Coleman, Schroth, Molinaro, & Green, 2006; Kahlenberg, 2015). Under attack in state across the nation, due process is often misunderstood as granting lifetime rights to a job, when in practice it is the right given to teachers, after an introductory period of two-to-three years, to be given cause for termination and the right to a hearing. Elements of teacher tenure began over 100 years ago to provide job security during an era of political control of schools wherein teachers could be fired without cause when a new

political regime took over (Coleman, et al., 2006). Many scholars assert that measures to protect teachers from arbitrary firings are important factors in the recruitment and retention of quality teachers (Jacobs, 2016).

Seeking new policies to improve academic achievement, reformers have targeted due process rights as a method to get rid of ineffective teachers. Between 2011-2014, 16 state legislatures changed their teacher tenure law (Goldhaber & Walch, 2016), but Kansas was the only state to completely remove due process rights (Thomsen, 2014). Like the Common Core Standards, the federal *Race to the Top* grant program is credited as a driving force behind the momentum for states to weaken teacher protections (Kahlenberg, 2015).

For almost two decades, efforts to increase student achievement have been tied to reform aimed at eliminating ineffective teachers. Early on, scholars recognized that removal of due process rights at the state level was based upon misconceptions of the law as much as school administration practices (Painter, 2000). School administrators often cited that barriers to teacher removal were unions and the time required to engage in the termination process, rather than contractual employment language (Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2014; Painter, 2000). For example, 92% of Missouri superintendents said they supported teacher tenure reform because the process to remove a teacher was too difficult, specifically noting the time required and paperwork involved (Shuls, 2014).

In many states, teacher due process in practice is a lengthy endeavor that is expensive, which has led to belief that the protections of tenure given to teachers far exceed benefits to students. Teacher shortages in many areas of the country and decreased morale have led to recognition that it is harder to attract new teachers to the job when this benefit has been removed (Coleman et al., 2006). Considering the controversy of due process removal and the detrimental

effects to recruitment and retention of quality teachers, progressive education reformers have responded by advocating for improved teacher preparation and administrator training programs as well as better policies for teacher evaluation systems (Coleman et al., 2006; Painter, 2000).

State Litigation Outcomes

The landmark *Vergara v California* (2014) case changed the landscape for teacher tenure reform when their State Supreme Court found that these laws were unconstitutional, in that they denied children equal access to quality education through retention of bad teachers. This case was notable not only for its outcome protecting certain (i.e., tenured) teachers while recognizing student rights (i.e., equality) were indeed impacted by teacher tenure, but also because the plaintiffs, a group of nine students from four schools, were financed by a Silicon Valley Tech Billionaire (Rowland, 2015). *Vergara* is recognized as the first case of neoliberal special interest groups using the courts as a strategy for policy gain (Superfine & Thompson, 2016). Most notably, plaintiffs inverted the language of equality and need for government oversight successfully pursued in the courts by civil rights era education reformers and reinterpreted to seek new measures of accountability and deregulation.

In the case of North Carolina's teacher tenure battle, their State Supreme Court ruled the legislature violated teachers' constitutional rights. In the judgment, the Court recognized that contracts can confer constitutional rights while also highlighting the implications the practice has on recruitment and retention into a profession that is perceived as poorly appreciated public service. Harvard Law Review (2015) cautioned other states legislating and litigating teacher tenure they "may have to incur considerable expense to offset the potential negative effects on teacher recruitment and retention" (p.1002).

Although the political battle for due process is contentious, there is evidence that reform efforts have produced positive outcomes. In 2010, New York City implemented a new teacher tenure granting policy focused on student achievement measures. Using value-added modeling, teachers considered to be poor performing were granted an extended probationary period to become more effective. Many teachers placed in the extended probationary period self-selected out of the profession, in theory leaving on the most effective teachers (Loeb, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2015). However, state teacher tenure laws vary so much that the little research there is on the impact of these laws reaches different conclusions (Goldhaber & Walch, 2016). What may be more important than the policy, is how administrators enact it. It is also important to note that even though teachers have seen a reduction in state granted employment protections, in many states, teachers have seen a trade-off in higher salaries and increased benefits (Marianno, 2015).

The Common Core Standards

Interest in developing national educational standards has been documented as early the 1992. After years of effort, the Common Core Standards, led by the National Governors Association, were implemented in the states starting in 2009. Supporters recognized that Obama was a toxic brand, so state-led efforts to adopt the standards were important to adoption (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The Common Core Standards were seen by many as a political strategy for national control of education that incentivized state-level implementation through the federal *Race to the Top* grant program. Efforts to both pursue and repeal the Common Core Standards were led by networks of interest groups working together for diverse reasons. Those involved in national networks pointed to private funding as the primary factor in the network's ability to facilitate political change (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The

standards most controversial elements were focused on testing and accountability measures, government collection of student-level data, and public misperceptions of curricular materials.

As early as 2011, states were beginning to recede, and several were able to receive federal exemptions to opt out of assessment requirements. Efforts to repeal the standards started spread to most states by 2014 (Jochim & Lavery, 2015; McShane, 2014). Common issues embedded in repeal proposals were accountability, local control, costs, privacy, and testing. Amidst the controversy, the national effort to pursue the policy reduced as supporters accepted the pieces that states adopted as victory and built upon costs already sunk into the project (McShane, 2014).

At the national level, the Common Core Standards were developed and supported by a broad diversity of special interest groups. Participants included policy entrepreneurs who served in some current or previous elected capacity, progressive education groups, state teacher associations, private foundations, chambers of commerce, school administrator associations, NAACP and similar gender and race member groups, conservative think tanks, Tea Party affiliates, and for-profit education businesses (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). These groups played important roles such as promoting the idea of common standards, development of programs, solutions or interventions to solve education problems. These interest groups also articulated constituent concerns and built support (or opposition) in the states.

McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) explain the shifting support for Common Core as a result of political learning. Early on, education reformers were unable to achieve national standards so along the way learned what language and limits were tolerable. Political discourse and strategies shifted to achieve the desired policy results.

Who Opposed the Common Core Standards and Why

Upon implementation of the standards, researchers documented a one-year 30% decline unionized teacher support for the standards paired with an increase in opposition of almost the same size (Jochim & Lavery, 2015). In contrast, a later study found that most teachers had positive attitudes regarding Common Core standards, concluding that the negative portrayal of teacher concerns in the media did not hold true (Matlock, Goering, Endacott, Collet, Denny, Jennings-Davis, & Wright, 2016).

Jochim and Lavery (2015) recount evolving special interest influence on Common Core standards. Resistance first came from Republican leaders and conservative groups, who focused attention on the loss of local control. Conservative think tanks viewed efforts toward national standards as a “threat to small government ideology and to state and local autonomy” (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013, p. 489). As the standards were implemented and the impact of unforeseen costs, teacher evaluation and student privacy, along with a host of other concerns became apparent, Democratic leaders and their allies joined these existing opposition groups.

At the state level, Republican and Democratic parties always held opposing policy positions. However, there were differences across the states in whether Republicans supported or opposed the standards, and similarly whether Democrats wanted to keep or repeal them. Across the states, policy proposals seeking repeal of Common Core were introduced at similar rates by both parties. However, Republicans were more likely to sponsor repeal with language focused on concepts of local control (Jochim & Lavery, 2015).

A 2015 poll of California voters found white voters more likely than all other races to oppose Common Core standards. Similarly, Republicans were 90% more likely to oppose, mostly due to the standards association with President Obama (Polikoff, Hardaway, Marsh, & Plank, 2016). This poll also found that individuals who self-reported having more knowledge

about the standards were more likely to oppose them, however, the knowledge these voters possessed was often based upon misconceptions.

McShane (2014) found that there were varying reasons for opposition. At the broadest level, there was back-lash from state and local control advocates while progressive education groups did not like the focus on accountability. On the practical level, there was much critique about the new need for technology that would be required for states to implement the testing and assessment requirements associated with Common Core. The costs for hardware needed were heavily criticized. For example, in Arizona it was estimated to be more than \$230 million for the computers, tablets and other equipment needed for all schools to implement testing.

Strategies

Much of the controversy surrounding Common Core is described as political spectacle rather than policy debate. At the national level, advocates supporting Common Core presented scientific dialect to justify policy positions, discussed preferred solution, and specified consequences if their preferred policy was not pursued. Parents started engaging in the policy debate by voicing concern about math, the forming coalitions to oppose the standards and support teachers who did not want to change (Szolowicz, 2016). National conservative groups furthered repeal efforts through “mobilizing negative policy feedback even among groups not typically allied with them” (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013, p. 489) to protest the standards.

One positive outcome that the controversy around Common Core has fostered is a shared agenda between political parties about education standards and accountability (Jochim & Lavery, 2015). However, partisan coalitions still deeply influence special interest group politics and their divergent agendas make education reform based upon evidence difficult.

Public Choice Theory and the Role of Special Interest Groups

Public Choice theory (Buchanan, 1999) is the application of economic thinking to political life. A framework for understanding individual decision-making which can be used to explain political, and therefore, social phenomena. The theory has the underlying premises that 1) men are driven by self-interest, and 2) that every action taken, every decision-made in politics is done so to further that person's own interest rather than in the best interest of a society. Collective action is the result of market-mechanisms rather than good deeds, and there is something to gain from every action.

The theory explains that elected policymakers take more than evidence into consideration when determining whether to support legislation. Public Choice theory (Buchanan, 1999) provides insight into why government so often does not select policy solutions that could provide ideal solutions to societal problems. It explains why, given academic research proving effectiveness of programs or interventions, policy solutions designed with evidence in mind are often not always considered or passed into legislation. Public Choice theory hinges on the idea that politicians and bureaucrats are self-interested individuals, just like the rest of us, who work to further their own personal goals before the common goals of society. Politicians want to be re-elected. Bureaucrats want to keep their jobs and maintain, if not increase, their budgets. When government is viewed as a market-place, it is considered the supply and individual, self-maximizing humans create demand. Government keeps growing, feeding on itself, getting bigger to provide many and varied resources. To understand social phenomena through Public Choice, one must look at individual behavior to explain rational choices and understand that political choices reflect that individual's self-maximizing preferences (West, 2009).

Public choice concepts are important to understand regarding individual behavior in politics and government: rent seeking and provider capture. *Rent seeking* is when individuals look to maximize their own advantages through the rules of government. These individuals make an investment and expect to see a net positive return on that investment. In practice, this may take the form of receiving direct payment of government funds or utilizing institutional rules to increase individual economic gains. *Provider capture* is the extent that those who provide government service receive most of the benefit of such expenditure and use it for their own interests, with very little of the expenditure impacting collective needs. Both terms are frequently applied to logic promoting free markets. Politicians also seek to attract middle income voters; thus, they provide incentives, in the form of more government services to attract those voters (Feigenbaum et al., 1999). The implication is that these behaviors lead to hidden costs in providing services, making government provision of education less efficient than market provision (Devine, 2004).

The theory supports the notion that government is incapable of making good decisions and should not be trusted, and therefore limited government intervention in individual decision-making is the best-case economic scenario. The fewer levels of government control, the more taxpayers can control their outlays (West, 2009). In education, this means letting parents choose how to educate their children, applying private sector practices to public schools, and letting a market-based system of education prevail. Public choice scholars advocate that institutions of direct democracy lead to lower overall spending levels (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Applied to education policy, Public choice theory provides rationale for less state and federal government control of schools and, therefore, more school choice particularly when it can be provided in the unfettered market place.

Buchanan also framed public finance as an outcome of political competition, wherein policy actors must first and foremost persuade the elected official to pick one over another. In his 2018 article “Language of Taxation,” Wagner says that policy actors use two distinct dialects to convince the policy maker to support his position over another competitor. *Scientific dialect* is described as “detached or disinterested observation, wherein the analytical challenge is to explain how observed patterns of taxing and spending reflect institutionally governed processes of fiscal competition” (Wagner, 2018, p. 79). The arguments use facts, models, and empirical evidence to justify policy preference. In contrast, an *ideological dialect* “seeks to create images that resonate with the sentiment of the population and use that resonance to lead voters to support particular political programs” (Wagner, 2018, p. 79).

Devine (2004) offers a critical perspective on how Public Choice theory negatively impacts social institutions through transforming public goods into private goods. The theory situates government as a market-place, an arena of exchange among self-seeking individuals, and frames analysis of political and social outcomes resulting from a collection of self-interested decisions. Politicians engage political competition and make decisions based upon their own self-interests to gain votes and political support, as well as campaign contributions. Individuals lobbying government also have self-interested motives, often in terms of power and resources.

These self-interests are understood through public opinion polling by political parties, and through efforts of small groups of self-interested citizens who work together to pursue policy preferences through lobbying elected officials. These interest groups provide information and political support through campaign donations and votes in return for legislative endorsement of the group’s policy preference.

Impact on Education

The most researched public choice topic in education studies increasing financial inputs without corresponding academic outcomes, which drives current reform initiatives to cut education spending (West, 2009). The principles of Public Choice lend credence to many of the political arguments present in contemporary discourse on education reform. The theory assumes that the same self-maximizing behaviors of those in public schools are the same as those in other bureaucratic agencies (West, 2009). The theory's focus on individual self-maximization supports a tenet that it is not right that the tyranny of the majority imposes its will upon the minority (Devine, 2004). For example, parents who believe religious values should be taught in schools must still contribute their share of taxes to support public education, essentially paying twice for this product. This conundrum is the impetus for some special interest groups to lobby for vouchers and other mechanisms to flow public money into private education. The perception of support for privatization as means to reduce government and secure greater individual liberty is, ultimately, more important to the elected official than the actual practice (Feigenbaum et al., 1999).

Public Opinion

A basic premise of Democracy is that elected representatives are responsive to public opinion when undertaking policy reform. However, a recent study (Gilens & Page, 2014) of data regarding public opinion on national policy issues, collected from 1981 to 2002, concluded that the median voter had a near-zero chance of influencing public policy. Because public opinion polls are expensive, and results must be considered in the context of who funded the poll, not much is known about what the public wants from education (Burstein, 2006; Wirt & Kirst, 1997). However, in a study regarding policy responsiveness, Berkman and Plutzer (2005)

found that public opinion data generally points to the public wanting increasing spending on education with support dramatically rising in past three decades.

Support for educational spending is rooted in self-interest and values. Self-interested citizens support different policies because they (or their community) stand to benefit from it; others oppose because they do not benefit (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Some research suggests that individual support for education is dependent on the extent that benefits are received, while some polls show Blacks are more supportive of public education than Whites, and Hispanics are less supportive than non-Hispanics (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Further, other researchers assert that ideology and other social factors are stronger determinants for support of public education (i.e., liberal and Democratic groups, African Americans, lower-income groups, renters, city-dwellers) (Chubb and Moe, 1990).

The American public puts faith in a democratic system that is intended to represent its interests through elected representatives. When policy is passed that does not reflect public opinion, it is reason for some to believe that law makers are more responsive to special interest groups than to the public (Burstein, 2006). However, Burstein (2006) asserts that while public opinion influence on policy is likely over estimated, this does not necessarily mean that special interest groups are more effective at achieving policy preferences.

Opinion Polls

Public opinion seems to indicate that the public is losing faith in the public education system (Jacobsen, 2009). Although barriers exist to knowing exact public opinion on education reform, several national organizations regularly conduct polls on the topic. Longitudinal data from GALLUP (2018) shows that since the rise of neoliberalism in the mid-1980s, the percent of Americans who had confidence in public schools dropped from half to 26% in 2014,

with Democrats consistently reporting higher confidence in public schools than Republicans, sometimes varying as much as 20 percentage points. EdChoice, the recently renamed Milton Friedman Foundation, conducts annual opinion polls on school choice political climate. A recent EdChoice survey (August, 2017) found that 62% of respondents said they believe education has “gotten off on the wrong track.” Those with higher negative attitudes on education were Republicans, rural residents, senior citizens, and whites. Most respondents also had more positive perceptions of private and charter schools (see Table 1). This survey also found that party-affiliation influences levels of support for education reform. Republicans were more likely to support charter schools than Democrats, and more likely than Democrats (25%) or Independents (25%) to support a pro-school choice political candidate.

Table 1 Public Opinion on School Quality

Respondents who graded school type as A or B

75% Private Schools

59% Charter Schools

39% Public Schools

Source: EdChoice, 2017

Special Interest Groups

The purpose of special interest groups is to “mobilize lobby government officials and influence public policy” (Grossman, 2014, p. 13). It used to be that political science was mostly focused on the influence of party affiliation on legislation, but the field has evolved to a new understanding that special interest groups possibly have a much larger role in politics (Feigenbaum et al., 1999). Mancur Olson’s (1965) theory of special interest groups explains how they use collective action to influence government and the economy. These small groups of individuals driven by economic incentives band together around shared concern to be effective in achieving their policy preferences at the expense of the whole population. Because of competition for government resources, people form coalitions to advocate for their interests.

Olson's theory says that groups of small numbers that have a single special focus are most effective at gaining policy preferences, even out maneuvering large politically-involved membership associations.

Historically prominent interest groups in education tend to focus on issues of function (e.g., special education) or geography (e.g., urban, rural) (Wirt & Kirst, 1997). Other interest groups at the national level focus on social issues and including ethnic, religious, occupational, other social groups, intersectional groups, ideological, liberal single issue, conservative single issue, foreign policy issue, and other single issue (Grossman, 2014).

Special interest groups try to influence spending and tax rates (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). These special interest groups have incentive to lobby government to gain policy advantages for their members and capture a larger share of government resources. The cost of these concentrated benefits is dispersed among the entire population, who, as a group, are generally unaware of such costs and, therefore, do not resist. Over time, stable governments tend to see a rise in special interest groups, whose small number of members achieve disproportionate political power. Olson (1984) believes this practice of lobbying government for preferential treatment ultimately leads to a reduction of resource allocation efficiency contributing to individual income reduction and economic decline over time (i.e., increased taxes).

At the national level, the top issue areas for interest group lobbying are taxes, health care, trade, environment, labor, Medicare/Medicaid, energy, transportation, education, and defense (Grossman, 2014). Interest groups create a 'ratchet effect' wherein government expenditures continuously grow even if need has lessened (Feigenbaum et al., 1999). Special interests are blamed for increased regulations, changes in social outcomes, lack of innovation (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Grossman, 2014), and, ultimately, the reason for inequities in distribution of

resources that lead to income growth (Anyon, 2011). At the state level education competes with other funding priorities, therefore special interests representing a wide variety of groups must compete in education politics (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005).

With a system of networked governance led by special interests, Hursh and Martina (2016) say it is now possible for primarily unelected and unaccountable individuals and organizations to significantly influence policy and marginalize educators, students, parents, and community members (Hursh & Martina, 2016). There is no agreed upon logic as to what legitimates special interest groups as prominent players in policy making (Grossman, 2014). Many believe that interest groups truly represent a diversity of social and economic policy preferences among the public, and their work is to obtain their members' goals (Grossman, 2014). Therefore, special interest groups can be an essential component of engaging elected representatives and may also be understood as beneficial to a healthy democracy, with some considering these groups to represent authentic voices of the people by engaging constituent members in policy discourse (Walker, 2014). Special interest groups can assist lawmakers in understanding various opinions about policy issues, including a wider array of perspectives in the policy making process (Grossman, 2014). These beliefs enhance the legitimacy of non-elected policy actors engaging in reform efforts.

Special interest groups represent a complex network of policy actors who seek to advance their ideology, or secure income or other resources financed by taxpayers. Special interest groups lobby for their policy preferences by making personal contact with legislators, deploying expert knowledge through circulating position papers and offering testimony in hearings (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001), and offering campaign or other financial contributions (Walker, 2014). While not much is known about special interest groups in education other than teacher

unions, focusing on these groups as the unit of analysis may explain why certain policies persist, how these groups protect their interests, and the way they mobilize to influence policymakers (McDonnell, 2009).

Wirt and Kirst (1997) find the primary special interest groups at the state-level are teachers unions and most others are business groups, with business interest groups growing from approximately 200 groups in 1980 to almost 500 in 1997 (Grossman, 2014). Gilens and Page (2014) found that business-oriented special interest groups always gained their policy preferences when in direct opposition to mass-group interests. This may partially be due to the overrepresentation of well-financed, conservative networked think tanks producing research and engaging in strategies to influence state-level policy (Ness & Gandara, 2014).

Legislators are believed to be most responsive to the median voter. However, legislators are most responsive to the special interest groups who are more likely to vote (Grossman & Helpman, 2001). Research has shown that politicians favor promotion of private over public schools as a result of intense lobbying undertaken by private education supporters (Hursh & Martina, 2016). The next section discusses partisan influence on education and outlines the different types of special interest groups, their interests, and strategies they employ to influence policy.

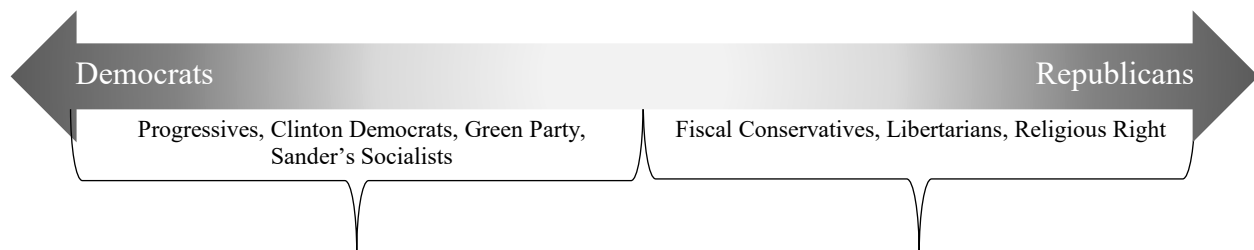
Political Ideology and Education Policy Preferences

Although political parties are not typically considered special interest groups, it is important to discuss their influence on policy preferences. Social differences lead to different policy preferences, and political divisions emerge because history, economy, and culture produce differences in quality of life and opportunities (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Ideology is “the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program” (“Ideology,”

2018). Ideology is pursued by groups of individuals through party politics. Seven distinct ideologies (see Figure 2) shape policy in the United States (Mitra, 2018; Spring, 2010). This section provides an overview of the most prevalent overarching beliefs that shape education policy reform within the U.S. two-party political system.

Republican (right-leaning) groups focus on accountability, associating the quality of schools to student academic outcomes (Mitra, 2018; Spring, 2010), while Democrats (left-leaning) believe there is more purpose for schooling than test scores. Democratic-leaning groups view education as an American right and promote policies that provide all children an equal chance to succeed in school. McLaughlin (2005) asserts that this right to education is so great that it should be secured for all children even in the face of market forces.

Figure 2 Political Ideologies in the United States



In contrast, right-leaning groups tend to view the goal of schooling as production of human capital to fuel the economy while achieving the most academic benefits at the lowest possible public cost.

The Democratic left view schooling as especially important to protecting the rights of minorities and low-income populations. Progressives are concerned with desegregation and equality, placing responsibility for achieving these goals with the government through laws that help the underprivileged gain equal ground. A new contingent, Sander's Socialists, share these values and are also concerned with expanding free access to college and limiting market-based education. This faction's Liberal policies promote inclusion, access and participation, and

individualized learning programs, leading (in theory) to greater social equity (Starr, 2015).

New, Clinton-era Democrats most closely align with right-wing views on education through their support of school choice, so long as it is choice within the public sector (Viteritti, 2010).

Three distinct factions form the Republican right (Mitra, 2018; Spring, 2010). The most conservative group is the Religious Right, also known as the Christian Coalition. People in this group want religion to be a part of the school culture and believe that curricula should reflect Christian teachings. The Religious Right are proponents of publicly-funded private school choice. A strategy this group enacts is to become involved in school boards to assert influence at the local level. Fiscal Conservatives value local control of education and support family values in schools.

Libertarians are somewhat distinct in that they tend to be more liberal on social issues but align with Republicans on beliefs in market systems. This group is most vocal on reducing the role of government in education and promoting school choice, especially the merits of private schools and competition. Libertarians top strategies are to utilize conservative think tanks to educate politicians and use mainstream media to spread free-market ideas to the public.

Special Interest Group Types

Varying tax codes dictate how different types of organizations can engage in politics, but most prevalent are IRS tax-exempt, non-profit organizations. Many established non-profit special interest groups are organized under code 501(c) 3 that allows private donations in return for tax credits but stipulates tax status hinges on following rules including restrictions on lobbying elected officials. Another tax status that is frequently utilized by special interest groups is the 501(c) 4 category. These organizations are considered social welfare groups but differ from 501(c) 3's in that they can lobby elected officials, provide campaign donations, and

participate in elections to influence legislation that achieves the group's social welfare purpose. Additionally, special interest groups are defined by characteristics of their members such as corporate, government, occupational, advocacy, and other (Grossman, 2014). The following section provides an overview of the different types of special interest groups engaged in education politics.

Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups are not unions, foundations, or business interests but encompass others engaged in education reform at the legislative level. Advocacy groups focus on political change and are often led by parents, politicians, or community-based coalitions (Grossman, 2014). Advocacy groups lobby but also engage in publicity campaigns to promote or oppose political candidates or specific education issues. These special interest groups are most often asked to present legislative testimony (Grossman, 2014). Advocacy groups are willing to be in the public eye and, therefore, are subject to much more scrutiny regarding their policy positions and actions.

An advocacy group's influence is dependent on factors such as the sphere of action wherein they operate (i.e., local, state, national, transnational), the cultural contexts and legacies the group promotes, size and experience, as well as their means of discourse production and contestation (i.e., their strategic use of information and issue visibility in order to challenge official discourses) (Acosta, 2012). When they engage as a network, they are able to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it will have the most impact. Additionally, these groups utilize symbolic politics, calling upon symbols, actions, or stories to make sense of a situation (Acosta, 2012). Advocacy groups have also been effective engaging powerful actors who have influence gaining policy preferences, as well as employing

messaging and media efforts to hold powerful legislative actors to previously stated policies or principles.

While advocacy has long been a part of education policymaking, around 2010 with the passage of Citizens United that allowed corporations to make unlimited campaign donations, new advocacy groups began to pop-up with a more aggressive approach to policy influence (Sawchuck, 2012). These newer groups are generally comprised of non-educators, mostly business interests, and contend that they provide balance to the policy debate that has largely been dominated by teacher unions and education professionals (Grossman, 2014). They generally oppose the power of teacher unions and support education reform as programs that expand school choice.

Many of these organizations are 501(c) 3 non-profits (tax-exempt) that often have affiliated 501(c) 4 organizations that can raise vast amounts of money to support advocacy initiatives as well as make political contributions. Unlike Political Action Committees, the legal structure of these non-profits allows them to conceal financial donors. Some research shows that Advocacy groups with ties to Political Action Committees or those that provide large campaign contributions can buy political influence (Grossman, 2014). These groups work at the state-level and often frame their education reform message around putting students first and concern for civil rights. Some label these groups ‘neoliberal reformers’.

Teacher and Education Professional Organizations

Professional associations for teachers (i.e., National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT)) are the oldest organized special interest group in education. The NEA, founded in 1857 and committed to public education professionals, is the one of the largest labor unions in the United States. For over 150 years, the organization has

advocated for policies that ensure equal opportunity and promote professionalism. The NEA believes the purpose of education is to develop a citizenry with the skills required to participate in a democratic society, and that education is the path to freedom and equality. The AFT began in 1916 with a mission geared towards democracy, equity and economic opportunity through public education.

Both groups have affiliate organizations at the state level that organize and lobby for teachers and other education professionals. Both are also perceived as politically powerful (Wirt & Kirst, 1997). Members of these groups share an interest in government aid for education are most concerned about working together to obtain a larger salary and better benefits (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005; Taylor, 2010). In states with a state-centralized education funding scheme, teacher unions have power (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005) and have a strong influence on the types of legislation adopted (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005).

Other professional education-related special interest groups include professional associations that represent different job classifications (e.g., Administrators), issues (e.g., Special Education) or school subjects (e.g., math) as well as associations that represent elected school board members (Spring, 2010). Some groups are temporarily engaged around a singular policy issue rather than permanently entrenched in education reform. These groups vary in their financial resources and policy influence, but most financially support Democratic candidates and elected officials (Wirt & Kirst, 1997).

Some scholars are critical of influential educator groups in education policy reform process. Research conclusions assert that these groups advocate for policies that align with existing funding agency priorities and leaders, thereby, increasing the power of the status-quo while stifling reform efforts (Chubb & Moe, 1999; Moe, 2011; Wirt & Kirst, 1997). Moe

(2011) credits teacher unions with obstructing any efforts for reform based upon their own self-interests to seek higher pay and more benefits. He asserts that not only are teacher unions to blame for the lack of academic progress, but also that Democratic elected officials are self-serving in their policy positions by supporting the wants of teachers to secure the votes of this large constituency.

Under this perspective, the political response to improve education was to change collective bargaining laws so that, ultimately, there is reduction in union membership and teacher power (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Such legal changes intend to reduce union resources, and therefore, their ability to lobby at the state and national level on behalf of their members' policy preferences. Additionally, reformers strategized testing schemes to hold teachers accountable as means to reduce their power as an anti-neoliberal force (Foster, 2011).

Policy Think Tanks

Academic researchers with overt policy position are often funded by philanthropists to further ensure school reform efforts take hold (Anderson & Donchick, 2016). Think tanks are institutions where policy ideas are generated and disseminated (Weidenbaum, 2010). They lend credibility to the research conducted by independent scholars for the purpose of influencing policy (McDonald, 2011). Well-funded by private supporters, think tanks have substantial resources to work and exert influence on policy through numerous publications, television appearances, and citations in the print media (Henig, 2008; Weidenbaum, 2010). Prior to the rise of neoliberalism, most think tanks were organized to conduct research promoting public education and were led by education professionals.

Between 1970-2006, the number of conservative leaning policy think tanks grew from four to 56 providing an avenue for non-education professionals to enter the education policy

debate (McDonald, 2011). These new conservative groups slightly outnumber progressive think tanks, with the majority associated with the “free-market” aligned State Policy Network (SPN) (Ness & Gandara, 2014). According to the SPN’s website, “SPN supports a powerful movement of 64 independent state think tank affiliates and over 90 associate partners” (State Policy Network FAQ’s, para. 1).

Because think tanks align their research with political agendas, the information they disseminate should be scrutinized (Ness & Gandara, 2014).

Policy Entrepreneurs

Some special interest groups form around taxpayer revolt (Wirt & Kirst, 1997). Connected to Americans for Prosperity, a Koch-founded political advocacy organization, the American Legislative Exchange (ALEC) is a network of political philanthropists, corporate interests, and elected officials who come together through ALEC’s Education Task Force to draft model legislation that can be adopted across states. ALEC is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit devoted to limited government, free markets, and federalism (American Legislative Exchange Council, 2016). Elected officials join this network to craft legislation in partnership with corporations, who both pay a membership fee to join. This tight relationship between corporations, philanthropists, and legislators has been criticized as a shift from democratic decision-making to the privatization of the policy-making process (Anderson & Donchick, 2016).

One of ALEC’s objectives is to “marketize the public sector so that it behaves internally more like a market than a political democracy” (Anderson & Donchick, 2016, p. 13). The ALEC strategy is to work across states to pass free-market, libertarian policies. Much work is done through a State Policy Network of advocacy agencies in each state. These free-market think tanks work to influence public opinion and policy to pass ALEC model or ALEC-inspired policy

at the state level. In addition to a focus on promotion of school choice, themes that tie K-12 model policy together are privatization of public assets, transferring corporate, business-style practices to the public sector, and opposition to teacher unions and tenure (Anderson & Donchick, 2016).

Anderson and Donchick (2016) identified ALEC's political, discursive practice as the creation of model policies that are distributed to state legislators for introduction into debate. Within these model policies are four main themes neoliberal reform: Privatization; Teachers, Teacher Tenure and Certification; New Managerialist; and Promotion of Conservative Social and Moral Values. In their review of these model policies, they found nine of 54 model education bills were "anti-union, anti-tenure or promoted alternative certification over university-based teacher education" (Anderson & Donchick, 2016, p. 15).

ALEC discourse is framed on logic that there is a reduction in costs when there is no pressure from unions, as well as benefits of improving the profit margins for private education providers. The language of individual rights and choice is used to promote privatization (Anderson & Donchick, 2016). And though ALEC keeps a low-profile in the media, their strategy is to push multiple bills simultaneously to overwhelm lawmakers into passing some version of their desired policy. To appeal to New Democrats, moderate Republicans, and the professional middle-class ALEC proposes a set of policies aimed at improving education through practices that transform education to run like a business (i.e., New Managerialist).

Rent Seekers

Some special interest groups seek to sell government a product or service. Referred to as either an edu-business or economic entrepreneurs, these actors are motivated to influence education policy to pursue economic gains (Thompson, Savage, & Lingard, 2016). In addition to

restricting education as workforce development, capitalists now see the state and education funding as an untapped market where they can sell their goods to make a profit (Foster, 2011). Most of these policy actors are in the business of selling technology, textbooks, or providing education testing services. Some, including for-profit Charter Management Organizations, seek to provide academics and core school services at the public's expense (Saiger, 2013; Scott, 2009).

Foundations

Philanthropy in education was traditionally focused on funding enrichment programs for local school districts and communities, and financing scholarships for students. The vast amount of funds that foundations have to spend on education have given them more power in shaping the U.S. education system (Foster, 2011). Known for their aggressive, investment style approach, foundations involved in contemporary education reform have been informally re-named venture or new philanthropists (Ball & Juneman, 2012).

Both large private, family foundations and business groups (e.g., Goldman Sachs) give money to fund foundation goal-oriented projects and transfer business and management practices to schools (Ball & Juneman, 2012). Saltman describes their philosophy as “treat[ing] schooling as a private consumable service and promot[ing] business remedies, reforms and assumptions with regard to public schooling” (2009, p. 53). Venture philanthropists do not hold the traditional view of charitable giving, but instead expect outcomes and a return on their investment, which often further shapes society and policy to continue wealth accumulation for founders, board members, and associates (Scott, 2009).

The new venture philanthropists tend to hold the same values as historically conservative organizations such as the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, that are

believed to protect the dominant status of the white, wealthy man (Scott, 2009). They work in direct opposition to progressive and labor coalitions, as well as community-based or social movement non-profits, that represent the needs of the average, working class citizen (Domhoff, 2009). Venture philanthropists are often narrowly focused on school choice initiatives (Hess, 2005; Scott, 2009). These special interests do not rely on evidence to support education reform, but rather the perception of prestige and power based upon their vast investments in schools and unwavering belief that grant seekers are likely to do whatever it takes to access money (Barkan, 2011).

Most foundations engaged in education reform are private rather than community-based, and work across the nation without a specific focus on one state or school district (Ferris, Hentschke, & Harmssen, 2008). Foundations are recognized nationally for their reform efforts, but most policy efforts are undertaken at the state and local levels where the bulk of education funding is concentrated (Ferris et al., 2008), and there are more opportunities to influence policy. Ferris et al. (2008) identified no less than 26 foundations focused on K-12 education reform. Although foundations provide a smaller percentage of education funding, school leaders are attracted to working with foundations because the money they provide is not restricted to mandated specific budget line items such as teacher salaries or mandated programs (Hess, 2005). Venture philanthropists provide financial support to individuals of all political ideologies, increasing the likelihood that their preferred education reforms will take hold (Barkan, 2011).

Foundations' tax-exempt status means they are not allowed to engage in lobbying, so may not directly participate in legislative policy reform. Instead, foundations utilize strategies that fund advocacy groups and research demonstration projects to engage school districts and provide grants to scholars who provide evidence that advances their reform agenda.

Foundations provide massive amounts of money that indirectly influence policy with many providing grants in excess of \$100 million per year, and at least granting up to \$1.2 billion annually (Ferris et al., 2008). Many have changed the model of giving from accepting grant proposals to seeking out opportunities to fund preferred initiatives, tending to work in urban environments where investments will have the largest population reach (Scott, 2009). A strong criticism of this interest group is that they answer to no one in an environment where education has traditionally been accountable to the public (Barkan, 2011).

Venture philanthropists have amassed great wealth due to policies in the past 25 years that have been favorable to large corporations, while at the time reducing the wealth of the general population, moving more Americans out of the middle class and into poverty (Scott, 2009). Barkan (2013) argues that these private foundations are subsidized by the public because the exempted tax funds are no longer available for public use, but instead, are hoarded with minimal amounts going to public programs that are narrowly focused to support the private foundations' own interests. Foundations continuously grow their wealth and power to have unparalleled influence on education, promoting a top-down system of reform that leaves little room for ideas outside of their own network of supporters.

It is easy to be skeptical of the motives these policy actors have in reshaping education. For example, Dell supports charter schools and school choice, as well as for-profit education management organizations while using its funds to promote technology in schools, which in the long-term serves its corporate objectives of selling information technology hardware and software to schools and creating long-term consumers of its products (Foster, 2011). Walton Foundation uses its monopolistic power to break down the public education system through targeting teacher unions while promoting school choice (Foster, 2011). Foundations can also

influence education policy in other ways. For example, in 2012 the Broad Foundation gave fund to the New Jersey State Board of Education with the stipulation that grant terms required that Governor Chris Christie remain in office and the number of public charter schools be increased (Foster, 2011).

Parents

Parental satisfaction is the key political driver of education reform (Buckley & Schneider, 2006). Parents often form groups to rally for a specific law that serves the needs of their own children (Spring, 2010). Many parent-led special interest groups that engage in policy reform are motivated to achieve equality of educational opportunity for their special needs child (Burke, Sandman, Perez & O’Leary, 2018). These grassroots groups “mobilize legions of like-minded families to craft their individual stories while also building networks of support to help them gain the knowledge and confidence needed to deliver these stories to the people in power” (Johnson & Lynam, 2015, p. 25). Parents collectively use the power of social media and storytelling to affect legislative change, while simultaneously seeking opportunities to work with their local school districts on individual-based solutions.

Parents who home school are also a powerful political force in changing public education practices (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). As a special interest group, these parents are “more likely to vote, contribute money to political causes, contact elected officials about their views, attend public meetings or rallies, and/or join community and volunteer associations regardless of age, race, family structure, geographic region, and number of hours worked” (Cooper & Sureau, 2007, p. 122). The home school grassroots movement, led by Evangelical Christians but supported by different religious groups and parents who do not believe the public school is best for their child, have created a solid foundation of national and regional networks that often utilize

the courts to achieve policy preference (Spring, 2010). Using First Amendment arguments of freedom of religion, home school parent have achieved access to public school classes, facilities, and services such as special needs education. However, attempts to access public school sports programs have been less successful, as many courts have determined athletics are not core educational programs (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). National associations work to undertake research and engage in advocacy and lobbying to support state legislation that advances the preferences of this group.

Wilson (2016) describes parents as rational individuals who seek to maximize their preferences in the same way as elected officials and think tanks. Competition as a key driver in education is criticized as creating a system that forces some parents to engage in bad behaviors such as lying to achieve their desired policy outcome (McGimpsey et al., 2013).

Special Interest Group Strategies

Reformers vilify teachers and teacher unions to gain public support for privatization (Foster, 2011). Strategies of well-funded foundations include *funding academic research* and think tanks as a method to engage policymakers, building and strengthening *networks* engaged in similar education and policy reform efforts, and granting *policy advocacy groups* the money required to directly engage the public and policymakers in promoting the foundation's desired policy position (Ferris et al., 2008). Large, national foundations have adopted an approach termed "astroturfing" wherein they provide money to affiliate groups who will form and work at the state and local levels to give the impression that reform efforts are happening at a grassroots level (Barkan, 2013). For example, in several states "trigger laws" (promoted by ALEC) that allow parents and citizens to organize and oust school administrators used these groups to hire canvassers to gather signatures required in efforts to pass this legislation (Barkan, 2013).

Foundations have also found success in achieving their desired education outcomes through direct funding of school-based demonstration and research projects focused on school choice (Ferris et al., 2008), leading to their efforts to achieve their self-defined, long-term goals for education through policy change. Foundations tend to engage in defining education problems and therefore set the policy agenda.

Special interest groups begin building relationships with law-makers once they become candidates. Candidates are solicited to make pledges regarding the group's preferences (e.g., no tax increases, pro-life/pro-choice) in return for endorsements and financial contribution (Grossman, 2014). Campaign donations buy credibility and influence, but special interest groups can also purchase access (legislators are busy) through holding events such as luncheons, dinners (Grossman & Helpman, 2001).

At the national level, Grossman (2014) defines interest group characteristics that lead to prominence in policy discourse. These are the longevity of the group, the scale of the group as represented by the number of staff dedicated to politics, direct access to specific constituencies who are often 'members' of the organization, groups who have broad political agendas with interest in a multitude of issues. Groups that fall into this category tend to garner more prominence than other advocacy groups and fare much better than others at getting their voices heard by elected officials and are also the prominent perspective captured by the media (Grossman, 2014).

Special interest groups are most effective when they frame their message around issues of hope rather decline, but other variables such as organizational resources play a role in group effectiveness (Itkonen, 2009). Ferrin (2005) list of typical tactics that special interest groups in education employ include pursuing lawsuits, testifying before legislators, and engaging in

messaging campaigns. Publicly, these groups distribute legislator voting records, research results, organize letter writing campaigns, as well as organize protests and public relations campaigns. Regarding policymakers, special interest groups contribute money political campaigns as well as publicly denounce opponents, conduct personal communication with and entertain legislators. Staying engaged and informed, opinion polling, public marketing campaigns, and building relationships with decision-makers and the media as key aspects to special interest groups gaining political influence (Zetter, 2018).

Indicators of national group prominence in policy making include agency documents listings per year, television news mentions, court document mentions, Washington media mentions per month, Congressional testimony per year, and Presidential document mentions per year (Grossman, 2014). The most powerful special interest groups attend legislative meetings and seek opportunities to be engaged in policy discourse through networks that share similar goals and ideologies. They have paid staff dedicated to lobbying and staying up-to-date on specific policy issues. Successful special interest groups know how to work with policy think tanks to produce research supporting their viewpoint, then utilize this evidence to frame policy messages that focus on benefits of the group's policy position (Zetter, 2018).

Information Dissemination

The use of media by special interest groups is especially important because the media can heavily sway public opinion (Anderson, 2007; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Grossman & Helpman, 2001; Henig, 2008). Anderson (2007) furthers this understanding of how dominant politicians and special interest groups have capitalized on the media to frame their message to push their education reform interests to the public. Special interests have utilized various forms

of media as diverse as talk radio and news-reporting to feature films (e.g., *Waiting for Superman*) to shape public opinion.

The most prevalent form of media manipulation is through news reporting, with think tanks and lobbyists often called on to provide interviews or content (Grossman & Helpman, 2001). Blogs and social media are easily used to reach the public allowing policy reformers to cherry-pick statistics and create spin to promote their point of view. As Anderson (2007) points out, the way that the media uses discourse is highly impactful in forming public perception of education issues. Sensation sells, creating a panic and often education issues are framed as crisis in need of extreme policy solutions.

Through media framing, the public loses its sense of reality and becomes more willing to accept policy solutions that, ultimately, serve to line the pockets of big business and the wealthy elite (Anderson, 2007). Teacher unions and the 'welfare state' are often blamed for crises and complex policy issues are reduced to simple talking points for public consumption. The most pervasive media message is that public education is failing putting the whole nation at economic risk, often ignoring the socio-economic factors that contribute to effective learning and alternative policy solutions that can reduce inequality and poverty.

Litigation

Education policy is built on a long tradition of using the courts as a strategy to achieve policy preference (Spring, 2010). For over four decades, school finance litigation has impacted almost every state driven by perceived legislative failures to ensure equality and adequacy through current finance models (Crampton, 2007). The courts are also a frequent strategy of special education parents and advocates and homeschooling parents (Burke et al., 2018; Cooper & Sureau, 2007). However, the First Amendment presents an obstacle to proliferation of many

publicly-funded private education options, and, further, many states have additional barriers to neoliberal reform efforts through language written into their state constitutions.

Policy Diffusion

Policy diffusion is the process where political leaders look to their neighbors for economic policy solutions (Wong & Langevin, 2007), as an explanation for widespread reform and uptake of new models of market-based education. Chubb and Moe's (1990) highly referenced, influential report written for the Brookings Institute, a national policy think tank, may be the tipping point for the movement towards more neoliberal education policies including school choice and the ideal of competition through market forces to improve academic outcomes. The report framed schools as failing American institutions, plagued by inefficiencies caused by their public nature (bureaucracy), and in need of complete overhaul.

Neoliberal Networks

Neoliberal education reform can be traced to networks of special interest groups who spread policy ideas across the globe (Ball, 1998). The main influencers for this new education movement are strong beliefs in market systems, government in a role focused on accountability, and concepts of public choice theory that connect wealthy donors to policy-making. School choice policies have proliferated across the globe through sharing policy ideas, as well as enforcement of policy preferences by some agencies such as the World Bank (Ball, 1998). Policy diffusion in combination with a system of governance wherein special interests strongly influence outcomes, new policy actors and interests are able to bring new discourse and modes of policy dissemination (Ball & Juneman, 2012).

Cooperative federalism is the phenomenon where states act independently but with full knowledge of what the other is doing, and they share policy ideas. A study of the passage and

implementation of state charter school legislation found that adjacent states had a strong likelihood of adopting similar policies (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). The ability to model another state's policy increases the proliferation rate of charter schools. Strong market response to policy gains visibility across states, increasing the likelihood of proliferation and spread (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). Other important contextual factors influencing a state's policies and programs are dominant political party preferences, extent of urbanization, and influence of teacher unions (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005).

Wealth Networks

Policy engagement is seen as a risky investment, requiring a battle with other special interests. When foundations engage as a network, they can leverage smaller investments for broader change. Networks encompass multiple interest groups focused on the same policy issue (Wirt & Kirst, 1997) and not only include other foundations, but also community groups and schools (Ferris et al., 2008). Decisions of whether the foundation will engage in policy work depends on several factors such as their organization's scale and the policy environment that they are trying to influence (Hess, 2005). Beneficiaries tend to be charter school organizations and national policy advocacy groups (Ferrare & Setari, 2017; Reckhow & Snyder, 2014).

The more a foundation can leverage (or potentially counter) the work and investments of another foundation, the more likely they are to engage in policy reform (Ferris et al., 2008). Recently, foundations have shifted their strategies towards convergent funding of more national policy network efforts than local demonstration projects (Reckhow & Snyder, 2014). Convergent funding guides independent groups to share similar policy goals, strengthening the likelihood that foundation goals for education reform will be achieved on a broad level. As major players in school reform, national foundations provide only a limited perspective on the

issue and leave little room for other experts to influence reform efforts (Hess, 2005). Most foundation program officers do not have a background or experience in education and do not have the same understanding of teaching and learning of educational professionals and many parents (Hess, 2005). This model of privately funding education reform is criticized as circumventing democracy (Barkan, 2011).

National donors through national networks of reform have recently begun to implement a new strategy to influence education policy. These interest groups are now allocating their wealth to fund preferred candidates for local school board elections in large urban areas (Reckhow, Henig, Jacobsen, & Litts, 2017). These national donors have contributed enough to now be the largest share of donations for school board elections at the local level in four major cities. Most money supports pro-reform candidates, specifically to “counter the traditional insider role of teacher unions” (Reckhow et al., 2017, pg. 796).

History of Public Education in Kansas

Many delegates to the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention (the fourth and final attempt that successfully made it through the U.S. Congress and created Kansas statehood) came from Ohio and modeled Kansas’ constitution on Ohio’s, including the provision for a system of public education (Wilson, 1987). As a member of the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention, John J. Ingalls, considered Kansas’ most influential politician at the time, was credited with creating the language and arrangement of Kansas’ Constitution. Ingalls was born and classically educated in Massachusetts and was said to hold disdain for the majority uneducated and untrained who came to Kansas. He had no patience for moralistic causes brought by ‘religious zealot’ immigrants coming to Kansas (Davis, 1976). It may be for this reason that Kansas’ Constitution explicitly stated tax-payer funds not be used for religious education.

In the federal ordinance admitting Kansas into the Union in 1862, federal lands were granted to each township for the exclusive use of common schools. In addition, five percent of proceeds from the sale of any federal lands were allocated to fund this new public education system. Because of this federal mandate, the Kansas Constitution includes a section outlining the rules for establishing, maintaining, and overseeing a system of local schools. Two years after statehood, the first teacher's union was established and almost sixty years later the legislature began levying a statewide tax to support public education (See Table 2).

Table 2 Timeline of Public Education Development in Kansas

1862	Kansas constitution adopted, admitted as a state to the union
1863	Kansas State Teachers Association (Kansas National Education Association) formed
1874	Kansas Compulsory Education Act takes effect; U.S. Supreme Court rules state tax money can be used for secondary education
1875	School enrollment at 142,606 students
1879	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State law enacted allowing first class cities (i.e., more than 15,000 residents) to provide segregated education facilities • Legislature eliminates one-mill state tax levy, reducing education funding by 50%
1879	Industrial School for Boys established to reform young criminals through job training
1887	Kansas legislature authorizes county high schools
1889	School enrollment at 405,450 students
1931	Kansas begins to levy state income tax and support schools with these funds

Source: Wilson, 1987; Somerset Publishers, 1994

Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution gives its citizens the right to a free, standard education and outlines the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure of governance. The first clause gives the legislature responsibility to establish and maintain public schools. A State Board of Education oversees a system of local public schools that are operated by locally elected school boards. To maintain this public service, the constitution asserts the state's authority to levy a tax to fund schools. The legislature is to provide suitable funds so that all children who are required by law to attend school may do so for free. Unlike the Ohio model that Kansas constitution

framers heavily borrowed from, the Education Article has a clause that public education funds may not be controlled by religious organizations.

In the first hundred years of statehood, there were 85 amendments made to the Kansas Constitution (Wilson, 1987). These modifications were intended to modernize government, adjust to changes in the U.S. Constitution, and be responsive to public opinion. Since 1992, there have been 33 amendments introduced to Article 6-Education. Many seek changes to the structure of the state school board, but most suggested amendments address the meaning of suitable education, reflecting the ongoing power struggle between the legislature who asserts a strong hold on determining what is a suitable education and at what cost, and the Supreme Court who interprets the law. None have received the required number of votes needed to advance a Constitutional Amendment for public vote (Kansas Legislative Research Department, 2017).

Education, Political and Social Change

Much like the rest of the nation, schooling in the early twentieth century underwent dramatic change from provincial management to a new focus on professionalism heavily influenced by Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) principles. Taylor's focus on improving efficiency through labor management became a popular movement in government, making its way into education through innovations such as teacher specialization and education management based upon efficiency. The State worked to develop standards for education and facilities, and, although controlled locally, schools were managed centrally through state institutions. For example, Kansas had its own textbook commission that oversaw content and publishing (Miner, 2002). The state-led system operated until

1937, was established to capitalize on the state's mass purchasing power to drive down costs, as well as ensure standard content. This system of public governance limited market competition and gave special interests the opportunity to influence policy decisions. Members of the commission were known to take bribes from publishing companies who, in return, controlled the market and limited competition for contracts to publish school books required by the state (Miner, 2002).

Constitutional Reform

In 1966, Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution was drastically amended to 'modernize' the document to reflect the current social-political operating context. All reference to 'common schools' was removed, and the purpose of education removed the words 'moral' and 'agricultural.' Other significant changes included removal of requirements for county school superintendents and a complete change in the school funding system. Instead of income tax and a variety of other funding mechanisms (i.e., sales of public land, legal fines owed to the state, and seizure of unclaimed property), the constitution made way for a state tax to support education and gave the legislature responsibility for making financial provision.

During the mid-nineteenth century many rural residents left their farms to move to the city and take jobs in factories supporting the war effort. The loss of rural populations and declining school enrollments, coupled with a growing concern for government efficiency, lead Kansas to take its first hard look at schools as an area for reform. Wide-scale school consolidation cross the state was made possible with constitutional changes adopted by the state in 1966. Research has since shown that financial savings of consolidation efforts were not realized (Heiney, 2012; Jacques, Brorsen, & Richter, 2000), local economies of communities that lose their school decline (Duncombe, Yinger, & Zhang, 2014), and rural student academic achievement may suffer after consolidation (Cooley & Floyd, 2013). Consolidation has also been shown to disproportionately negatively affect low-income and minority students through limiting access to school opportunities and imposing new barriers such as increased travel time (Schmidt & Welsh, 2012; Muller, 2011).

Religion and politics have also highlighted the government's influence on indoctrinating values through public education. Kansas was the center of national controversy involving the Religious Right when, in 2001, the state put the teaching of evolution back in the school science curriculum after it was removed two years prior (Spring, 2010). After the 1999 decision to remove evolution, the following state school board election had national advocacy groups from both sides and outside donors involved in work to get their preferred candidate elected. Voters ultimately picked moderate Republicans who reinstated the teaching of evolution but compromised with religious groups by adding language in the bill that clarified that teaching evolution did not mandate belief. This event invigorated special interest groups and provided rationale to some groups for advocacy around state-sponsored school choice.

The most recent era of education reform in Kansas has been driven economic arguments, with three major lawsuits regarding adequacy of funding within a 25-year span. A 1995 measure of public opinion on local commitment to education spending ranked Kansas as the state with highest public opinion believing too much money was being spent on education (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005). Funding for public education has been controversial almost from the start in Kansas. When the legislature drastically cut public education funds in 1879, after only eighteen years of state-funded education, a contemporary historian lamented that was the first step down the path of reducing the state's responsibility and theorized that it was a lack of organization among teachers that allowed such legislation to pass (Somerset Publishers, 1994).

Contemporary Education in Kansas

There are just over half a million students in K-12 schools with over 90 percent attending

traditional public school (See Table 3). Public schools also include both magnet and charter schools. In 1994, Kansas expanded public school choice through allowing magnet and charter schools to operate as state-funded institutions. These new school types began as models to improve public education quality through choice and competition while desegregating schools in minority neighborhoods without forced busing. In Kansas, 75% of magnet schools are located

Ideology in Policy Reform

Influential Libertarians who shape policy at both the state and national levels are the billionaire industrialist Koch brothers, whose corporation is based in Wichita, Kansas. The Koch's wealth supports many and various academic programs and think tanks that promote free market society, while also funding political candidates and a network of private institutes, known as the State Policy Network, across the states with the sole purpose of lobbying state governments (Anderson & Donochik, 2016). Known in Kansas as the Kansas Policy Institute, the group has overlapping goals to increase access to school choice and reduce taxpayer burden. (Kansas Policy Institute, 2018)

in the City of Wichita, and almost three-quarters of students attending qualify for free or reduced lunch.

In Kansas charter schools operate independently, although they may be housed within a school district, and are required to maintain accreditation standards as well as accept all students free of charge (Kansas State Department of Education, 2018). As of 2016, there were ten charter schools in operation, with the majority of students attending Lawrence’s Virtual School. Charter schools can be found in both rural and urban communities.

Table 3 School and Student Population Characteristics in Kansas

2015-2016 Academic Year	Public	Public-Magnet	Public-Charter	Private
Number of K-12 Schools	1,319	32	10	172
K-12 Student Population	483,545	14,857	3,186	30,174
Percent Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch	49%	72%	29%	-
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2016				

Kansas has a tax-credit scholarship program that accommodates private school choice. Enacted in 2014 and began in 2015, the policy gives students no more than \$8,000 per year for tuition and qualifying education expenses and participation is restricted to low-income children who are assigned to a failing school. Currently, private schools educate about six percent of the K-12 population (Kansas State Department of Education, 2018). The 2018 Republican Gubernatorial candidate ran on a campaign platform to eliminate checks and balances in education funding decisions, reduce education funding, and then distribute this smaller amount to both public and private education providers through a school voucher program (Wichita Eagle Editorial Board, 2018, May 15). Most of the 172 private schools in Kansas are affiliated with a religious sect (Kansas State Department of Education, 2018). These schools provide a standard

curriculum to meet state assessment requirements and can teach religion. For contemporary school choice advocates, freedom to teach children moral values is a compelling motive that invigorates political participation (Spring, 2010).

Table 4 provides a timeline showing key milestones in the development of the Kansas public education system as well as important landmarks in national education reform.

Table 4 Key Events in Kansas and National Public Education Reform

Year	Education Reform Landmark Events
1954	<i>Brown v Board of Education</i> declares school segregation unconstitutional
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed. Targeted focus on assistance to poor children.
1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposition to amend all of Article 6 of the constitution of the state of Kansas, relating to education. Adopted Nov 8, 1966. • Coleman Report finds that school success is more correlated with socio-economic variables than the quality of a school.
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Education created, with a purpose to guarantee equal access to education and promote academic excellence. • National Commission on Education (NCE) formed to study U.S. Education System.
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coats vs. USD #353</i> Kansas State Supreme Court case that affirmed teachers' right to due process. • NCE's report "A Nation at Risk" sets the agenda for nationwide education reform targeting public schools as institutions responsible for slow economic growth.
1986	A proposition to amend the Kansas constitution by revising Article 6, relating to education. Rejected Nov. 5, 1986.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. President and 50 Governors adopt National Education Goals. • Wisconsin establishes voucher system for low-income students, becoming first state to extend choice to private and religious schools. • <i>Mock v State</i> challenges Kansas school funding system. Legislative changes are adopted for equitable funding.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New American Schools, a public-private partnership focused on developing and disseminating effective schooling strategies established. Marks introduction and commitment of the business sector in education reform. • Minnesota becomes first state to adopt school choice laws.
1992	Private school enrollment in Kansas is 1.7% of total student population (125,848 students).
1994	Goals 2000 provides federal funds for states to create education standards, including a focus on accountability for achieving goals.
1999	Kansas enacts 529 Education Savings Plan program restricting eligibility to K-12 public schools. <i>*Federal changes made in 2017 to this tax law means that, in all states, these funds can now support private and/or religious schools.</i>

Table 4 Continued

2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Child Left Behind Act adopted, increased focus on teacher accountability and student academic achievement.• <i>Zelman v. Simmons-Harris</i> U.S. Supreme Court ruling that state-sponsored school choice programs must extend to private and religious schools.
2005	<i>Montoy v State</i> lawsuit declared prior Kansas legislative changes to education funding as unconstitutional.
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Gannon v State</i> Kansas lawsuit in response to large tax breaks for the wealthy that corresponded to cuts in education funding.• Due process for Kansas teachers taken away by legislature.• Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship legislation in Kansas expands tax savings to paying tuition for private and/or religious school.• Private school enrollment in Kansas is 5.1% of total student population (358,242 students).
2017	Federal legislation passes making 529 Education Savings Plans eligible to spend funds at private and/or religious schools.

Sources: Somerset Publishers, 1994; Kansas State Department of Education (2018); Kansas State Historical Society (2018); Kansas National Education Association (2018); pbs.org; Pisciotte, J.P., 1993; Wilson, P.E. 1987.

Chapter 3 - Methods

Introduction

Education is the largest state government expenditure. With the rise of network governance and the influential role of special interest groups in determining policy, it is important to understand how these non-elected policy actors shape contemporary education reform. The purpose of this research is to gain deeper understanding of education reform efforts in Kansas, with sharp attention on how special interest groups influence K-12 policy through rhetoric and public choice principles. A multiple qualitative case study approach provided a framework to collect and analyze data answer the overarching research question of:

How do special interest groups influence K-12 education reform at the state level?

Taking a qualitative approach, this research aims to increase understanding of how contemporary education reform is shaped by the actions of lobbyists and the special interests they represent. The research identifies and describes the policy actors and the policy issues they support or oppose, language and strategies used to attempt to gain policy preferences, and motivations that shape neoliberal education reform. Analyses both describe the case context and provide interpretation of meaning around beliefs and motivations shaping education reform. Multiple coding techniques were used to provide insight into how the language of policy discourse contributes power struggles and social change. The research design uses a multiple qualitative case study design (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2017), focused on describing contemporary Kansas education reform in terms of neoliberalism and the political process wherein multiple non-governmental policy actors engage in the creation, deliberation, and passage of rules that shape society. This study begins with the 2013 legislative session and includes House and Senate Education Committee Legislative sessions held through 2018.

This case study contributes new insight on how special interest groups shape the education policy landscape at the state-level. This research adds to the literature on how special interest groups function in a defined space (i.e., public hearings of legislative committees), which can be used to develop understanding that may apply to similar phenomena of policy-making in other settings as well as other public policy issues. Findings provide rich detail that allow the reader to determine for themselves what knowledge can be generalized or transferred from this study.

This chapter describes the epistemological paradigm that guides the research, and outlines the framework for data selection, collection, and analysis. The rationale and benefits of selected research methods are discussed. The chapter also describes qualitative coding methods, content analysis, and the use of critical discourse analysis to interpret meaning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations, as well as the limitations of the proposed research methods.

Epistemological Position

This case study takes a constructionist approach that maintains reality is a subjective concept reliant on individuals to create and interpret meaning from their own experiences. While some phenomena exist outside the human mind (e.g., water), policy making is a social construct that relies on the collective knowledge of individual participants. This study does not seek to prove a hypothesis, but rather its purpose is to bring further understanding to why and how different special interest groups, acting on the behalf of organized groups of citizens, pursue policy preferences.

Constructionists hold the belief that meaning is made by each individual human being as she or he engages with the world and, therefore, there is no one true meaning of anything

(Crotty, 1998). A constructionist approach requires the researcher to seek different perceptions and experiences to explain the phenomena and recognizes that there are multiple realities. This approach aligns with the research aim to understand the ideologies, language, and strategies employed by different policy actors. Subjectivity in qualitative research is inherent because an individual's view of the world informs his or her way of understanding social phenomena. These views shape participants' interpretations and understanding of phenomenon as well as the researcher's sense-making of participant discourse (Crotty, 1998). Subjectivism means that interpretation will likely differ dependent on the person who conducts the analysis. What one person discovers in the data, another may not.

To make meaning, data were systematically collected and reviewed to interpret what was seen/heard/read. Categories of themes and code were created based upon this interpretation, and ultimately, reassigned meaning to the original source (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). In his explanation of case study method rationale, Stake (1995) explains the concept of constructionism as "what people know of reality is only what they come to believe, not what they have verified through outside experience" (p. 100). Taking an inductive reasoning approach means that the analysis was completed from a position not dependent upon an existing testable hypothesis (Battacharya, 2017; Rossman & Rallis, 2016). The qualitative researcher's job is to provide enough detail that the interpreter takes this information to form clear belief in how the phenomena works (Stake, 1995). This means that individual reader will likely understand and make meaning in different ways, however, the goal is to tell the story in such a way to achieve collective understanding and agreement on what the data say. Within the constructionist paradigm there is an "expectation that phenomena are intricately related through many coincidental actions and that understanding requires looking at a wide sweep of contexts" that

cover time and space as well as political, historical, cultural, economic, social, and personal dimensions (Stake, 1995, p. 43).

Research Sample

The case study is bound within a six-year time frame and utilized official public documents for each of these years as the basis for developing the case description, research questions, and identification of the sampling frame for research interviews. Specifically, the first stage of document review collected and analyzed agendas, sign-in sheets, and written testimony from the 2013 – 2018 Kansas Legislative Education Committee meetings to identify and describe policy issues and policy actors. Written testimony was further analyzed to understand language and strategies of special interest groups. Finally, websites of the organizations engaged in education lobbying during the case study timeframe were reviewed to develop an understanding of motives and policy preferences.

A constructionist approach allowed for purposeful sampling, in which interview participants were selected for their ability to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon under study (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The sample of individuals invited to participate in research interviews was identified through review of public records. Participants initially sought for interviews fit the sole criteria of having presented written testimony during at least one session of the 2013 – 2018 Kansas House and/or Senate Education meetings. Other interviewees were identified through snowball sampling and selected based upon their experience and unique perspective of the phenomenon. Participants were asked questions to gather detailed contextual narratives that described their own experience with and perceptions of public education policy reform.

Overview of Information Needed

To answer the primary research question and provide a detailed description of neoliberal education policy discourse in Kansas, both indisputable content and perceptions of the phenomenon are needed. Objective, descriptive information required to build full understanding of policy reform began with a list of policies debated at the state level and a corresponding list of special interest groups and policy actors who participated in policy discourse.

Much information required for this study was found documents kept as records of the State. For each House and Senate Education Committee meeting, the state archives an agenda, sign-in sheet, and written testimonials on a publicly accessible website (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/committees/). These documents were analyzed to provide context and the magnitude of policy discourse, participation, and outcome. To better understand how language is used in the struggle for control of education, written testimonials presented by the participating policy actors were interpreted using a critical discourse analysis approach (Fairclough, 1992).

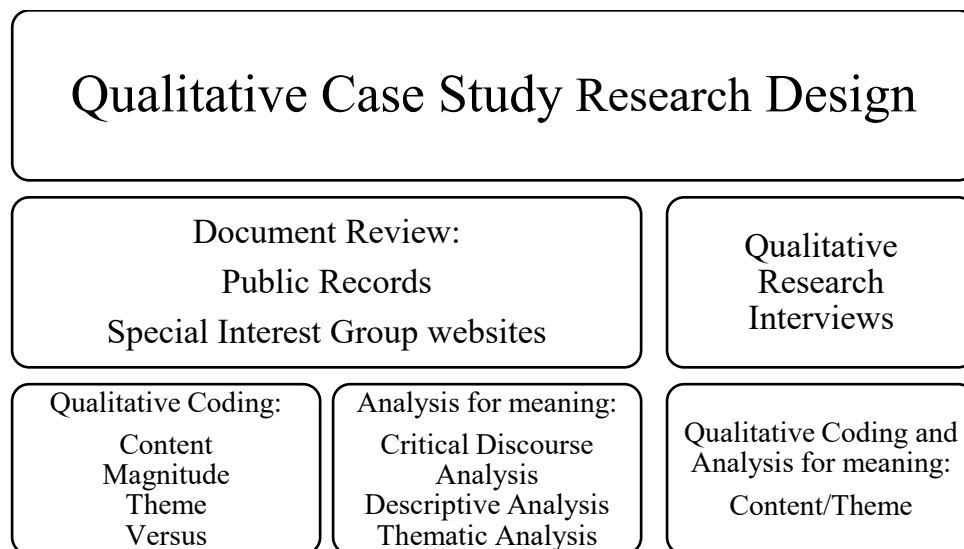
These documents do not convey the dialogue spoken during these meanings, nor other observable variables that could inform interpretation. To study the phenomena from the human perspective, research interviews were conducted with key individuals to understand first-hand experiences and resulting perceptions of the phenomenon. Inclusion of direct participant experience serves to verify or contest information found within documents, providing further details and opinions that could not be culled from analysis of documentary materials.

Research Design

A single, overarching research question frames the case study with a subset of questions developed to guide detailed data collection related to what is known about the phenomena of

special interest groups and their involvement in education policy reform (Stake, 1995). A multiple method qualitative case study research design was utilized to answer these questions (Figure 3). This approach fits the paradigm of constructionism through inclusion of multiple perspectives as well as provision of exemplary quotes and raw data in appendices that allow each reader to interpret meaning for themselves. The case study research method employed a rigorous and systematic data collection and analysis process designed to minimize bias and ensure trustworthiness in findings (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Prior to collecting data, five specific components of the research plan were delineated: clear research questions, research propositions based upon theory or existing knowledge, defined unit of analysis, logic that connected the unit of analysis to propositions, and criteria for interpreting findings (Yin, 2017). The following sections outline the case study research plan.

Figure 3 Research Study Design



The literature review provides a framework for comparing one case (Kansas) to what is known about special interest groups and their role in neoliberal education policy reform. The literature guides what to identify in respect to policy frameworks in education, policy actor types and roles, and the discourse and strategies of special interest groups (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

This existing knowledge served as a basis to assign attributes, categories, and codes to data for crosstabulation analysis.

A qualitative approach to gathering and analyzing data allows the researcher to produce an information rich, in-depth study of an issue (Battacharya, 2017), and is essential to answering the question of how special interest groups seek to influence K-12 education policy at the state-level.

Qualitative Case Study Research Design

This research employs a multiple case study research design (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2017), with single cases focused on detailing a specific policy issue and the quintain (i.e., entirety of the collection of cases) representative of the phenomenon of neoliberal education policy discourse in the State of Kansas. This case study takes a descriptive approach to developing a better understanding of state-level neoliberal education policy reform efforts. Case studies focus on contemporary events, rely on multiple sources of data, and most appropriately for this study, do not require behavioral control (Yin, 2017). The incorporation of multiple cases describing neoliberal education policy issues in depth allowed for triangulation of data and comparison of themes and policy actor behavior across issues.

This study is designed to contribute to in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and aimed to convince the reader, through thick description, of how certain events or actions were experienced. The strength of the case study method is in the detail provided, complexity studied, and the incorporation of multiple perspectives. Findings require both the researcher and consumer to apply inductive reasoning to discover meaning around questions of ‘why’ or ‘how’ (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Case study findings are not generalizable but can serve as an example to inform understandings of similar events or processes within similar contexts or situations.

This study explores the phenomenon of neoliberal political discourse in K-12 education in the State of Kansas.

This case study contributes to better understanding of U.S. education reform through a closer look at the political discourse in one state. Further, this research fills some of the gap in what is known about special interest groups' roles and functions in legislation at the state-level (Grossman, 2014). This phenomenon of special interest group involvement in policy debate spans the boundaries of many reform processes, and therefore, this study provides contextual details and meanings that can be applied to policy issues broader than education.

Case Bounds

Case bounds and the scope of the study were framed through considerations of feasibility to collect data and including time and money (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). The bounds of this proposed study are:

- **Phenomena of Interest:** State-level K-12 neoliberal education policy discourse.
- **Unit of Analysis:** House and Senate Education Committees in the State of Kansas.
- **Timeframe:** 2013-2018 is banded by substantial shift in state policy that effectively allowed state funds for private education (i.e., Tax Credit Scholarship Program) and the session most recent to study implementation (i.e., 2018 Legislative Education Committee sessions).
- **Data Sources:** Criteria for inclusion limits evidence to those found in the public record during the defined study timeframe. Policy issues, special interest groups, and other policy actors were only included if they were found in the official documentation of at least one of the 2013-2018 Kansas House or Senate Education Committee proceedings.

Theory

This research builds further understanding of how special interest groups contribute to Public Choice theory, specifically in the case of state-level education reform. As outlined in the previous chapter, Public Choice theory says that elected officials will select policies that further their own interests, while special interest groups are believed to push their own interests rather than policy based upon evidence or aligned with public opinion. The proposed study does not hinge on testing public theory, but instead describes how public choice plays out in the specific context of state legislative education reform (Yin, 2017). However, evidence provided in this study could lead to a conclusion that established theories upon which the study is built may not hold true, and findings could possibly lead to new theories for understanding the politics of education reform.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection plan was guided by a subset of research questions that were analyzed through inclusion of multiple sources of information and differing perspectives. The study incorporates various sources of evidence to corroborate data within and among documents and interview transcripts. Data collection included public documents associated with the 2013-2018 House and Education Committees and special interest group websites, combined with semi-structured research interviews to capture the perceptions of policy actors representing special interest groups in K-12 education policy reform.

Document Review

A systematic document review and analysis was the first method employed. Document review is the collection and analysis of written materials, both text and visuals – hard copy and online, that are “produced, shared and used in socially organized ways” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27).

Most importantly, these documents were produced independent of the research. Document analysis emerged as a research method from the practice of hermeneutics, which is the study of the interpretation of texts that has a purpose to “obtain a valid and common understanding of the meaning of a text” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 60). Defined by Bowen (2009) as a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and electronic” document review is a qualitative method that allows the researcher to interpret deeper meaning through analysis of written text and visual data (p. 27). A benefit of including the document review method in a case study is that it provides both a method and source of data triangulation. Including a document analysis in a case study can provide a better contextual understanding under which the researcher and reader can interpret data (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Analysis of documents informed the research project design (Bowen, 2009). Salient K-12 education policy issues and individuals who participated in shaping state policy were identified to invite their participation in interviews. Data collected and analyzed assisted in developing an understanding of the context within which research participants function, providing background information and historical insight. The review helped to finalize interview questions, prepared the researcher to ask probing questions during interviews, and built the content knowledge and language to convey credibility as an expert in the research topic. Documents were analyzed to track change and development of policy issues, as well as to verify or corroborate evidence gathered in interviews. Where there is greater convergence of evidence, readers are more likely to feel confident about the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Stake, 1995).

The document review method is advantageous because data already exists, reducing the time and cost of data collection (Bowen, 2009). Documents provide a depth of information

spanning across times, distances, and events that can help to describe contexts, situate the research in historical or sociological dimensions, and inform interpretation. When contrasted with the interview method, documents provide specific, undeniable information that serves to increase credibility in that documents are static and cannot be influenced by the researcher.

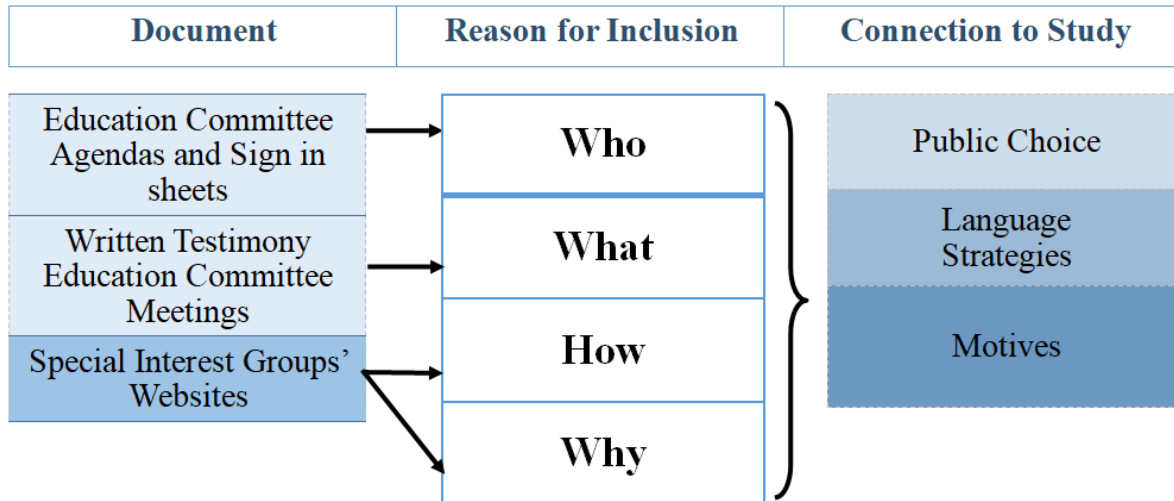
Caution in analysis was important as documents may encompass biased selectivity, meaning the text or visual data may be indicative of values or principles of the organization producing and/or sharing them (Bowen, 2009). A disadvantage is that documents may not provide all the pertinent information needed to understand context or properly interpret meaning. To account for this potential gap in information, interviews supplement documentary evidence.

Document Review Method Design

The first step in the document analysis process was creation of a full list of documents of interest to the research study along with the reasons these documents are of interest (Bhattacharya, 2017). These resources were “examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). Figure 4 outlines the documents selected for inclusion in this study, connecting these with reasons for inclusion. These documents were selected because they represent the case study topic, were easily accessible public documents maintained on State of Kansas websites, and, importantly, provide relevant details that informed the interview protocol. Data collected and analyzed during this phase were used to corroborate information revealed during the research interview phase. This

practice was especially important to reveal convergence of data through pattern-matching both within and across data sources (Bowen, 2009).

Figure 4 Document Review Design



Document analysis identified policy actors and relevant policy topics to further inform the interview research study. Discourse analysis and semi-structured research interviews were used to better understand and describe policy actors' experiences. Data was as written text subjected to several distinct iterations of different qualitative coding methods. Interpretation focus on answering key research questions.

Interview participants were given the opportunity to provide documents they believed important to understanding education reform and special interests in state level policy making (Bhattacharya, 2017). The interview protocol included an invitation within the consent section for participants to provide other documents that may be useful for this research study. During the initial interview, participants were asked again in person if there are documents that he/she would like to share.

Semi-Structured Research Interviews

Both Stake (1995; 2006) and Yin (2017) consider interviews an essential part of any well-designed case study. Qualitative research interviews are an important method to systematically gather perspectives and experiences from individuals knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. Interviews serve as a source of both data triangulation and methodological rigor within the case study design. Described as an old way of gathering systematic knowledge, the interview has long been utilized in anthropology and sociology studies, and is now common in the fields of education, health sciences, and marketing and advertising (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Research interviews are planned with lobbyists identified during the first phase of document review. Interviews are designed to gain further understanding of special interest groups, specifically, how and why they seek to influence in K-12 education policy. Interview research is framed using Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) system of interviewing as a craft to design interview questions and logistics. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) describe interviews as conversation that is research, undertaken to understand the world from the subjects' point of view. They describe interviewing as "an active process where the interviewer and interviewee through their relationship produce knowledge" (p. 21). The method requires the researcher to take a careful listening approach, and actively follow-up on responses to dig deeper while not sharing her opinion.

The researcher maintains a powerful position by controlling the topic and conversation. After participants express their views, beliefs and experiences, the researcher summarizes the response essentially co-constructing knowledge with the participant. While contrary to a survey that asks the same questions in the same order, a benefit of using the semi-structured interview

process was the conversational atmosphere that allowed me to give time to provide detailed responses.

The interview is the main road to understanding multiple realities (Stake, 1995). Rarely does a case study ask the same questions of each person because the individual participants will have had different, unique experiences. Therefore, a list of issue-oriented questions was provided to the participant in advance of the interview, but dependent on interview response different probing and clarifying questions were asked. Some field notes were taken during the interview, but the focus was kept on listening to the participant (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Stake, 1995). Shortly following each interview, a summary was written that included key information and ideas generated. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for coding purposes.

Interviews are envisioned as guided conversations, and not implemented as structured questionnaires (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). The interview included open-ended questions that are friendly, non-threatening, and did not express or solicit bias. Interviews started with an overview and consent, followed by a series of guided open-ended questions. Questions were asked in order of what, why, then how using a mix of introductory and follow-up questions. Direct questions were asked to gather facts and indirect questions were posed to better understand participant attitudes and beliefs. With participant permission, audio recordings were made of all interviews that were transcribed by a third-party vendor and verified by myself to prepare for analysis.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) believe that the quality of an interview is not judged by its duration, but rather by the depth and validity of information obtained. Interviews were conducted in person when possible, and via telephone or Zoom video conference. Interviews lasted between 30-120 minutes.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Case study research should be analyzed to find anticipated and unanticipated patterns in the data (Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2017). Data analysis for this study followed an iterative approach that included reflection through creating clusters of smaller bits information for study, creating coding schemes for further analysis, and researcher journaling to capture immediate hunches and questions that arise (Battacharya, 2017). Interview analysis relied on a matrix of qualitative coding methods attuned to revealing policy power dynamics and interpreting content in several ways to identify themes within the data. All documents were coded for content and magnitude, while testimonial documents were also interpreted using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) and versus coding (Saldana, 2016) to illustrate both sides of policy issues. Data was interpreted through a structure that rests on thematic descriptions aligned to research questions. The goal is to provide thick description in the analysis to give the reader ample context to interpret results and discover meaning.

Analysis

Data gained during the document review was connected to existing knowledge described in the literature review and to other data sources included in the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). The analysis phase was an iterative process that involved skimming information for initial reactions, carefully reading to examine content to code text so that it could be matched across data sources and themes could be identified. Finally, interpretation of data was completed through pattern matching and, in some areas, quantifying information to enhance conceptual or contextual understanding of the case.

First pass coding was undertaken with pen and paper during the skimming phase, and the NVivo qualitative coding software program was used to assign categorical attributes and qualitative codes in a digital format. Some pre-identified codes were used, including descriptors

such as “Policy Proponent” or “Policy Opponent”, other codes may arise only after interviews are completed and documents are re-examined. After data is coded, it was organized into themes for interpretation. Bowen (2009) says that a quality document review study “requires robust data collection techniques and documentation of research procedure” and should provide detailed information study design, data collection, and analysis procedures in the research report (p. 36). Following this recommendation, Table 5 displays the documents collected and the data that was analyzed.

Table 5 Documents Analysis Plan

Documents Selected	Data Analyzed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013 – 2018 House Education Committee Agendas, Minutes, Testimony • 2013 – 2018 Senate Education Committee Agendas, Minutes, Testimony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description and chronology of policy issues • Lobbyists, legislators, and government staff • Discourse found in testimonials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013 – 2018 House and Senate Education Committee rosters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative members and demographics

Data was analyzed in ways that allow for rich description of context, aligned theoretical propositions to evidence, and answered research questions while leaving space for theory to be generated (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; and Yin, 2017).

Qualitative Coding

To analyze data and develop themes and meaning through pattern matching, it was necessary to create a system of coding data for tabulation and comparison. A set of qualitative coding schemes were selected to organize and make sense of data. This section describes the methods of qualitative coding the proposed study employed and the software that was used to organize, store, and assist in data analysis.

The purpose of coding for analysis was to create a systematic process categorizing and assigning meaning, as well as to match pieces of information. Prior to digital coding process,

interviews were reviewed aurally, documents were printed and read, and initial reactions were written down to identify possible codes and schemes for organizing data. Coding for analysis and interpretation utilized several of Saldana's (2016) methods to organize information into patterns that were labeled to identify elements of the case study topic (Payne & Payne, 2004). The first pass of analysis involved a careful reading followed by coding with a purpose of describing key policy issues, policy actors, language, and strategies being studied. A second round of coding was completed to assign policy actors as either proponents or opponents of the policy issue.

Following Saldana's (2016) process, coding was done in cycles to align codes that were intuitive to the data, matched to the literature, and aligned to research questions. Much of this process was completed with pen and paper that was supplemented with field notes taken to reflect initial interpretations of data and possible meanings. The second phase of data coding utilized computer aided qualitative coding software to enable efficient, reproducible documentation of pattern matching across data sources (i.e., documents and interviews). The NVivo qualitative analysis software system was used to gather, store, and code data contained in documents and interview transcripts. The software allowed for organizing documents with specified attribute variables providing a method to compare categories of interest by characteristics of political ideology, primary policy issue of interest, and organization type (i.e. advocacy, membership, industry, private). Data gathered underneath each code was outputted into a single document analyzed as stand-alone, single topics within each case. The ability to code at multiple nodes within documents allowed for comparison across coding schemes to understand how variables interact (e.g., What policy issues do business interest groups engage in?).

Content Coding

Content analysis is the demonstration of “the meaning of written or visual sources by systematically allocating their content to pre-determined, detailed categories, and then both quantifying and interpreting” meaning (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 52). Saldana (2016) refers to this method as coding for description or topics. The purpose of these codes was to label with short summaries that signified the topic of the coded text. These codes were used to identify policy issues, policy actors, language, and lobbying strategies. These codes allowed for quantifying the magnitude of occurrence.

Attribute and Magnitude Coding

Attribute coding is a basic set of descriptors that convey factual information about the interviewee that may influence his or her world view, such as perspectives on education, gender, age, or policy position that can be utilized in contextual analysis of case study data (Saldana, 2016). This type of information can help the reader understand the sources of information and provide their own judgement on the reliability of the data source. Saldana recommends using these attribute codes as file naming conventions to easily retrieve data.

Magnitude coding is layered with attribute and is a simple use of coding data by frequency. One beneficial option in using the NVivo software analysis tool is the ability to easily calculate frequencies of codes or text. Data were explored using word clouds that showed frequency of actual words found in the text, word stems that displayed frequent words and their surrounding text, as well as the frequency each code was used.

Versus Coding

Versus coding (Saldana, 2016) was used to identify dichotomous issues and relationships. Versus coding is appropriate for policy studies that focus on understanding conflicting goals and

motives. Not only are these codes important in understanding policy perspectives, they are also useful in discovering patterns of hierarchy and power. When applied to policy actors, the framework for analysis set-up an 'Us vs Them' relationship with accompanying issues and perspectives situated in this context. The first step was to code data into major categories of 1) Stakeholders, 2) Perceptions/Actions, and 3) Issues while keeping an analytical memo that reflected on possible reasons for support or opposition. The analysis was grounded in observable conflicts between people, identifying metaphors that expressed the tension of such conflict. A final step was to consider what or who was being discredited at the expense of someone else's maintenance of authority.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse creation is a social phenomenon (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001), and in this case study discourse is the political process as evidenced in official documents as well as the experiences and beliefs of the people directly shaping the process. Discourse analysis relies on data collected through earlier stages of the investigation and is undertaken for the purpose of interpretation. Discourse analysis complements the descriptive analysis through providing context to understand the phenomenon and create meaning through common themes. Discourse analysis serves as an opportunity for triangulation as patterns are generated to compare across data sources. The qualitative nature critical discourse analysis allows for multiple interpretations and meanings that are dependent on the reader's own social position and knowledge (Fairclough, 1992). The analysis provides an interpretation of how language influences power relationships as presented in written testimony for legislative education committee meetings, research interview transcripts, and information found on policy actors' online websites, social media accounts, or other publicly accessible digital information.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the study of language as a social phenomenon: different texts have specific meanings and values that reflect the groups and institutions who create the discourse. Analysis is concerned with understanding how language is used to construct power (Wodak, 2001), as well as how power relationships and struggles shape the discursive practice (Fairclough, 1992). The CDA method is particularly useful in studying social hierarchies and fits well with the scope of this study to better understand how different groups influence education reform through their use of language and their engagement in the policy discourse process. This study's analysis falls under the term 'critical' due to interest in uncovering meaning through text analysis rather than studying aspects of linguistic form. In this case – understanding how different special interest groups use language to maintain or obtain power.

The use of CDA in this study is heavily influenced by Fairclough's (1992) teachings about discourse analysis as a method to study social change. CDA is a method that frames discourse as social practice and is focused on the ideological and political effects of policy discourse. A critical study of how and who gains power can reveal ways in which discursive policy practice effects social structures based upon the government's distribution of wealth. It fits the overall research purpose of understanding how special interest groups influence policies that shift education from public to private markets. Fairclough (1992) asserts that discourse is shaped by class and other social relationships, relationships specific within institutions, as well as norms that dictate how discourse is implemented. Following Fairclough's (1992) methods, critical discourse analysis was first undertaken to look for themes and magnitude, while also looking for information that suggests motives for identified themes. These data were further

analyzed to uncover ‘modalities’ (e.g., beliefs or attitudes), whether they were provided as objective or subjective, and what words were most used in instances of modalities.

Understanding context is important, as the context under which the text was created may influence its interpretation (Fairclough, 1992). To capture a sense of where ideas come from, a code to represent Foucault’s (1972) ‘archeology of knowledge’ was used to document historical references, popular culture, scholarly literature, and government reports. These discursive processes construct people’s identity and social relationships with others.

Theming Data

Coded data was placed into themes aligned to research questions and additional themes that emerged during analysis. Saldana’s “categories of categories” (2016, p. 205) analysis was completed to help facilitate thematic analysis. This method encompassed creating taxonomies or hierarchies and diagramming simple illustrations of networks of relationships. Strategies used to analyze data were the creation of matrices with evidence placed in themed categories, tabulation of frequencies, development of timelines, and the creation of graphs and charts. Patterns and relationships were identified across varying sources of data and findings and related back to the literature. The findings contain a mix of data coded to provide frequencies of observation and inclusion of direct observation for interpreting meaning (Stake, 1995/2006; Yin, 2017).

Computer Aided Qualitative Coding

The first coding cycle process was done by hand and further coding was done using the NVivo qualitative analysis software. NVivo is a computer-aided software that can organize, manage, and analyze text-based data. Documents analyzed in NVivo were assigned attributes that indicate producer characteristics and the specific policy issue, and interviewees were

assigned attributes (gender, political ideology, special interest group type, policy issue) used in the analysis to compare cases across characteristics. An example of the attributes and codes that were assigned is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Examples of Qualitative Codes

Attribute Nodes	Codes
Ideology	Republican: Fiscal Conservative Republican: Libertarian Republican: Religious Right Democrat: Progressive Democrat: Neoliberals Democrat: Socialists
Gender	Male Female
Special Interest Group Type	Advocacy Group (i.e., primary activity is policy advocacy) Economic Entrepreneur Education Professional Foundation (i.e., primary activity to give money) Parent and/or Student Policy Entrepreneur Think Tank (i.e., primary activity is research for policy)

Data Management

During data collection, a field journal was kept that recorded important facts, reactions to data, and insights into possible meaning as a reference for data analysis (Bhattacharya, 2017; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Yin, 2017). All other data collected and created for this study was stored in digital format. Using a personal computer, a system of folders was used to organize files by source and purpose. Documents collected for analysis, interview audio files and written transcription, internal memos and analysis software files were stored in these folders. Data files will also be managed within the NVivo qualitative software system. The researcher followed responsible conduct of research best practices for maintaining security, privacy, and confidentiality.

Ethical Considerations

This research study follows Kansas State University's Institutional Review Board's rules for conducting research with human subjects. Informed consent details any benefits or consequences of participation and protection of confidentiality. The informed consent form contained all elements on Kansas State University's Informed Consent Checklist such as the purpose of the research, procedures to be used to collect data (i.e., semi-structured interviews), and the anticipated number and duration of interviews. Participants were asked for permission to audio record each interview and their confidentiality was maintained. Ethical considerations during document analysis include being sensitive to reporting information that could identify individual participants and breach confidentiality, utilizing credible sources to gather documents, and including a variety of sources that accurately represent all perspectives so that researcher bias did not influence interpretation (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Issues of Trustworthiness

While the nature of qualitative research allows for different interpretation of meanings, the research process must still take into consideration the issues of validity and reliability (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2017). In considering validity, actions were carried out to ensure the study answered the research questions set forth through careful planning of research questions, identification of data sources, and plans for analysis.

Validity of interviewee perceptions was achieved through asking participants clarifying questions and asking questions in different stages of the interview to determine participant response consistency (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). To aid validity in reader interpretation, familiar policy content provides a barometer for gauging the accuracy of other assertions made from data interpretation (Stake, 1995). Findings include fact-based, descriptive data to build the

contextual narrative needed to interpret participant perceptions. Reader validity is also enhanced by describing methods and sources of data collection in plain language. External validity is accomplished by connecting findings to existing knowledge outlined in the literature review. Raw data, such as direct quotes, are used in the findings so the reader is able to make his or her own inferences.

Triangulation is an important tool in increasing qualitative research validity (Bhattacharya, 2017; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2017). The nature of qualitative research means that there will not be one ultimate correct interpretation, but accuracy can be achieved through including multiple data sources. In fact, triangulation is the rationale for including multiple sources of evidence within a case study. Triangulation was achieved through gathering multiple sources of data and utilizing multiple sources of analytic methods to interpret the data. This case study triangulates perceptions of the phenomena through inclusion of all individuals who participated in testimony around the selected policy issues and who represent different genders, ages, races, and political affiliations. While triangulation of data provided a source to verify evidence, it also served as opportunity to look for outliers or contrary evidence.

Reliability means that another person could replicate the proposed research in the exact same manner by following the methods described. A case study protocol containing an overview of information needed, plan for data collection, details on how to interact with interview participants, and analysis methods was created to guide the study. Following Yin's (2017) advice to keep a trail of evidence to enhance reliability, field notes and other records were kept to thoroughly document the research process. NVivo was used to enhance reliability, as the software stores codes that can be easily replicated and queried to lead back to the original source

of evidence. Most importantly, validity and reliability were pursued through rigorous conduct of research and the presentation of results in an honest and correct manner (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

The concept of generalizability in findings was accomplished by providing rich detail in the report using common language so that any reader can transfer information from this study to understand a similar situation. Participant quotes describing topics by using their own words provides raw data by which to judge other report findings. An abundance of evidence is provided in the findings so that readers can come to their own conclusions.

Methodological Limitations

The very nature of case study research is that the results are not generalizable to the population. However, this research intends contributes new understandings of political discourse specific to place, time, and participants that can be used to build knowledge and can be applied to understanding other contexts. Qualitative research is by nature subjective, but subjectivity is an essential element to developing new understanding through the research process (Stake, 1995). To address methodological concerns, triangulation of data sources and data methods reduces both researcher and participant subjectivity.

An identified problem with subjectivism in research is that of inconsistency in qualitative analysis. When making an observation different people see different things dependent upon their beliefs and personal biases that were formed through socialization which happens in many varying contexts (Patton, 1999). These differences of interpretation make their way into the results reported and may lead readers to distrust the findings if they see the situation through a different lens based upon their own subjectivity. Credibility in qualitative analysis is also achieved through exploring alternative explanations, looking out for instances that negate norms

and including these in the analysis, and using multiple methods to explore phenomena (e.g., pairing interviews with document analysis) (Patton, 1999).

Practical limitations are limited by data that are available within the documents studied and the people who elect to participate in interviews, and study results and the willingness of individuals to participate in the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). The views of the people who agreed to participate in interviews may not be representative of all policy actors. There are likely opinions, knowledge, and experience shaping education reform that is not fully captured in this study. Similarly, document analysis relies solely on written text and what participants said as well as their body language is missing, which if included in the analysis could contribute vital information resulting in different interpretations.

Summary

This qualitative multiple case study research design answers the question of how special interest groups influence K-12 education policy at the state level. Taking a constructivist approach to knowledge building, public documents and associated special interest groups websites were analyzed along with the perceptions of individuals who participated in the phenomenon provide meaning to state-level school reform politics. The Case Study protocol was developed following well-cited methods to guide the research, ensure credibility, and adhere to ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Introduction

This chapter contains the results of a qualitative multiple case study to answer the primary research question: *How do special interest groups influence K-12 education policy at the state level?* The case is bounded by the 2013-2018 Kansas House and Senate Education Committee hearings with a sharp focus on policies that represent a shift toward market-based education reform and through a theoretical lens of public choice. Findings are organized around the following secondary research questions:

- 1) What, if any, are the neoliberal policies advocated by interest groups and debated by elected representatives?
- 2) Who are the policy actors engaging in these debates?
- 3) What language do special interest groups use toward social change?
- 4) What strategies do special interest groups pursue to gain policy preference?

This chapter also discusses how the analysis is framed upon a multiple case study approach detailing the context of five key policy issues. The sample of documents is described and demographics of interviewees are provided. Details regarding the analysis of 385 written testimonials and 16 interviews are included. Qualitative coding was first conducted manually to identify themes, then coded using NVivo12 software to answer key research questions as well as by common themes. This chapter provides tables and graphics to describe the data as well as vignettes from testimony and interviews to provide rich detail from the participant perspective.

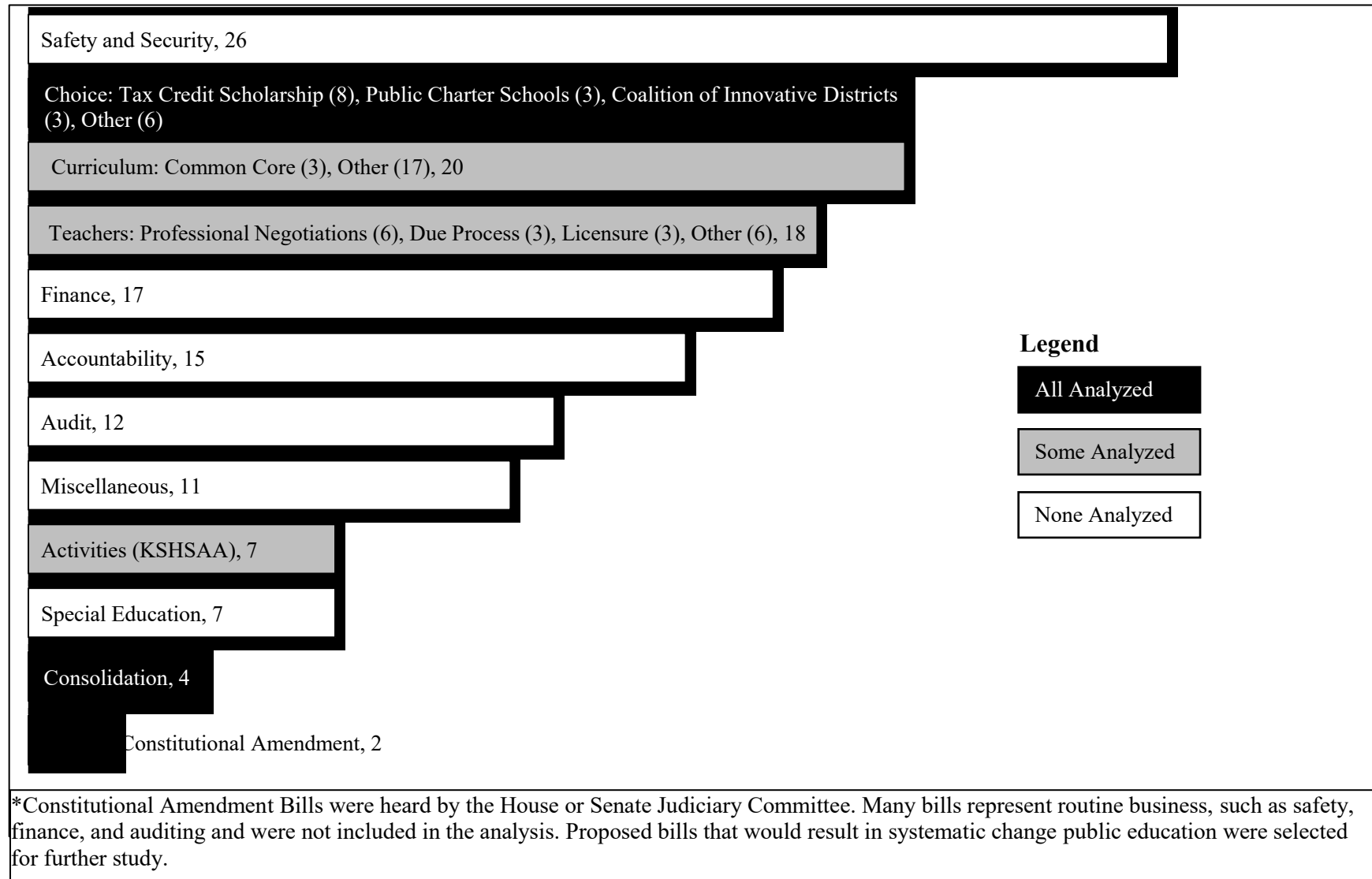
Sample

This section describes the sample of documents reviewed for the case study as well as demographics of interview participants.

Document Review

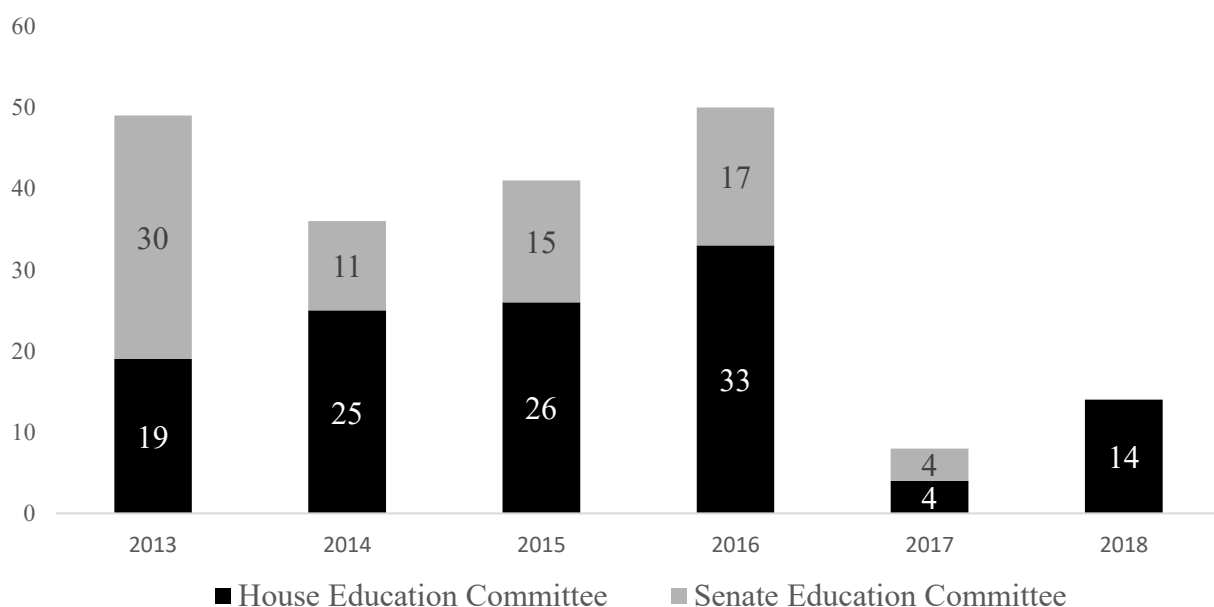
During the case study time period, the House and Senate Education Committee Indices listed a total of 156 unique bills presented for consideration. Most bills represent the typical work of government oversight of tax dollars and allocation of funds to agencies and services (see Figure 5). Some policies cover the State's role as employer, while other bills reflect efforts for systematic changes to schooling and the state's role in suitable provision of public education. Policy issues that met the criteria for inclusion had characteristics of market-oriented ideals such as choice, efficiency, and less government involvement in education. Two Judicial Committee hearings regarding amendments to the Constitution were included in the analysis based upon the suggested importance described by multiple interviewees. These issues provided 385 individual pieces of testimony for analysis. Each document was coded with multiple codes to identify themes and develop categories for analysis.

Figure 5 K-12 House and Senate Education Committee Policy Subject Matter, 2013-2018



Many policies heard during the timeframe represent perennial issues brought to the legislature. For example, there were 27 bills (14%) presented about safety and security of students and school staff (i.e., bullying, storm shelters, safety and security policies). As expected, committees also heard bills related to fiscal management (i.e., finance, accountability, audits). These committees were also presented 17 bills seeking curricular additions and/or changes to science, sex education, financial literacy, as well as two separate bills seeking to designate a week to celebrate freedom and winter. Classified as miscellaneous are bills regarding transportation, food service, and local elections, as well as one bill, which did not receive a hearing, titled “An act concerning school districts; relating to reporting of students who are not lawfully present in the United States.” These policy issues are important to understanding the full scope of education policy development in the state. However, they did not meet the study criteria and, therefore, are not included in qualitative coding and critical discourse analysis. As shown in Figure 6, most testimony was presented to members of the House Education Committee.

Figure 6 Distribution of Bills by Committee



*2018 Senate documents unavailable at time of study

Interviews

Interviewees were first identified through document review. An initial list of ten individuals who gave testimony at least two hearings was sent an electronic invitation to participate. Snowball sampling was utilized in response to several interviewees' suggestions for inclusion of other key policy actors who could contribute specific knowledge regarding the phenomenon of education reform in the State of Kansas. Individuals identified through snowball sampling were invited to participate if their perspective would add to the diversity of responses. For example, one interviewee identified through snowball sampling had not testified, but was recommended for inclusion in the case study based upon his experience as a leader of a teacher association. A total of 23 individuals were invited to participate. Sixteen policy actors (69.5% response rate) who had experience directly related to state education policymaking in Kansas agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews. Most interviewees were Caucasian males, with two female (12.5%) and one African-American (6.3%) participant. These individual's professional roles included lobbyist (n = 7, 43.8%), education professional (n = 6, 37.5%), private and/or religious school leader (n = 3, 18.8%), as well as state legislator (n = 2, 12.5%). Interviewees also possessed multiple relevant experiences such as teacher, state or school board member, third-party participant in a due process teacher hearing, founder of a private school, expert consultant, state bureaucrat, as well as leader of a statewide organization with interest in education policy.

Data Collection

This section outlines the procedures taken to gather documents for review and the collection of key informant perceptions through semi-structured interviews.

Document Review

Documents reviewed and analyzed were retrieved from the Kansas Legislature's website (www.kansaslegislature.org) which provides information to the public on all legislative business. House and Senate Education Committee Bill Indices for each year, 2013-2018, were first transcribed into an Excel database. Fields transcribed into the Excel database were: document title, bill number, subject, dates of hearings, and action. Documents were first manually reviewed to begin to understand and categorize policy issues. Then in the database, each bill was assigned an attribute to identify subject matter and marked yes/no to sort out those that did not meet the criteria for inclusion. The Excel output listing all policies considered for inclusion is provided as Appendix A: 2013-2018 House and Senate Education Committee Bills.

For those bills that met study criteria, all documents indexed on the legislature's website corresponding to each bill were downloaded into a folder and organized by bill number. Documents downloaded include: lists of hearing participants and their policy position; meeting attendees, agendas, and minutes; government-produced documents providing descriptive policy overview or fiscal notes; and a written copy of all testimony submitted for each hearing. Testimonials were the only documents coded for critical discourse analysis.

A second Excel database was created to analyze trends in special interest group participation. This database contained a list of participants, their gender, the policy they lobbied for, and their policy position. Database fields included the lobbyist's first and last name, gender (if identifiable), location, organizational affiliation, and a researcher-assigned special interest group type. Excel PivotTables were used to summarize data for content analysis; filters and sorting functions allowed analysis by bill and lobbyist attributes. The initial review of documents provided an overview of policy issues to develop interview questions, and a sampling

frame to invite informed individuals to participate. The Excel output listing all policies considered for inclusion is provided as Appendix B – Policy Actors. Appendix C contains mission statements for participating special interest groups.

Interviews

Potential interview participants were identified in public documents. This pool included individuals who presented testimony at a high frequency. Some individuals were identified for participation through snowball sampling based upon recommendations from other interviewees. These individuals were invited when their unique knowledge of the topic and/or their personal experiences could increase the diversity of viewpoints contributed to the study. Overall, 23 individuals were sent an invitation and 16 agreed to an interview for a 69.6% positive response rate. Interview questions are provided in Appendix D.

Interviews were conducted October through December 2018. Nine (56.3%) interviews were held in person at a location convenient for the participant, six (37.5%) were conducted by telephone, and one (6.3%) was completed through video-conference. All interviews were audio-recorded and manual field notes were taken during and immediately after each interview. Interviews were transcribed using NVivo's Artificial Intelligence software. Transcripts were manually verified and edited by the researcher.

Data and Analysis

Testimony and interviews were analyzed using NVivo computer aided qualitative research software. A series of codes was established that aligned with the literature or represented themes discovered during the manual analysis (see Appendix E). Documents were categorized into folders for each key policy issue and were assigned attributes of 1) Policy Position: Neutral, Opponent or Proponent; and 2) Special Interest Group by Type: Concerned

Citizen, Professional Organization by name, Schools, or Elected Official. Attributes, codes, and folders were utilized to query data. NVivo features of auto-coding for themes, cluster analysis, matrices, and word counts provided multiple frameworks to explore data, detect patterns, and discover trends.

NVivo auto-coding for themes confirmed that all policy discourse centered on schools, education, students, and teachers. Codes were created to categorize evidence related to each research question, versus codes to organize explicit references to or attempts to shift hegemony, and codes of either scientific or ideological dialect to differentiate how special interest groups frame their message. Additionally, NVivo codes were related to reflect themes identified during manual coding. Codes were utilized to develop matrices that allowed for triangulation of data across policy issues, policy actors, and major themes.

NVivo cluster analysis revealed that the two most frequent participants, who tended to be in opposition on most issues, also had the most highly correlated use of language (Pearson Correlation Coefficient .746252). Upon coding for themes, it was discovered that these two special interest groups most often used scientific dialect and fiscal rational to argue their policy position. Some perceived this type of message framing as an over reliance on recitation of facts and figures as not taking a clear policy position. An interviewee said, “[He] will get up to talk and he's supposed to be for or against it and you can't tell by listening to him.” (Interviewee 15)

Major Policy Themes

Five major policy issues are each detailed as a single case within this multi-case study. Each case study is similarly organized to provide an overview of the policy, details of participating special interest groups, and analysis of the language and strategies contained in testimony. These focused case studies provide for context to illuminate the complexity of state

education policy discourse and allow comparison across issues. Single policy issue case studies are provided in Appendices E-I.

Discourse surrounding Common Core highlights public involvement in state-level education policy, while the battle over a Constitutional Amendment illustrates business special interest group participation. These two issues serve as exemplars to understand variation in language and strategies used to influence state-level policy. The analysis of due process for teachers, consolidation, as well as tax credit scholarships epitomize public choice theory in decision-making. Finally, the overview of public charter schools and the Coalition of Innovative Districts illustrates how Kansans seek to implement market-based ideas for education reform through the state's regulated public system.

The following sections answer research questions in aggregate starting with an overview of neoliberal policy issues in K-12 education, followed by discussion of policy actors, then analysis of the language and strategies that special interest groups use to influence policy.

Market-Oriented K-12 Policies

This section answers the key questions: *What, if any, are the neoliberal policies advocated by interest groups and debated by elected representatives?*

In all, 51 bills (32% of all proposed) were deemed to align with neoliberal ideology and were selected for further analysis. However, ten of these bills (20%) did not receive a hearing. Proposals framed as increased options for school choice, improvements to efficient operations, or a reduction of the government's role in education constitute the remainder of the analysis. Although only a small number of neoliberal-oriented proposals were heard, these topics sought to fundamentally change school finance, curriculum, state employee protections, legislative power, and the constitutional rights granted to state citizens.

The neoliberal-oriented policies analyzed for this study all reflect shifts or attempted shifts in perceived power and allocation of resources. However, each issue represented unique characteristics and differing special interest group motives. Major policy themes selected for further analysis consist of: 1) Due process for teachers, 2) School choice through tax credit scholarships, home school participation in school district organized sports, public charter schools, and the Coalition of Innovative Districts, 3) School district consolidation, 4) Reducing federal government in education, and 5) Constitutional change. In the broadest sense, all state education policy is motivated by finance and much of the testimony analyzed reflected desires for lower taxes or rent seeking behaviors. A summary of these key policy issues follows.

Due Process for Teachers

The removal of due process for teachers represents a major shift in the perceived power of teachers and their labor unions who have traditionally been perceived as the most powerful interest group in education. The statute outlining due process rights was changed during the so-called “midnight massacre,” and never appeared on any legislative committee agenda nor received a public hearing. Interviewees and testimony aligned in giving credit for removing this right to one conservative legislator who struck all references to K-12 teachers from the existing due process law.

Four bills were presented during the case study time frame from proponents seeking to restore some benefits to teachers. None passed. Most participation came from labor unions and professional lobbyists. The opposition was the school board association whose members gained power through the policy change, and the Kansas Policy Institute (KPI) who supported the return of control to locally elected school boards.

Many testimonials were framed as explanations of how due process for teachers worked in practice, and several recounted the opaque process of policy adoption. Fewer relied on impassioned arguments to state their case. The issue was driven by differing perceptions on the definition of due process for teachers as well as renewed national focus on teacher tenure practices as cause for low academic achievement. Some incorrectly believe that due process is the inability to fire a public-school teacher and removal of due process brings government more in line with business sector employment practices. Those supportive of public education saw this policy as exploitation of public misunderstanding that public education opponents capitalized on to erode the current system. “Can you get rid of teachers in Kansas? Yes. Period. How is it done? You have to have people doing their job, filling out evaluations properly. So, that was a bogus issue. It was going after teachers.” (Interviewee 11)

The legislative removal of due process for teachers shows that neoliberal policy is not the product of public demand or evidence-based research. Instead this case exemplifies circumvention of governance norms as a key strategy for proponents to change public education at the state level. A detailed analysis of due process for teachers is presented as Appendix F.

School Choice

Attempts to provide more school choice for Kansas families took the form of tax credit scholarships, public charter schools and the Coalition of Innovative Districts, as well as home school participation in school district activities such as music and sports. Policy discourse on the tax credit scholarship program provided multiple pieces of testimony from different special interest groups on both sides of the issue and was therefore selected for in-depth analysis. The remaining school choice-oriented proposals are discussed as an overview.

The same bill that removed due process for teachers also enacted the state's first tax credit scholarship program in 2014. With an original emphasis as a mechanism to improve education options for special needs students, this policy was unsuccessfully argued the prior year. Once the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program was passed, there were six amendments proposed, two of which passed, seeking change who qualified to receive the tax credit and who qualified to receive the scholarship.

Primary proponents of this policy were rent seeking to obtain state funds to provide education services. These private and/or religious schools were supported by special interest groups concerned with lowering taxes. Together, these interests gained policy preference through the conservative lawmakers' willingness to circumvent or redefine traditional policymaking norms. Initial opponents of the tax credit scholarship program were education experts, particularly special education professionals, and their traditional allies whose primary message was of the potential inequity for students and burden on public schools that could result.

Policy diffusion was documented within several testimonials that explained the program derived from an ALEC model policy. A local grassroots advocacy network with connections to established statewide private school networks and KPI was developed to lobby for tax credit scholarships. Additionally, three out-of-state lobbyists who each supported the program shared their expertise and opinions based upon experiences with similar programs in other states. Proponents of tax credit scholarships used ideological messaging to describe a failing public school system that was unable to provide a quality education along with quips on competition as the variable needed to improve all schools. These special interest groups also cited research from multiple right-leaning national policy think tanks, the economic philosophies of Milton

Friedman, and opinions of conservative lawmakers as justification for the tax credit scholarship program.

In contrast, opponents largely used scientific dialect to describe federal legislation and regulations in place to ensure all children receive a free and appropriate public education, constitutional rights given by the state, and the public education system's role in provision of these laws. In short, opponents expressed strong belief that the program would lead to discrimination against students who require more and expensive special education services. The perception of wealth and power in dictating tax policy and school finance was also a common theme in the testimony of opponents. Similarly, concepts of fairness in both student's education and in accountability measures were frequently mentioned in opposition to this program.

The enactment of the tax credit scholarship program shows how free-market think tanks and private education special interest groups are working together to achieve policy preferences that do not benefit the general public. That the original primary intent of the policy was to provide a tax credit to corporations highlights wealthy special interest groups' ability to sway legislation through the system of election finance that maintains political candidates' reliance on private donations. A detailed analysis of the tax credit scholarship act is presented as Appendix G.

Public Charter Schools and the Coalition of Innovative Districts

The public systems attempt to respond to the discourse of competition led to the passage of the Public Charter School Act in 1994. In Kansas, charter schools are publicly funded, independently operated and exempt from many hiring and curriculum requirements but are overseen by a Unified School District and their elected board members. During the case study timeframe there were two bills presented (HB2320, 2013 and SB196 heard in both 2013 and

2014) that sought to amend the law to allow other entities to authorize charter schools, and therefore, provide market entry to private and/or religious schools. Neither passed.

The proposal was supported by four private and/or religious schools seeking rents who all utilized ideological, emotional appeals in their testimony. Each professed to be able to provide a superior education to a certain group of students unable to succeed in public schools. One lobbyist focused solely on a message of perceived fairness in allocating taxpayer money, while another gave opinion on the need for competition. In contrast, nine opponents representing schools and public education advocacy and association groups focused on scientific dialect explaining constitutional restrictions on funding private schools and beliefs of how, similar to tax credit scholarships, the policy would lead to discrimination and inequity, with one opponent specifically calling attention to the lack of public demand for the proposal. Examples of proponent and opponent discourse on school choice are provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Differing Perspectives of Public Charter School Bills

Proponents	Opponents
<p>“The only real issue here is whether “competition” improves the cost and quality of products and services provided to consumers. If the answer is “yes,” then charter schools and vouchers should be expanded in Kansas. If the answer is “no,” then just relax and let the educational bureaucracy work as it has for decades fighting for its “fair share” of the Kansas budget.” (Love, Testimony SB196, March 7, 2013)</p> <p>“It is irresponsible to continue to pour ALL of the funding into the same system that is not meeting the needs of all our Kansas children. This charter bill can help. It will allow new schools that can offer alternatives for some of these children and give the school a chance to survive by receiving some funding with our taxpayer dollars. I hear so often that</p>	<p>“At a time when school consolidation has been discussed to address school funding, it seems counterproductive to talk about increasing school choice. Many small districts that could be targeted for consolidation provide the choice many parents ask for. In addition this bill could result in less revenue for public schools as tax credits are provided to those individuals or businesses who donate money to these schools. A number of studies show that with few exceptions charter schools do not ensure students success significantly different than public schools.” (Griffith, Testimony SB196, February 14, 2014)</p> <p>“If the interest in introducing this alternative charter school bill does not come from parental demand within Kansas, we are left to conclude the motivation is coming from</p>

everything needs to be on a “level” playing field. How can it be level when the public school system has 100% of all tax money collected for education? Any alternative education in this state is totally funded with private money and their tax dollars are still going to fund the public system. Is that a level playing field?” (Cornfield, Testimony SB196, February 14, 2014).	outside the state. Interestingly, sections of this bill are identical to language from boilerplate ALEC legislation, whose stated mission is to advance limited government, free markets, and federalism at the state level. In alignment with the ALEC goal of limited government, this charter bill opens the doorway to private, for-profit entities to run our public charter schools.” (Throckmorton, Testimony SB196, February 14, 2014)
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In 2013, legislators also passed into law a proposal to create a Coalition of Innovative Districts. The program history was explained by an interviewee.

“About four or five years ago during the more conservative legislature, some legislators were looking at trying to find ways to improve education without spending a lot more money. And one of the ideas that came forward is to sort of say, well, we'll give you a choice. You can get into a system that would waive a lot of state laws and regulations. You wouldn't get any more money, but you could do that. But then you'd have to kind of come up with a plan to show that you're going to be sort of held to a higher standard.”
(Interviewee 12)

The Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) and KPI along with one school district supported the bill based on the premise that exempting public schools from hiring and curriculum regulations, similar to public charter schools, would lead to overall improved academic achievement. The Coalition of Innovative Districts was opposed by the Kansas Parent Teacher Association (Kansas PTA) on grounds that the policy is essentially the same as charter schools, as well as the KNEA who said the bill:

Ensures that the teachers working in these so-called innovative school districts have no voice in the education program of the district or in their own hours, benefits, wages, and

working conditions. Let's be up front about the laws and regulations likely to be ignored. The bill consciously leaves the teachers out – the application is based on a partnership between the district (that would be the board of education and superintendent), the parents, and the community. Teachers are statutorily denied a voice in the application (Godfrey, Testimony SB176, February 19, 2013).

At the time of this study, two interviewees shared that the original six districts that signed up to be in the Coalition had recently submitted an application “to withdraw because there's no advantage to it.” (Interviewee 14)

School District Activities

Several interviewees noted that school choice in Kansas is largely practiced through home schooling. In 2013, SB60, a bill to allow home schooled children to participate in sports and/or other extra-curricular offerings sponsored by their local school district was passed. Fairness was a common theme in the discourse among both proponents and opponents.

Twenty-four proponents, mostly home school parents, relied entirely on ideological arguments to convince lawmakers to pass the bill. A strategy to persuade lawmakers was having a well-known, successful Kansas State University Football player share his story of playing sports in Colorado public schools while being home schooled. All of the testimonials shared by parents are personal stories of their own or about their high-achieving home-schooled children. Many of these parents also believed that their status as taxpayers gave them a right to access this public good, best illustrated by one parent: “Since we have chosen to homeschool, you may ask, “What right do we have to expect that our kids can participate in district activities?” To answer that question, we pay taxes to support our school district” (Davis, Testimony SB60, March 17, 2015).

Those who opposed the bill, all representatives of public schools or associations, also used passionate messaging but focused on issues of student accountability measures that are absent in-home school environments and the unfairness of choice for home school children to pick their school and team. This is explained below.

I think the biggest, and most important issue is one of fairness. Students get up every morning, follow the rules of instruction in our schools, wish to participate in activities or athletics, and then may be replaced by a young person who doesn't have to follow the same constraints or rules, and has no financial obligations to the school (Meier, Testimony SB60, February 2, 2015).

The issues of charter schools, innovative districts, and home school students participating in school league sports demonstrate how lawmakers seek to provide choice within the bounds of State Constitution, which explicitly denies private entities from managing state education money.

District Realignment

Rural and small schools co-opted the conservative narrative to frame their opposition to consolidation as their patrons' exercising school choice and the implementation of local control in governance. During the case study time frame there were two attempts to force changes to school administration practices, both largely framed as measures of efficiency. The first bill was designed to combine across districts certain administrative services such as payroll and purchasing. The second attempt, titled as realignment rather consolidation, sought to force school districts below an arbitrary threshold of enrollment to merge with neighboring districts. Both proposals were in response to multiple legislatively-commissioned school finance studies. Neither passed.

There was little interest in the proposal to consolidate administrative functions (HB2203, 2015). One Libertarian political advocacy group opposed on the rationale that the bill did not cut enough costs and one business advocacy group supporting the policy saying,

Education spending continues to be a Kansas priority, but efficiency needs prioritization, the study reveals, particularly at the administrative level. Kansas administrative spending as a percent of total K-12 spending persistently exceeds the U.S. average – 15% above. Anything that incentivizes reducing the administrative footprint and related costs, in favor of prioritizing funding to the classroom will earn the appreciation and support of Kansas families and businesses, the latter of which are the ultimate consumers of the educational product of the state (O’Neal, HB2203, February 18, 2015).

The hearing regarding district realignment (HB2504, 2016) took a different approach to cost-cutting. Supported by only four proponents and strategically titled ‘realignment,’ many of the 38 opponents perceived this bill as forced consolidation. The majority of opponents (n = 25, 65.8%) were either Superintendents or locally-elected school board members.

Proponents sought to make a rational, fact-based arguments centered on keeping money in the classroom while reducing overhead. This is best exemplified by one legislator’s testimony provided in support of the policy proposal.

When one is looking to make spending reductions in the Kansas Annual Budgeting process, it is only natural to look at the largest claimant of State General Funds (SGF). That is the Department of Education (K-12), taking over 50% of the total SGF budget each year and growing more each and every succeeding year. It is also paramount that education directed to the classroom remains untouched. Within K-12, the largest expenditure of funds is administration. The issue now becomes how we reduce

administration costs without affecting K-12 classroom education, educational facilities and/or teachers. The answer is obvious that excess capacity needs to be reduced through re-alignment of the School Districts, eliminating unnecessary expenses in manpower, facilities and administrative costs (Rep. Bradford, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Superintendents and school board members, most of whom represented small, rural schools, also used their testimony to provide information on how their districts function and the voluntary efficiency measures some districts had recently implemented. Opponents also relied on stories of personal experience and appeals to emotion, providing narratives about the impact and importance of the school to their community as well as their perceptions on loss of local control. For example, one Superintendent shared: “I understand that the bill is only proposing to consolidate the district office, but in doing so will remove the local control from the Waconda district because of lack of representation on the board” (Damman, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

The issue of consolidation, also known as realignment, reveals the power of language in political discourse while supporting public choice theory’s tenet that scientific dialect based on fiscal arguments cannot overcome the power of the special interest voter bloc. Although rural populations are shrinking, the accepted political norm of local control and ability to frame a message of school choice to match the opposition assists these entities in maintaining power. A detailed analysis of district realignment and administrative consolidation is presented as Appendix H.

Reducing Government in Education

Calls for reducing the role of government in education were heard in 2015. House Bill 2292 provided the most testimony (n = 102) in legislative education committees during the study time frame. Proponents sought legislation to repeal and remove the Common Core Standards from Kansas curricula. Policy discourse was framed by both sides as an issue of local control and was pushed by 61 Concerned Citizens, many of whom self-identified as religious or home school parents. Grassroots advocacy was clearly utilized to organize the public as evidenced by the repetition of opponents' bulleted lists of scientific talking points that repeated across Concerned Citizen testimony.

Most testimony relied on ideological dialect based upon personal experiences with Common Core. The extraordinary participation of Concerned Citizens highlighted public misunderstanding of education policy, used emotional appeals often based upon perceptions of morality, and provided many metaphorical stories to explain why the standards should be repealed. Fact-based arguments centered on policy and governance rights outlined in the state constitution, as well as information about the financial implications of policy change. Most striking in the discourse was both sides argument of local control as justification for policy preference. Concerned Citizens who sought repeal of Common Core worked to convince legislators that the issue was about taking back control of curriculum decisions from the federal government. In contrast, education professionals and special interest groups who opposed repeal of Common Core said that the concept of local control gave power to local school boards to decide curriculum. Perspectives from both positions believe that the State Constitution supported their argument. Examples of both policy positions based upon the concept of local control are show in Table 8.

Table 8 Differing Perspectives of Local Control

Proponent	Opponent
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<p>“HB 2292 is a very good bill, that will re-establish local control of education in Kansas and prevent Kansas from ceding any control to entities not allowed authority over Kansas education as per Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution.” (Kupper, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)</p>	<p>“First is the issue of local control. A cornerstone of good governance is that such governance should be as close to the people as possible. This bill strikes at the heart of this belief by usurping the authority of not one, but two locally elected bodies, namely local boards of education and the Kansas State Board of Education.” (Robinett, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)</p>
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The issue of Common Core reflects a concept of smaller government. However, as multiple interviewees shared, this issue was a ‘red herring’ that distracted from the more important discourse and ongoing debate over education finance and tax policy. A detailed analysis of Common Core is presented as Appendix I.

Constitutional Amendment

Efficiency-focused policy discourse was unable to force any change that would lead to decreased spending. Similarly, reducing the rights of unionized state workers had no effect on the education budget. And some people believe that the issue of school choice is primarily a strategy to reduce state spending. When these policy reform efforts failed to achieve desired results, the next strategy was to seek to change the rules and governance norms.

Many (n = 11, 68.8%) interviewees directly stated that the number one policy issue facing Kansas education was finance and ending the current litigation over school funding. In committee hearings, this matter was debated as a Constitutional Amendment to Article 6 – Education.

One proposal to change the amendment language was introduced in 2013 but failed to move forward with only two proponents. As time passed and lawsuits regarding the legislature’s allocation of money to schools continued, a 2018 legislative-commissioned study provided evidence that schools were indeed underfunded. The State Supreme Court then ruled that the legislature must increase education spending. Conservative special interest groups rallied in

response to seek the Constitution's language be changed. Nine proponents, mostly business and farm advocacy groups, sought to convince lawmakers that increased taxes would cause economic decline and that the allocation of public resources was unfair. To achieve their policy preferences, these special interest groups proposed to "end the constant cycle of litigation" by giving all the power of education finance decision-making to state legislators.

Fifteen special interest groups, joined by 15 Concerned Citizens, opposed such action. Special interests included teacher and education focused organizations and advocacy groups, as well as teacher unions. Additionally, unique to this education policy issue, one farm advocacy group split from its peers to oppose the amendment as they perceived the change would lead to decreased funding thus accelerating the loss of rural schools. Similarly, discourse on the Constitutional Amendment also drew the attention of a policy entrepreneurial group that supported public education as a core driver of economic growth for the state.

Discourse from both sides focused on concepts of separation of powers, opinions about the root cause of constant litigation, and perceptions of equity in funding public goods and services. Discourse read as a back and forth debate between opposing special interest groups with each asserting their sides' understanding of these concepts was the correct interpretation. Professional lobbying groups used scientific dialect centered on fiscal facts and interpretations of governance to argue their case. Concerned Citizens, mostly parents engaged in a grassroots letter writing advocacy campaign, used emotional appeal to frame their message. Many of these parents used the opportunity to express discontent with legislative attempts to change the rules to benefit the legislators who favor reduced education spending. A full analysis of proposals to amend the State Constitution is presented as Appendix J.

Policy Actors

This section answers the following questions: *Who is involved in K-12 education reform?* One-hundred thirty-six different organizations and 107 Concerned Citizens¹ were represented in written testimony. Special interest groups included various education professionals, education associations representing specific occupations, advocacy groups, elected officials, individuals, and others such as labor unions and policy entrepreneurs. A complete list is provided in Appendix 4.3. Ninety-three pieces of testimony were submitted by representatives of public schools and public education service providers. The frequency of participation by special interest group type is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Frequency of Testimony by Special Interest Group Type

Special Interest Group Participation by Type	Number of Testimonials
Advocacy Groups (n = 48)	
Parent/Teacher/Community	23
Business	11
Religious	6
Farm	5
Political	3
Schools (n = 93)	
Public – Superintendents	36
Private School	9
Teacher	9
Special Education Cooperative Services	9
Educator*	5
Catholic School	4
Christian School	3
Public – Activities Director	3
Director of Special Education	3
Public – Principal	1
Former Instructor and Administrator	1
Sports League	1
Elected Officials (n = 38)	

¹ Public documents labeled all individuals with no organizational affiliation as ‘Concerned Citizens’

Local Elected School Board	17
State Elected Official	12
Other Government Body	9
Individuals (n = 115)	
Concerned Citizen	107
Consultant	4
Scholar	2
Civil Engineer	1
Former Kansas State University Quarterback, home schooled	1
Other (n = 96)	
Teacher and Education Profession focused (Non-Union)	46
Policy Entrepreneurs	26
Labor Union	21
Political Party	1
Professional Association	1
Think Tank	1

Twenty-four organizations submitted testimony more than once. Participation by a local sports celebrity highlights the power of individual story-telling and ideological dialect in policy discourse.

*Self-described label given in written testimony.

Twenty-four special interest groups presented testimony for multiple policy proposals

(Table 10). The most frequent contributor, KASB, represents locally elected school board members. Second most frequent participant is KPI, a private, non-profit organization identified as a member of the conservative State Policy Network. The teachers' union, Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), participated in over half of the hearings analyzed. Half of reoccurring special interest groups (n = 12) were membership organizations with democratic governance structures. The remaining were split evenly between private groups (n = 6) and other publicly accountable entities (n = 6). Of the 11 legislators who provided written testimony, only one was female (9.1%) who was also the only legislator to submit testimony on the constitutional amendment favoring Maintainer's preference, although on the record was recorded as neutral.

Table 10 Interest Groups Participating in Kansas K-12 Education Policy

Participating Organizations by Frequency	# Testimonials	% Participation
Kansas Association of School Boards	22	78.6
Kansas Policy Institute	21	75.0
Kansas National Education Association	16	53.6

Kansas PTA	9	32.1
United School Administrators of Kansas	9	32.1
Game On for Kansas Schools	6	21.4
Kansas Chamber	6	21.4
Kansas State High School Activities Association	5	17.9
Educational Management Consultants	4	14.3
Christian Faith Centre and Urban Preparatory Academy	3	10.7
Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators	3	10.7
American Federation of Teachers	3	10.7
Mainstream Coalition	3	10.7
Kansas Families for Education	3	10.7
Fundamental Learning Center	3	10.7
Kansans For Liberty	2	7.1
Kansas Farm Bureau	2	7.1
Catholic Diocese of Wichita	2	7.1
Kansas Farmers Union	2	7.1
Kansas State Board of Education	2	7.1
Kansas State Department of Education	2	7.1
Organizations that submitted testimony for more than one bill; 28 bills analyzed.		

One key policy actor, a state legislator turned lobbyist, was mentioned by several interviewees as having outsized influence through circumventing the norms of the legislative process and supporting bills that could reduce the power and role of public education special interest groups. After completing his term in office, he lobbied on education policy for two different special interest groups concerned with lowering taxes. This single actor is credited with taking away due process for teachers and legislating tax credit scholarships and was identified as a champion of efforts to amend the Constitution to give legislators sole power to determine the level of education funding. Multiple testimonials and interviewees perceived his actions as a strategy of blatant circumvention of the legislative process to achieve personal policy preference.

Self-Identification

Membership-based special interest groups consistently began their testimonial with a description of their mission and history. Education professionals and school board members

included their organizational affiliations and credentials to lend support for their policy positions. Concerned Citizens identified themselves as parents and grandparents, business-owners, patrons and taxpayers. One Concerned Citizen was compelled to share she was a registered Republican (Welicky, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016), another simply shared “*I am a Kansas Citizen*” (McLoughlin, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015), and an elected Representative shared “*I admit, I am not an expert*” (Schwab, Testimony HB2596, February 16, 2016) prior to stating his position on a new school finance model: “That would be more affordable and consistent than what we have had in the past; or even the current plan the folks across the street seem to have issues with.”

Gender Participation

Overall participation in state-level education policy discourse is dominated by men (n = 230, 59.7%), particularly in professional roles as lobbyists or school leaders. Only two policy issues had majority participation of women: 1) Creating the Coalition of Innovative Districts, and 2) a proposal seeking to allow home-schooled children to participate in public school extracurricular activities. The first set of women were education career professionals, while the latter were mothers.

Location

Special interest groups and concerned citizens most frequently came from Topeka (n = 92), Wichita (n = 51), the affluent suburban Kansas City communities of Overland Park, Olathe, and Shawnee Mission (n = 32). School leaders from small towns and rural areas across Kansas participated in hearings on consolidation. Concerned Citizens, often from rural areas, rejected the Common Core Standards and others throughout the state wanted the local school district to allow their home-schooled children’s participation in league sports.

Three individuals from California, Missouri, and Virginia shared their personal opposition to the Common Core Standards. A former Oklahoma State Senator, the head of a privately-funded policy think tank based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and an attorney from Virginia gave testimony in favor of establishing tax credit scholarships based upon their experiences (n = 3). Finally, a mother from Iowa explained why she and many others could not live in Kansas' policy environment.

I am not the only homeschooler who has had to factor homeschool laws into a decision on where to live. We are a mobile society and the number of homeschooling families grows each year. Many families choose where to live based on homeschool laws. I invite you to research the question on homeschool message boards. The Well Trained Mind Forum is a large and active one (Sealine, Testimony SB60, March 17, 2015).

Language

This section answers the following question: *What language do special interest groups use toward social change?* Written testimony followed a distinct pattern. Most were one-page documents, many with bullet points to differentiate sets of facts associated with the policy position. An introduction described the individual's credentials and/or personal experiences regarding the policy issue. Organized groups shared their mission statement and membership numbers.

Testimony next stated the policy position and followed with either facts and figures or ideological perspectives based upon personal experiences and designed to appeal to emotion. Statements by professional groups often reiterated their policy position in closing. Concerned Citizens, however, usually gave a friendly sign-off, such as "Thank you for your consideration"

(n = 65, 16.9%). Eleven Concerned Citizens “urged,” seven “asked,” and one “demanded” that legislators vote a certain way. Six offered to stand for questions.

Common themes found within each issue are shown in Table 11. Across policy issues, the language of competition, local control, and school choice was most prevalent. Within these themes, testimony was coded as either scientific or ideological. All types of special interest groups used scientific dialect, with professional lobbyists more often relying on fiscal data, academic achievement scores, and summaries of existing statutes. Individuals who self-identified as an educator were most likely to also tell an individual story of impact that appealed to emotion. Concerned Citizens were more likely to employ personal stories and ideological beliefs as justification for their policy position.

Table 11 Major Themes in Neoliberal Policy Discourse

District Realignment & Administrative Consolidation HB2504 HB2203	Common Core HB2292	Choice Tax Credit Scholarships HB2374, HB2400, SB22 Public Charters HB2320, SB196 Coalition of Innovative Districts HB2319, SB176 Athletics SB60, SB464, SB145, HB2540	Constitutional Amendment HCR5029	Due Process for Teachers SB2 HB2220 HB2179 HB2483
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency • Competition • Local Control • School Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Local control • Math and Morals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Competition • Discrimination • School Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation of powers • Checks and balances • Endless litigation • Change the rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control

Scientific

Professional lobbyists and education professionals were most likely to use scientific dialect to frame their policy message. Themes within scientific dialect were explanations of

constitutional and statutory rights, data on academic achievement, and interpretations of contextual events given as historical narrative. Especially in tax credit scholarship discourse, federal laws impacting education and civil rights were given as evidence for policy position. A focus on discrimination was found in at least one testimony across all policy issues and used by both sides as justification for their position. An interviewee whose professional career is lobbyist, described her rationale for framing scientific messages in political discourse. “We made a conscious effort to talk policy ideas, not get down in the nastiness.” (Interviewee 6)

Across all policies analyzed, the State Constitution was referenced 256 times (23% of testimony; 89 of 385 docs) as justification for policy preference. Academic achievement as measured by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was cited by ten lobbyists. In some cases, NAEP was used to illustrate improvement in learning and in others to show Kansas as a failure when compared to other states.

A common theme in interviews (37.5%, n = 6/16) was a perception that use of scientific dialect generated distrust among special interest groups. These interviewees expressed beliefs that facts and figures are still subjective data, often dependent on the perceived bias of the information source. One interviewee shared how he perceived a lobbyist’s ‘facts and figures’ approach to policy justification as less credible than individual stories of personal impact:

“There’s a group called [lobbyists], and they make stuff up. They come and testify. And they do these analyses and they write it up as if all these other people are just – they’re just giving you the feel-good stuff, but we have the statistics.” (Interviewee 2)

Other items coded as scientific were special interest groups’ descriptions of their collective voting bloc power. Almost all groups began their testimony by sharing their

organization's mission statement and number of members as a heuristic to influence decision-making.

Ideological

Half (n = 194, 50.1%) of all documents had at least one coded ideological statement. Every special interest group type contributed a narrative designed to appeal to emotions. Professional lobbyists often coupled their dialect to include both types of discourse. When Concerned Citizens deviated from organized advocacy talking points it was to share a personal opinion. Concerned Citizens, especially parents, tended to also use analogies and metaphors to support their policy position. Concerned Citizens lacked sophisticated knowledge of policy issues and, therefore, often relied on metaphors to explain their preferences. Almost a quarter of Concern Citizens (24.5% (n = 25)) who lobbied against Common Core provided a comparative analogy. One Concerned Citizen explained how the standards were akin to cancer, and others used metaphors to compare education policy to running a business. For example, "No business I know would take on a project without real numbers identifying the costs of a project. Neither should Kansas!" (Hendershot, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

On occasion educators and policy entrepreneurs utilized metaphors to explain their policy position. In the few instances that professional lobbyists used this language, it was limited to short quips, similar to the following quote referencing the culture of sports. "These two bills taken separately or bundled together are bad ideas and have no place in the state's fiscal or educational playbook" (Krebs, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

School Choice

Most school choice discourse was ideological and given without fiscal, legal, or academic achievement reasons as justification. Special interest groups in favor of policies that create

school choice mechanisms cited ‘competition’ and perceptions of poor-performing public education to support their arguments. Home and private school parents described their underlying reasons for picking an education environment, citing desire for their child to learn specific curricula. However, only one parent used the concept of choice in testimony, stating:

We tried the part-time public school. I was thankful the option does exist... yet we are able to offer a superior curriculum at home. Do we really have to make a choice between sports and academics? Our children need both” (Cole, Testimony SB60, March 17, 2015).

Interviewees shared positive perceptions of the concept of individual freedom expressed through school choice, but all linked their own understanding of school choice to state financing of private schools. However, testimony analysis found that public education proponents also used the language of school choice as a message framing device. As shown in Table 12, on several occasions, pro-education lobbyists used the language of school choice to defend keeping the Common Core Standards, to support the maintenance of small and rural schools, and explain that the practice of choice is predicated on known benefits and consequences.

Table 12 Perceptions of School Choice in the Public Sector

Common Core	District Realignment	Choice
“I hope we can agree with this statement and realize that HB 2292 would take away this flexibility and local school choice.” (Griffith, HB2292, February 23, 2015)	“The families in my [Wellington] congregation have exercised their school choice in choosing multiple local building sites and districts which are the best match for their children’s temperament and talents.” (Miller, Testimony HB2504, January 29, 2016)	“Home school parents have made a choice to educate their children in a different manner and I support their right to make that decision. This choice, as with all choices, has ramifications and that is a decision that these parents have made.” (Ross, Testimony SB60, January 31, 2018)

Local Control

The concept of local control was evidenced in multiple policy issues. Fifty documents (12.9%) explicitly stated ‘local control’ as an essential factor in the social structure of life.

While some testimony described statutes granting power, most used their narrative to appeal to perceived values of legislators. Local control was conceptualized across policies as a state’s rights issue and desire for reduction of federal government in education as well as the decision-making power granted by the State Constitution to locally-elected school boards (Table 13).

Public power over the education system is institutionalized through the discourse of local control.

Table 13 Concepts of Who Should Have Local Control

State Legislature vs Federal Government	Local School Board vs State Legislature
Common Core: “We need a Kansas solution for Kansas education that allows us to make decisions based on a unique Kansas culture, based on unique Kansas needs, and based on what is best for Kansas.” (Kupper, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)	District Realignment: “My husband and I will always live here and hope our children will come home to their roots when they settle down – but why would they if there isn’t a school to educate their children? A good school system is essential to a family. A small, rural school allows us to maintain a bit of local control in how our students are educated. We know the teachers, administrators and school board that ultimately make the decisions for our children.” (Tracy, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016)

Checks and Balances

The fundamental concept of co-equal branches of government was a main theme given by pro-education special interest groups during the 2018 Judicial Committee hearing on a constitutional amendment that would shift power over education to legislators only. This attempt to change the policy-making rules through amendment of the most foundational governing document was also of concern to an interviewee who said:

It removes the checks and balances from our government. And that's where I think the slippery slope is, [Constitution] is designed to develop a checks and balances for our state. Without this most recent lawsuit we would have districts that are closing their doors, we would have programs that kids would not be part of, we would have large classrooms where kids were not learning at all because we felt like we had to cut the tax dollars to increase business and schools were a victim of that. (Interviewee 8)

Checks and balances discourse was also used by a parent who opposed expanding tax credit scholarships. “A rapid push for expansion removes checks and balances and removes accountability” (Wilson, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

Efficiency

Fifty-six (14.5%) testimonials made specific reference to efficiency while debating policy merits. Most of these were delivered in hearings on consolidation, with proponents stating schools needed to be more efficient. In response, opposing schools shared facts on recently implemented efficiency measures. As seen in across testimony, opponents to neoliberal ideas co-opted conservative discourse to state their case. An opponent to district realignment,

I agree with a conservative approach to governing. But this isn't actually reducing government. The result of this bill is that administrators will spend their time over the next two years trying to navigate compliance of new rules rather than doing their real job of building a learning environment for students and teachers. So, not only has it failed to improve efficiency, but it actually creates new regulatory requirements. Can you see that this represents the very kind of regulatory burden that we so often rail against in conservative politics? (Dunn, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Five interviewees (31.3%) shared beliefs that state-level education reform should in some part be based upon improving efficiency. Education reformers were in agreement that the most reasonable efficiency measure was reduction of administrative costs, particularly reducing the number of Superintendents.

Competition

Education reformers argued that education needs competition to improve from an ideological position, without any evidence brought forth to prove that competition among schools improved any variable. Ideological statements are exemplified by the following: “Members of our organization thrive on competition. It’s what makes them better. Public schools should embrace rather than eschew competition” (Schettler, HB2374, March 23, 2017).

Five interviewees (31.3%) spoke about competition. Three emphasized competition’s effects on resource distribution between public and private schools, while two focused on generalized benefits. “We need competition. These are the kinds of things that are going to make a difference. It's what's made a difference in states like Florida.” (Interviewee 9)

Taxpayer

Although not a dominant theme in any one policy, across issues both sides spoke of taxpayer status as an important consideration. Thirty-eight (9.9%) of testimonials specifically referenced taxpayers as justification for their policy position (see Table 14). The only policy issue that no one mentioned the taxpayer perspective was debates on reinstatement of some due process rights for teachers. Some framed taxpayer discourse as issues of accountability and efficiency, while others expressed an opinion that this standing was justification for receiving the benefit of public resources. Focus on taxpayers was most often used by special interest groups

who sought rents (i.e., tax credit scholarships, participation in sports, and lower taxes and/or larger share of public funding for business groups). In particular, tax scholarships discourse emphasized conceptual differences regarding what it means to be a taxpayer and implications of that view on distribution of wealth.

Table 14 Frequency of Taxpayer Language Across Policy Issue

District Realignment & Administrative Consolidation HB2504, HB2203	Common Core HB2292	Choice Tax Credit Scholarships HB2374, HB2400, SB22 Athletics SB60	Constitutional Amendment HCR5029
7.0% (3 of 43)	25.0% (10 of 40)	21.7% (18 of 83)	17.1% (7 of 41)

Both supporters of the current public education system as well as proponents for shifting public funds to the private education sector used taxpayer language (see Table 15). Reformers tended to focus on waste, while public education supporters spoke of being accountable.

Table 15 Maintain and Reform Taxpayer Discourse

Support Policy Change (i.e., Reform)	Support Public Education (i.e., Maintain)
“[Kansas Department of Education] say they are taking care of the children under the umbrella of reading services and learning disabilities. They aren’t and they aren’t going to. 1 in 5 children have dyslexia, that’s 90,000 plus children in Kansas’ school system every year, still unidentified, low literate, and likely to fail in school and in life. It’s your wasted tax dollars and mine.” (Phillips, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014)	“School districts strive to be good custodians of taxpayer dollars” (Semmel, Testimony HB2203, February 18, 2015)

It was also common for parents of home-schooled children to suggest that their status as a taxpayer should influence policy decisions. In asking that their children be allowed to play league sports, one parent said

I also would support this bill because we families who educate our own children also pay our taxes to educate others' children through the public schools. It seems fair that our children have the opportunity to participate in public school activities that we help fund as well (Swygard, Testimony SB60, February 2, 2015).

Another parent suggested that paying for private education as well as taxes to fund public education was a choice that helped school districts.

Non-accredited private schools in Kansas are self-funded by hard-working Kansas families who willingly provide tax support to local school districts, while also saving the school districts money in the form of staffing, insurance, food, textbooks, materials, testing fees, etc. (Phelan, Testimony SB60, February 2, 2015).

Versus

Strong “Us versus Them” themes were found in testimony and shared by interviewees. At the broadest level, Common Core was framed as the federal government versus the citizen. Concerned citizens spoke against data collection by the federal government as well as a common feeling of being ‘pushed around by Washington.’ One sophisticated argument toward that point was framed as concern regarding propagation of societal values, which was refuted by scientific dialect (Table 16). At the local level in the case of realignment, Superintendents were clearly targeted by reformers in attempts to shift power and resources.

Table 16 Perceptions of Hegemony

Opposed Common Core	Supported Common Core
“What I see in Common Core is the fact that the government is going to tell Kansas how and what to teach our kids. Our future generations will be taught what the government wants them to learn about history.”	“HB 2292, Sec. 3 (b) does not actually forbid Kansas educational entities from joining any of the current national standards movements whose standards the law specifically bans, because joining in those movements does not “cede any measure of control over any aspect of Kansas public education” to those groups. The

(Jacobs, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)	decision to modify the national standards and adopt them in any form has been strictly that of our state board of education, so this authority was never ceded.” (McDonald, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)
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School boards used the language of local control when confronted with an antagonistic policy position, illustrated in their response to the proposed realignment bill that would reduce the number of school districts and Superintendents. “If the people of Kansas really want consolidation and/or fewer administrative personnel, they have every ability to do so through the existing political process at the local level” (Tallman, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Interviewees interested in reform (n = 4) perceived inability to make progress on policy preferences as embedded in the power of pro-education special interest groups, including the bureaucracy. This is exemplified in the following story given by a private educator turned activist:

I really started in 2002 with my testimonial to the Department of Education through the State Board and knowing that was probably the gatekeeper to the information as well as the policy. I didn't know for sure, but it became very quickly obvious to me, like within three years that was true, is true today. The Department of Ed is the true... And I don't know how much of this you know or have dug up. But our State Constitution has established a self-empowered Department of Ed that no other state has. So, if our Department of Ed, if they don't want it, change or recognize a policy, they don't have to. (Interviewee 7)

Analysis of all policy positions by special interest groups and perspectives of interviewees revealed a clear dichotomy in special interest group policy preferences, with an almost equal number of opposing groups that participated in state-level education policy making

(Table 17). Special interest groups interested in reform (Group A) were characterized as concerned with business and lower taxes. Several groups overlapped categories (Group A-B), as they shifted sides dependent on specific policy issue implications for their members. Those groups who sought to maintain (Group B) policy preference were always educators and allies.

Table 17 Dichotomy of Special Interest Group Representation in Lobbying

	Policy Actors	Education Preference	Influence
A. Reform 43% (23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Low-tax • Conservative legislators 	Private Education or reduced public finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create networks support change • Free-market ideology
A.-B.* 6% (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Professional Associations • Farm Advocacy 	Public Education	
B. Maintain 50% (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Parents • Unions 	Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional power and networks • Resource and systems maintenance
*Reform or Maintain categorization dependent on policy issue.			

Strategies

This section answers the following questions: *What strategies do special interest groups pursue to gain policy preference?* Both Reformers and Maintainers utilize similar strategies to achieve policy preference. As described in the preceding section, well-thought out message framing is a strategy that professional lobbyists and well-organized groups employee. Groups on both sides of issues co-op the same words and phrases, and then provide reinterpretations to legislators to pick the true meaning through policy decisions. This strategy of concept claiming was most often used in asserting local control and school choice. Reinterpreting a statute for legislators was also frequently undertaken by professional lobbyists on both sides of issues.

Networks

Groups split into two overarching networks who at times worked together to achieve

policy preferences. On one side was a neoliberal network of conservative think tanks, policy organizations, and legislators who supported change (Group A: Reform), and on the other was the traditional public education network of statewide professional organizations (Group B: Maintain). Both networks included newer 501(c) organizations organized solely to lobby for education and tax policy preferences. Reformers utilized the network to build grassroots support that included “the first school choice rally held Tuesday, February 11, 2014” (Moore, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

However, there are exceptions to networked cooperation. Proponents of public education did not always share the same policy position. In several hearings the interests of school boards (i.e., KASB) and teachers (i.e., KNEA) were not aligned, with the farthest extreme in preferences for due process. In this case, locally elected school board members took their position as a special interest group to lobby to maintain their newly gained power over teacher termination. Similarly, farm advocacy organizations held opposing preferences for a constitutional amendment while having a shared value of protecting rural communities and the farmer’s way of life.

Perceived organizational reputation also factored into decisions as to whether to work with other networked interests. When asked about what special interests groups collaborated on developing policy positions, a lobbyist commented:

[testimony] includes references to all kinds of themes and all the people in the coalition, which was the highway contractors, Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Kansas Livestock Association, those groups. The Kansas Policy Institute is not part of us. It’s not part of our coalition. They are more further to the right than us. (Interviewee 6)

Likewise, some special interest groups picked a policy position that contradicted their

traditional network alliances. While others, as illustrated below, choose their position strategically so to not alienate any potential partners or negatively impact prospective policy benefits.

We were pretty hesitant for [organization] to take an official stance for two reasons. One is a lot of the school choice movement is anti-public school and we don't want to be anti-public school. Private schools work closely with their local public school or special ed with title money for busing, and we are very careful not to be anti-public school. We are for all schools and a lot of the school choice movement is based on public schools are bad. (Interviewee 13)

Traditional Networks

Traditional education networks are based upon support for public education. Special interest organizations in this network tend to be well-established membership groups and professional associations, but also include new groups of public education allies that have formed over the past decade. Special interest groups that dominate this network have a common characteristic of earning individual income from employment in the education sector. Many of their opponents perceive that they are engaged in rent seeking behavior to get as much public assistance as possible. An interviewee shared his opinion about this conduct in regard to a member of this traditional network. “I've listened to his testimony and the people are saying things that are self-serving as hell. It has nothing to do with teaching kids.” (Interviewee 14)

Historically important groups including school boards (i.e., KASB) and the teacher's union (i.e., KNEA), who all interviewees (100%) perceived to be the most influential in education policy making at the state-level lobbied in 78.6% and 53.6% respectively of all issues analyzed. Furthering these traditional groups are specialized education professions interest

groups and newer 501 (c) groups with sole missions to support and lobby for public education. These organizations represent professionals with differing interests for the purpose of working together to achieve mutually beneficial policy preferences while encouraging parent and public involvement in advocacy.

Teacher and education professional organizations cooperated and collaborated to develop mutually beneficial policy goals. They engaged as a united front on policy issues when their members' preferences were threatened. An education professional summarized this network's primary goal: "We make sure that our policies are aligned and we're moving somewhat succinctly forward and not against each other." (Interviewee 8)

Leaders of special education services also worked together to provide consistent interpretation of federal rules and regulations that complicated state policy proposals. One interviewee experienced as a legislator shared that cooperation is necessary to maintain influence. "When a policy body like legislature finds that a group is divided that becomes an excuse not to fund them." (Interviewee 2)

Neoliberal Reform Networks

Neoliberal reform networks consist primarily of entities seeking entry into the public education market or those pushing policy ideas intended to lower taxes and reduce government. Network members are a mix of policy entrepreneurs, business interests, and private and/or religious educators. The most consistent special interest group in the network is KPI. Founded in 1996, this private, non-profit group seeks policy preferences aligned to individual liberty and low tax ideals. Opponents of this network believe these reformer's priority goal is to: "Defund and destroy public education. To knock it down. [Reformers] think it is too powerful." (Interviewee 2)

Most members of the reform network are not tightly connected. Specifically, organizations do not work together on a regular basis for any purpose but instead collaborate when conditions are mutually beneficial. Further, organizations in this network often have other legislative concerns and strategies to gain public rents. These groups will support private and/or religious education to further their policy preferences. Private and religious groups, including schools, support each other through a formal organization concerned with education. Religious groups also rely on their own members to lobby the legislature.

To counter powerful pro-education special interests, two interviewees shared that once they began to organize as a group of citizens, they were able to develop connections with this network and enlist the KPI to help them build relationships with legislators. Reformers provided evidence of strategies to build coalitions of partners who worked together to lobby the legislature to support their shared policy preferences. Reform efforts started with action at the local level to seek entry into the state-funded education provider market. When that effort was not successful, strategies were implemented to organize education and advocacy within the local community. Community momentum was built around concepts of school choice and was propelled to the state-level through partnerships developed with others in the reformer network.

The reform network provided evidence of connections to national networks of neoliberal education change. ALEC model policies were documented as the sources for at least two of the policies analyzed. Well known national groups including Americans for Prosperity (AFP) were cited and several testimonials came directly from affiliates of the SPN. Additionally, four interviewees tied the prominent Libertarian Koch Brothers to the Kansas Policy Network.

Expert

Both sides of issues recruited some type of specialist who could give first-hand expert knowledge on the policy issue. In most cases, that expertise came solely from Kansans. Out-of-state experts were recruited by proponents of expanding state-funded private education to substantiate evidence of successful school choice models and laws. Among these experts were a statewide sports celebrity, SPN affiliate, neighboring state legislator, former federal bureaucrat and conservative policy think tank scholar, attorney, and activist.

In contrast, school boards assert expertise and power over policy through the concept of local control and the virtue that local decision-makers know best. Superintendents supplied the expert knowledge of varying contextual factors about the potential effects of policy decisions. Teachers were also looked to for expertise. Two Kansas Teacher of the Year recipients shared observations of success with students in the classroom. When Concern Citizens stood opposed to the preferences of teachers, they framed their expertise on their own previous experience as a teacher.

As illustrated in Table 18, special interest groups also engage in providing expert opinion outside the legislative hearing arena. In addition to common strategies of providing legal and policy advice, six interviewees spoke of working directly with lawmakers as a subject matter expert to craft the policy proposal.

Table 18 Ways How Special Interest Groups Supply Expertise

Reform	Maintain
“In the fourth area, school choice, we assist legislators interested in creating school-choice programs to ensure that whatever programs are passed can withstand subsequent legal challenge. If such challenges are filed against the constitutionality of the program, we help the state protect the program by intervening in the lawsuit on behalf of parents. We consider ourselves the lawyers to the school choice movement.” (Smith, Testimony HB2174, February 18, 2015)	“Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators recognizes the critical importance played by both State and Federal legislators, and works to provide comprehensive and timely support for legislators as key decisions are made.” (Collins,

	Testimony HB2263, February 8, 2013)
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Policy Diffusion

As evidenced in testimony, both sides of the issue developed policy based upon input from a larger national network. Education groups worked together across states to develop curricula and also have access to the resources (e.g., legal guidance, research) of their associated national organization. Testimony in three different policy hearings put into the record that reformers used ALEC model policies as their source (i.e., tax credit scholarships and efforts to change the rules on charter schools).

For each policy issue studied, there was at least one reference to another state's education systems or reform initiatives. Twenty-four individuals gave evidence from seven different states as suggested models for Kansas, with Oklahoma and Florida initiatives recommended most often. In a personal narrative, a local celebrity brought in as a proponent of choice credited his football career success from being homeschooled and still allowed to participate in publicly-funded school sports.

Many interviewees (n = 7, 43.8%) also shared beliefs about their policy positions from a policy diffusion perspective. They discussed programs in other states or nations that show promise for improvement of both academic achievement and lowering costs. Some interviewees and testimonials looked at other states as to compare organizational systems, all concluding that based upon fiscal rationale, Kansas has too many school districts.

So long story short. We don't need as many school districts as Kansas has. It is self-defeating. It is costly and it's taking a large portion of the money that should be used instead of having more lawsuits and raising taxes on everybody. (Interviewee 14)

Archeology of Knowledge

Testimonials often used a strategy of building credibility through the provenance of ideas. Much of the data that frames individual policy positions and provides scientific talking points comes from the state and federal government. Three major policy issues (i.e., Constitutional Amendment, District Realignment, and Due Process for Teachers) had only state-produced content and data cited in testimony. Most common in testimonials and by interviewees on both sides of issues was to cite National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data and follow this reference with their own interpretation aligned to their policy position.

Special interest groups that sought policy change traced their ideology to Milton Friedman with influences from the ALEC and seven unique national conservative leaning policy think tanks. Traditional education special interest groups primarily relied on facts derived from direct observation as a professional in the field.

An interviewee who had a background lobbying in support of public education shared that many lobbyists are wary of utilizing research because of associated political biases of the producer. About using research in testimony, he said:

That can be a double-edged sword because there are groups that are going to be educational resource groups that some legislators love and some legislators hate. And so, if you if you try to use more of that than actual local, what's happening in their district, you can run into problems. (Interviewee 11)

In contrast, Concern Citizens most often cited popular media sources such as opinion pieces found on media company websites or blogs. Four interviewees expressed specific policy knowledge gained from the 2010 feature film “Waiting for Superman,” that influenced their own beliefs and policy positions. A parent co-opted conservative discourse to state opposition to

conservative ideas, saying: “As Milton Friedman once said, “Profits above all else” (Wilson, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

Concerned Citizens often shared a personal story or school experience to frame their policy position. Narratives varied from opinions based upon career, parenting experience or religious morals, to the individual’s own research on the policy issue: “I have taken a random informal survey among my friends and have found a very interesting result. Both my Liberal's and Conservative's friends agree on the overwhelming need for this reform” (Howerter, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Similarly, many parents who sought policy change shared a story of their child’s exceptionalism stifled by some aspect of the public education system as justification for their policy position.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of special interest groups influenced policy positions and lobbying strategies. Many special interest groups represented a large group of individuals with common interests, such as profession, across the state. These groups determined their policy position as what is in the best interests of its members. Organized groups were usually membership-based with members formed into committees that controlled almost every decision-making aspect of the collective body. Committees worked to develop legislative platforms and policies for their organizations to pursue.

Interviewees who represented special interest groups that support education all described a process to gather input from members. These groups had explicit processes for gathering dispersed input from various members of their community to shape policy positions, often explained in testimony or described by interviewees.

The oldest and one of the oldest operations that really puts together their policy is the Kansas Farm Bureau. They have county organizations and they have a policy book that has, I do not how many of these, but you can go online and look at their policies and how they come up with it is they basically have county meetings where they do policy review on a particular issue, and the counties vote and each county has a representative or several voting members that come to Topeka, and the voting membership is based on how many members in the county. (Interviewee 6)

Traditional Activities

In addition to lobbying and offering legislative assistance as a policy expert, special interest groups engage in various activities such as grassroots organizing, advocacy, and education. Organizations poll for their members' opinions, sometimes at state-level if the organization has resources and other times through national professional organizations that provide Kansas data as a subsample of a larger group. One group commissioned its own public opinion survey and conducted multiple types of analyses to support its policy position. Two interviewees shared that their organization engages in direct lobbying but did not support political campaigns as a method to influence policy makers.

Table 19 provides a list of all policy engagement strategies evidenced in this case study. However, interviewees agreed that personal relationships and one-on-one with local elected legislators is the most influential lobbying activity, even more important than participation in legislative testimony. "We develop personal relationships with our legislators." (Interviewee 5) "We try to work individually across the state rather than you know try to work just in Topeka and we work very closely with all of our legislators across the state." (Interviewee 12)

Table 19 Common Special Interest Group Strategies

Concerned Citizen	Group A (Reform)	Group B (Maintain)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local elected representative • Organized letter writing campaign (Common Core and Constitutional Amendment) • Special Education Advocacy • Focus on success of individual child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Education • Conduct Research • Experts (Various) • Lawsuits (education rights) • Media • Membership-based, democratic groups • 501 (c) 4 organizations • National networks • Professional Lobbyists • Public Choice • Seek Rents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Education • Conduct Research • Experts (Educators) • Lawsuits (finance) • Media • Membership-based, democratic groups • 501 (c) 4 organizations • Professional Lobbyists • Public Choice

Concerned Citizens shared their own research activities, which largely consisted of asking for friends' opinions and making observations to confirm or deny the issue. Their participation in grassroots advocacy through organized letter writing campaigns was evidenced in Common Core and Constitutional Amendment testimony. In each case, multiple documents had the same bulleted talking points.

Legal action was evidenced as a strategy pursued by both maintainers and reformers. Much of the litigation in this case concerns school finance and led to attempts to change the policy making rules. However, an interviewee shared his observation that lawsuits have also built state-level policy influence of parents of children with special needs.

Many groups engage in statewide outreach through social media or established networks of members who can be mobilized for cause. To this end, many special interest groups engage networked professionals and Concerned Citizens in the policy process through organizing letter writing as well as more timely and frequent email or telephone message campaigns to state representatives. An interviewee shared how powerful this strategy is in the hands of traditional power holders.

Superintendents get a call from [policy influencer]. He'll send out an e-mail [and] they'll flood every legislator's desk with... I mean the Superintendents will by the next morning. The next morning on their desks in the House chamber or the Senate chamber or in their offices. All this literature and all these e-mails saying don't do this or do that. They're being told by their Superintendents how to vote. So, you can work your tail off to come up the good language in the bill, build that coalition, get the people to contribute to the draft, get it introduced have a hearing. But if it comes close to a vote and [policy influencer] doesn't want it or the Superintendents don't want it or that Kansas Association of School Boards doesn't want it, they send out a blast the night before and by the next morning it's going up or down based upon what they said. (Interviewee 14)

Religion

Although separation of church and state is a fundamental concept in the State Constitution, religion is a key issue and often an intentional strategy in policy discourse. Most apparent is the tension between private and/or religious and public schools in policy decisions that impact allocation of resources – in this case state-funded scholarships to attend religious schools. The social construct of religion also shapes beliefs, which some parents expressed as strong opinions about the moral state of public education through opposition to Common Core. Most common was placement of religious references in advocacy talking points, followed by perceptions of morality in school curricula. Emotional appeal was emphasized in all these statements, exemplified by the following quote. “Parents have a biblical duty to see that their children are raised with the correct moral standards NOT the heathen standards promulgated by Washington, DC” (Wood, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Public Choice and Political Strategies

Across issues policy actors engaged in communication to understand benefits and trade-offs in policymaking from the lens of public choice. Two hundred seventy-five organized special interest groups supplied opinions for lawmaker's consideration. In each organization's presentation the magnitude and interests of their members was outlined prior to stating their policy position. These introductory statements also reminded legislators of their collective voting power. Several examples include: 1) "The Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics (KATM), a state organization of over 700 members" (Hollingshead, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015), 2) "GameOn is testifying but the over 9150 people who follow us on Facebook have not traveled to Topeka today, though they commonly share our views" (Deedy, Testimony HB2596, February 16, 2016), and 3) "The Kansas Livestock Association, formed in 1894, is a trade association representing over 5,200 members on legislative and regulatory issues" (Teagarden, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

These messages implied to lawmakers that their vote on the policy being debated could impact electoral votes from those special interest group members in the future. While most messages of this type were subtle, a few were direct about the consequences of not supporting their special interest group's preference. "Our organization will be watching closely to see which legislators are entertaining this sort of nonsense and we will work diligently against them when they run for re-election" (McDonald, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Subversion of governance norms was the legislative strategy used to achieve expanded school choice through state-funded scholarships for private education. Lawmakers were able to take advantage of loopholes to achieve their policy preferences, and actively worked to change

the accepted norms and rules to gain power. Multiple testimonials shared historical narratives that documented perceptions of subversion as a legislative strategy.

I will not transcribe how the legislative process unfolded to repeal due process except to say legislators were “burning the midnight oil”. It occurred by way of an amendment that went against the framework of our constitutional government and is inconsistent with our institutions and traditions (Sanchez, Testimony HB2483, January 24, 2018).

When asked about the removal of due process for teachers, one interviewee shared,

That was a bogus issue. It was going after teachers. And predominantly, [policy actor] was livid in a couple campaigns when the teacher’s union came out against him in his race just to be retained in the house, not even for Speaker. So, it came back to it came back to politics. It came back to personal politics.” (Interviewee 11)

The hearings regarding constitutional change demonstrate that reformers were willing to change the rules to achieve policy preference.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of documents collected and analyzed as well as the demographics of interviewees who shared key insights, experiences, and opinions for this multi-case study. The process of coding data and creating databases to detect patterns on anomalies was explained. Five key neoliberal education policy issues that sought to reduce public education were described. Results show that there is a balance of special interest groups that seek change against those who fight to maintain policy preferences. These groups’ preferences are broadly categorized in a dichotomy of reform or maintain. Reformers seek to allow private sector participation or lower taxes while the traditional network of education advocates seek to maintain benefits. Both groups use common language such as choice, local control, and

accountability to explain their policy position. Professional lobbyists use scientific arguments in testimony, but evidence shows that ideological dialect can influence decision-making. Special interest groups engage in a multitude of activities, including public engagement to bolster their public choice influence on legislators.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Introduction

Education is the largest state budget expenditure (Crampton et al., 2015). Given the rise of network governance (Anderson & Donchik, 2016; Ball, 2012b; Ball 2016b), the increasing influence of wealth in education politics (Barkan, 2013; Lubienski, 2008), and the role of public choice in diminishing evidence-based policy decision-making (Buchanan, 1999), it is important to know why policies are adopted or resisted. The purpose of this study is to better understand the phenomenon of state-level policy making and the role of special interest groups in neoliberal education reform. This research describes one case of state-level education policy development through a systematic review of public documents, a critical analysis of political discourse, and interviews with informed policy actors. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and interprets these findings to answer the overarching question: *How do special interest groups influence K-12 education policy?*

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

Neoliberal Education Policies

During the six-year study timeframe, one-third of education policy debated in Kansas represented neoliberal ideas. Aligned with global and national trends, these policies sought to reduce the power of teachers through removal of workers' rights (Anyon, 2011), shift public funds for education to private markets, and infuse business sector practices in education reform (Hursh, 2004; Lubienski, 2008). Although one policy issue was focused on curriculum, similar to the rest of the nation much of state education reform is driven by school finance litigation (Crampton, 2007). Most policies analyzed for this case study reflect systematic changes that altered (or sought to alter) public education in a direction toward lower financial inputs. Policy

discourse surrounding these issues was based largely upon aspects of public choice, rather than evidence of effectiveness. Neoliberal education reform is not driven by the previous era's concerns of equity and equality but is instead furthered by the increasingly prevalent ideology of free-markets and lower taxes.

The resulting outcomes of state-level political discourse suggests that policymakers are currently influenced by strong voter support of public education. In this case, Maintainers achieved policy preferences when issues were debated in the public arena of the House and Senate Committees. Reformers achieved policy preference only through circumvention of governance norms of transparency when one legislator removed due process and enacted tax credit scholarships during what was named the “midnight massacre.” Reformers also sought unsuccessfully to “change the rules” of government to achieve economic gains through public policy preference.

Major Themes

The major themes found in this study center on the future of rural education in a neoliberal policy environment. The neoliberal policy agenda is perceived to have an inevitable negative impact on rural schools and communities as state's and free-market ideologues continue to push low taxes and privatization. Many testimonials recounted the impact of forced consolidation in the 1960s to rural communities, as exemplified by the following quote: “Many of our rural schools have already consolidated – and the towns that lost their schools are mere shadows of what they once were when they had a school. Please don't contribute to the death of another small town!” (Tracy, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016).

As states continue to grapple with economic realities of the technological revolution on the workforce as well as climate change and tariffs on the agricultural sector, small and rural

communities in Kansas are most likely to experience population shifts that dramatically impact local school districts. The state education system will be required to respond to these new economic realities knowing that there is already tension between urban citizens who believe they are paying more than their share for education and rural communities that are already struggling to support schools with a dwindling property tax base.

This tension is also reflected in a common theme of the influence of wealth in politics or as one lobbyist stated, “Philanthropy vs Tax Avoidance.” Public education supporters brought into discourse perceptions aligned to several leading scholars that education policy was being shaped by wealthy interests seeking policies to increase their own economic gains (Ball, 1998, 2012a-c, 2016a; Barkan, 2013; Gilens & Page, 2014; Lubienski, 2008; Scott, 2009). The fact that policy is not being influenced by evidence, but rather by public choice reinforces the influence of wealth in policy decision-making. Those who have the resources to financially impact elections will continue to gain economic benefits. Both testimonials and interviewees expressed concern regarding the impact that wealthy donors will have on the public education system, exemplified by the following statement.

I support the public schools because we’ve got to educate a massive, massive population out there in a quality way. And the more and more private [education] competition we have it’s going to be tougher and tougher to do that as more legislators are going to need enough campaign support and we’re talking wealthy people in a lot of cases have a big influence. (Interviewee 1)

Although interviewees shared mixed beliefs about the influence of wealth in policy and politics, even those who do not think money has outsized influence still recognize the impact of finance on who gets elected.

I think that money only really comes into play when it is supporting an already confirmed position or personal belief of a legislator. In other words, you will see liberal legislators who are taking money and have a lot of money from KNEA or whoever – they will be predisposed to be in that camp. You will see the same thing from conservatives.

You'll see where they may have received a lot of money from a particular organization, they are already predisposed to be in that camp. (Interviewee 6)

In summary, although there are different conceptions of the extent of the influence of wealth in shaping public policy, those with direct experience agree that those interests who are able to financially support political candidates will determine policy and, therefore, social outcomes.

Special Interest Groups

Similar to Ness and Gandara's (2014) findings, findings show conservative think tank influence is more prevalent than similar progressive groups at the state-level. This case provides evidence of multiple interest groups with ties to national conservative reform movement (i.e., KPI and related SPN-Associate the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, ALEC, AFP). However, Kansas follows historical trends in education special interest group politics (Chubb and Moe, 1990) as maintainers included the traditional teacher organizations (i.e., KNEA, AFT, and Kansas PTA).

However, there is no evidence of involvement of edu-business (Thompson et al., 2016) nor foundations and venture philanthropists (Saltman, 2009; Scott, 2009) in state education policy discourse. Although charter schools were debated in this case, constitutional limitations on the provision of education tightly confined to a system of public schools deters venture

capitalists and philanthropists from investing in education in Kansas. However, tax scholarship granting organizations are able to earn a fee for administering this program.

While many scholars rightfully call out neoliberalism's threat to democracy (Anyon, 2011; Connell, 2013; Gilens & Page, 2014; Hursh, 2004; Hursh, 2005a-b;), this case provides an alternative perspective of special interest groups in state policy as mechanisms to increase democratic participation. Historical member-based organizations found in communities throughout the state, such as the Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) and League of Women Voters, as well as unions increase democratic decision-making through organizational processes that allow their members to formulate state-level policy positions that are then lobbied for on their behalf. The variety and balance of perspectives provided by policy proponents and opponents to influence legislation represents polycentric governance. Although these groups cannot make legally binding decisions, their participation in testimony is a healthy function of democracy that, in theory, leads to better policy outcomes (Ostrom, 2010).

Maintainers vs Reformers

Viewed as collective interests, groups engaged in policy can split into two distinct categories. 1) Maintainers who defend current laws and structures that reinforce public education and resources, and 2) Reformers who seek to reallocate resources to the private sector and/or back to the taxpayer. Although Maintainers comprise the current majority of interest groups, there are almost as many groups engaged as Reformers. As several interviewees noted changes in election laws that allow unlimited campaign donations (i.e., Citizens United) and the corresponding trend of 501(c) 4 advocacy groups engaged in Reform, the balance of power may begin to shift even further in favor of neoliberal policies.

Maintainers represent public education interests. In this case, both national organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association and newer advocacy groups that represent local, grassroots pro-education interests (i.e., Game on for Kansas Schools, Olathe Public Education Network) work together to support public education. As a collective interest, Maintainers were not supported by any political party, but one moderate political organization (i.e., Mainstream Coalition) often testified in support of this group’s preferences. Maintainers resist change through a focus on local control. In this case, groups in this category utilized litigation as a strategy to maintain or gain power and resources. To adapt to neoliberalism, Maintainers adapt the policy ideas promoted by neoliberals (i.e., Public Charter Schools and Coalition of Innovative Districts) within tightly controlled environments (Table 20).

Table 20 Special Interest Group Neoliberal Policy Strategies

Neoliberal Policy Issue	Maintainers	Reformers
School Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with neoliberal ideas: Public Charters and Coalition of Innovative Districts • Discourse to support rural schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Credit Scholarship Program • Home school parents pursue access to school-sponsored extra-curricular activities
Less Government		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Core Standards to reduce federal overreach • Expressed preferences for lower-taxes when seeking to reduce the number of school districts as well as through promotion of a Constitutional Amendment to transfer power of education-funding decision-making to a singular branch of government
Business Sector Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition of Innovative District’s teacher employment and licensing practices • Voluntary efficiency measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Due Process for Teachers • Promote Administrative Consolidation and District Realignment

As another example, an interviewee shared how public education policies have adapted to the “one-size-does-not-fit-all” messaging of Reformers by shifting to personalized learning: “We have an innovative Superintendent who now is talking about the individual people and people are buying that.” (Interviewee 2)

Reformers are led by interest groups consistently promoting a free-market, low tax ideology and narrative of failing schools. Reformers were supported in this case by two political parties based in Wichita: the Sedgwick County Republican party and an emerging group of Libertarians who called themselves “Kansans for Liberty.” Professional groups seeking change expressed motivations based upon ideology and resource allocation more than education outcomes. A common theme among these lobbyists was calls for accountability for taxpayer dollars.

Reformers brought in out-of-state interests connected to the network of national conservative policy groups interested in education reform. These interests promoted school choice, sharing policy successes from other states. One example of this network’s success in policy diffusion is seen in the strategies used to mobilize allies and the language found in testimony from Kansas Common Core opponents mirroring the national conservative network response focused on local control (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Although private and religious schools naturally fall into the category of reform and can benefit from free-market ideology promoted by other Reformers, these groups often expressed support for public education. Private schools and parents seeking change were motivated by religion and strong belief that the education options they offer the children in their care are superior to the public-school system. Combined with the rising influence of neoliberal policy, this sector is helping to reshape public education in Kansas to focus on individual needs in lieu

of a common good. Reflecting on reformers efforts for change, a state-elected representative shared,

People generally love their school if they have a winning football team or basketball team [and then] they are supportive of their school. But in general people are not quite tuned into how important it is for the state to have broad general policies that full fund our schools. (Interviewee 2)

Political Discourse and Strategies to Influence Policy

Political discourse reflects the subjective nature of reality. The multitude of perspectives analyzed in this study reinforce that there is no one universal truth and that, in fact, many realities exist at one given time (Crotty, 1998). Policy actors consistently opened their testimonial with a description of how they developed their individual beliefs on the issue based upon their experience as a student, parent, teacher, or other professional. Personal experiences, even if described as from a similar perspective of parent or teacher, led to different interpretations of differing policy perspectives. Both opponents and proponents interpreted policy through their personal experiences and individual knowledge that shaped beliefs and policy preferences (Foucault, 1972). One striking example of differing epistemologies that drive policy positions is that of the support of farm advocacy groups for a constitutional amendment to give legislators sole power over school finance: Two of these groups supported a constitutional amendment (HCR5029), while one was against.

Both sides of policy issues use the same key words and phrases re-interpreting from their individual epistemological position. Much of policy debate exploited language to persuade and convince, whether it be through fact-based arguments, metaphorical examples, or personal

stories. For example, lobbyists employed a common refrain regarding the impact of a child’s zip code to both support public education as well as call for private school choice (Table 21).

Table 21 Similar Discourse to Support Conflicting Policy Preferences

Maintain	Reform
“The standards are essential to ensure all students, regardless of their zip code, graduate prepared for postsecondary education and to compete in the global economy.” (Bartels, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)	“Do you believe one’s ZIP code should determine the quality of education one receives? Of course you don’t, but that is an unfortunate reality in today’s education system.” (Dorsey, Testimony HB2374, March 23, 2017)

Special interest groups frame discourse upon their own knowledge, with well-resourced groups such as KASB and KPI conducting their own internal research to support policy preferences. In addition to being used to support testimony, this research is shared through organizational media outlets, such as websites and social media, to inform the public as a method to influence voter opinion. As a national network of policy ideas, Reformers appear to be more successful in shaping state-level policy discourse as evidenced in the repetition of conservative thought-leaders and national think tank scholarship by Concerned Citizen. In comparison, policy actors supporting public education do not have a shared lexicon of philosophy or scholarship to suggest to policymakers a united front on policy preferences.

Reformers were also able to capitalize on the power of language to reframe policy proposals until preference was achieved. As revealed in the evolution of the tax credit scholarship debate, the policy was first designed to provide private education for students with special needs. Opponents utilized Constitutional dialect to squash the proposal in 2013. When the program was passed during the “midnight massacre” (see Appendix F) it was appropriately named a “Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship” to reflect the policy’s true intended beneficiaries. Recognizing public backlash, the program was amended and the titled changed to “Tax Credit

for Low-Income Students.” The power of language was also very clearly displayed in the debate on due process for teachers, wherein the practice was equated with tenure and confounded by differences in other state laws to convince the public and policymakers that teachers should not enjoy this benefit.

Words have different meanings and the crux of policy discourse is convincing the decision-maker to interpret a single word, phrase, or phenomenon in the same way as the lobbyist.

Ideological vs Scientific Dialect

Political discourse fell into three distinct categories with some testimony combining multiple categories of dialect to convey a policy position. Few interest groups and lobbyists used a scientific dialect of facts and figures meant to show evidence of effectiveness, while almost everyone conveyed impassioned ideological arguments (Wagner, 2018). Adding to Wagner’s “language of taxation” this study found that at the state-level, education policy discourse also heavily employs what I have labeled as Constitutional dialect. Maintainers frequently used their time in front of legislators to explain relevant statutes at both the state and federal level that protected current public systems. This dialect relied on themes of ensuring equality and public accountability. Maintainers justified policy positions on existing law because they were always in a position of resisting change. However, Concerned Citizens also made statements of policy preference based upon their interpretation of the U.S. or Kansas Constitution to convey an unbiased policy perspective.

Scientific dialect is often employed by professional lobbyists. However, these facts are often perceived by policy opponents as manipulations of data to fit personal policy preferences. In this case, interest groups that undertook their own research or even utilized state and national

data sets to inform policy positions were doubted in both testimonial and by interviewees when their assertions did not fit opposition perspectives. Both Maintainers and Reformers utilized scientific dialect and cited scholarly sources. Although sources of evidence were typically Kansas government education data and NAEP, both objective sources, they were perceived by their political opponents as not credible. For example, both sides of policy issues referenced the NAEP in testimonials but selected different variables and portrayed contrasting narrative derived from the same data. NAEP was utilized to both convey Kansas as a successful education system as well as one that needs improved (Table 22).

Table 22 Differing Interpretations of NAEP Results

NAEP Indicates Need for Improvement	NAEP Shows Success
“Between 2011 and 2015, Kansas’ ranking for all students scoring at “Basic” or higher on the National Assessment of Educational Progress dropped from 10th to 20th and the ranking for students scoring at “Proficient” dropped from 12th to 18th.” (Tallman, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018)	“Kansas has been consistently among the top five states on the 4th grade NAEP, and among the top dozen on its 8th grade version.” (Wurman, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)

Political opponents often discredited each other, refuting the evidence that they themselves at times had relied on to justify policy positions. This is exemplified by the following statement from an interviewee.

But here's the Kansas Association of School Boards teaching schools to go out and say “Kansas has the tenth best outcomes overall in the country” when Kansas never ever has had a single top 10 ranking on any measurement of actual learning. And by that, I mean looking at an ACT, looking at NAEP scores never. You look at the national rankings and you cannot do that. There was a great paper on that Cato just put out last month debunking the bias in K12 rankings. One of the common mistakes that's made in,

including at U.S. News and World Report., as Cato points out, you cannot use state averages to compare because every state has different demographics. (Interviewee 9)

As depicted in the quote above, policy opponents can “poke holes” in statistics. Perhaps this is why ideological dialect is so persuasive. One lobbyist cannot easily dispute another’s personal experience and beliefs. An interviewee shared a similar story of cherry-picking data to support policy preferences.

And our state legislators are being told we're doing wonderful things. Look how many of our students are graduating-85 percent, and before they were telling the legislators, before I and others pointed out that you just lowered the cut scores passing grade for state assessments. (Interviewee 14)

Ideological dialect was used almost universally across maintainers and reformers. Almost all testimonial expertise was described as gained from personal experience. Given the propensity to refute evidence, it makes sense that emotional appeals dominate testimony. The magnitude of ideological dialect reflecting personal stories and philosophical beliefs, help to explain why, even when presented evidence, research does not have a more significant observable impact in state-level education policy making. Maintainers often used ideological dialect to share narratives that reflected larger social issues in education (i.e., rural communities) and individual stories of student success. Reformers followed the neoliberal lexicon often repeating themes of efficiency, accountability, and competition in seeking policy change. In this case, the common language for education systems maintenance focuses on statutory conceptions of local control and checks and balances, as well as a reconceptualization of the ideology of school choice.

Local Control was employed by both Maintainers and Reformers to assert power in determining policy outcomes. For Reformers, local control centered on reducing the role of the federal government in education and was often paired with statements reinforcing local school districts authority. Maintainers utilized this phrase to reinforce the power of Superintendents and locally elected school boards by suggesting that any decision aligned with statute should rightfully be made by this group. In essence, the power of local control allows policymakers to dismiss empirical evidence to pursue policies that align with perceived popular opinion.

Checks and Balances were used by Maintainers to assert the power of the public in policy decisions. Colloquially, legislators were viewed on several occasions as attempting to “change the rules” to gain power and personal benefits. Constitutional dialect is an important resistance mechanism for public education supporters. Maintainers function to reinforce constitutional limits on education policy experiments, particularly to prevent public funding of private and religious education. These interest groups utilize testimony to bring into public discourse the constitutional dilemmas presented by some reform policies. However, as this case study demonstrates, one lawmaker was willing to circumvent the norms of transparent governance to bypass the constitutional limits on education and fundamentally alter education systems in ways that aligned with his personal policy preferences. Similarly, Reformers selected to seek an end to school finance litigation through changing the rules of government rather than complying with a court order to increase school funding.

Choice. As expected, school choice as an ideological statement was often given as justification by private and religious educators as well as home school parents seeking public rents. While the literature on school choice focuses on shifts from public to private education providers (Angus, 2013; Bosetti, 2005; Cowen, 2012; Godwin & Kremer, 2002; Hammond &

Dennison, 1995; Hoxby, 2003; McLaughlin, 2005; Renzulli & Evans, 2005; Viteritti, 2010), this case revealed a new strategy in that small and rural schools have reinterpreted and co-opted the language of choice to resist change and justify continued public expenditures. These interest groups are framing school choice as an important reason to maintain rural education systems.

Similar to Lubienski's (2008) findings, this case suggests that policy decisions seem to be more attuned to popular culture and public opinion that has been shaped by neoliberal forces than it does based upon empirical evidence. There is a general lack of independent research utilized to justify policy positions, but there is an overrepresentation of conservative-produced think tank scholarship. Most importantly, this study suggests that individual biases associated with the motives and mode of research production can render factual data unbelievable.

Strategies

Both Reformers and Maintainers utilize traditional legislative engagement strategies and are represented by professional lobbyists, the education workforce and advocates, and parents and grandparents. As evidenced in stock testimonial language repeated in Concerned Citizen discourse and shared by interviewees, special interest groups are engaging in traditional grassroots advocacy efforts, interbuilding, and information dissemination through traditional and social media. One lobbyist shared typical strategies for effective policy persuasion that included promotion of public choice through ensuring contacts were made to legislators from across the state.

So much more work is done after you give your testimony, visiting one-on-one with candidates. And that is just not in education policy that is across the board. You are there early in the morning just because of what legislators' schedules are. Most of them will get there early so you want to, as a lobbyist you are going to want to get in and have

10-15 minutes of time when you can talk to them one-on-one. And then also find out if they have specific questions to ask before committee. Some legislators are pretty coy and they try to not give you an idea. But, in general, you're gonna... after a certain number of years on the job you know, ok this person is going to vote yes on this. This person is going to vote no. This person might need some contacts from back home. As a lobbyist for a member organization, you've got to have tentacles out across the state. (Interviewee 11)

Special interest groups know that elected leaders are by nature inductive thinkers, which is why these groups also engage in electoral politics. Interest groups need to have allies who will make decisions in their members favor. Thus, those groups that are able to elect representatives who share their beliefs will dictate the political and social future. A similar phenomenon of inductive thinking was found in the case study of the proposed Constitutional Amendment. In this example, lawmakers rejected research evidence based upon their predispositions and preferred policy outcome. Specifically, some legislators held strong belief that an adequate education should cost less, not more, than what was currently being spent. As such, they commissioned an independent research study from a scholar who had traditionally found results that supported conservative preferences. When results did not support lowering education expense as expected, the research evidence was put aside.

The legislature has done. I don 't want to say a very poor job, they did what they thought they should do, they should hire somebody. In fact, the last people, the last study they retained a consultant on came back and it was actually...there were those in the education community that were really fearful because it was a very, very conservative Consulting firm. When the report came back it was like, “this is what the conservative group said,

my god what would a liberal group say?” Well, there were some of the legislative leaders rapidly trying to get rid of that report under some other pieces of paper. (Interviewee 11)

However, when research results did not fit ideological notions and policy preferences, facts were quickly discarded. The resulting Kansas legislative faction and allied interest groups’ strategic response sought to, in effect, end the ‘constant litigation’ in education by removing the State Supreme Court from interpreting statute and thereby, end the Court’s participation in education finance policymaking.

The success of conservative think tanks and venture philanthropist’s ideology diffusion is evident in the resources policy actors cited to justify policy positions. Popular culture influenced opinion and is most strikingly evident in the pervasive recounting of the story of teacher tenure practices in New York City (see Appendix F) provided in testimony and by interviewees. This reveals the disproportionate power of disseminating policy ideas that cannot be fully understood by the public and even policymakers without implementation context. An analysis of the archeology of knowledge that drives individual perceptions of policy issues found that Reformers, through national networks of policy influence, are successfully shifting public sentiment toward ideals of smaller government through mass media. In contrast, Maintainers do not display a cohesive intellectual narrative and ideological structure, and rarely cite academics or think tank scholars in justifying policy positions.

Given the importance of majority voter opinion on policy selection, the most effective strategy evidenced in this study is the discourse that signals to the legislator potential political support of special interest group voters dependent on the outcome of the legislator’s vote. As such, testimony given by organized groups almost always began with public choice signals (i.e., numbers and reach) identifying the groups electoral power.

Public Choice

The language and strategies that special interest groups use are signals to lawmakers. The theory of public choice insists that all decisions made by policy actors, from parents and educators to lobbyists and elected officials, are guided by their individual self-interest (Buchanan, 1999). Because of this, there is no way to create public policy that will produce societal benefits (Wagner, 2018). This analysis of state-level education policy making suggests that public choice theory dictates policy outcomes because: 1) there is not much empirical evidence being introduced in testimony, and 2) when evidence is presented, the facts are often disputed. This study suggests that there currently is strong public support for public education that is reinforced by electoral politics.

Several specific lessons of public choice politics are evidenced in this research, specifically in regard to the ‘midnight massacre’ wherein it is assumed the policy actor was seeking policy to benefit his personal economic situation. First, the removal of due process for teachers was perceived by many as an act of retribution, as the legislator who orchestrated the policy was not supported by teachers in his last campaign. The second lesson is to debunk the popular sentiment that voters can influence policy outcomes after-the-fact by voting out legislators who disregard public opinion. Several testimonials given by elected officials mentioned the cliché that the voters would have the ability to punish bad-decisions at the next election. In this case, voters in fact did not have any opportunity to express dissatisfaction as instead the lawmaker credited with removing due process rights and ushering in publicly funded private school choice left the public sector to become a lobbyist for two Reform special interest groups.

Rent Seekers and Provider Capture. Public employees through their unions have been heavily criticized during the neoliberal era as engaged in a rent seeking/public capture manner and are to blame for increasing costs while also decreasing the public benefit received for this expenditure (Buchanan, 1999; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Moe, 2011). This case provides a counter narrative by illustrating the extent that Reformers are engaged in similar rent seeking behaviors through articulated desires to change the rules of government so that their members capture more public resources. The mechanism is low-taxes. Reform is not a local movement, but rather one that is driven by an enduring neoliberal ideology that prioritizes low-taxes over collective action and the common good. Concerned Citizens are enticed by the benefit of lower taxes, but as the case of Tax Credit Scholarship shows, state-level policies are adopted first to benefit corporations.

Overall, this case study suggests that Lubienski (2008) is slightly misguided when stating that special interest group preferences outweigh the evidence given to policymakers. Instead, maybe the true culprit is that relevant, contextual policy evidence does not exist and there simply is not much compelling evidence being introduced in state-level political discourse.

Implications of the Findings

Outcomes of policy debate, through the lens of public choice, suggests a current voter preference for public education. However, Education scholars leading the charge on countering neoliberalism (Ball, 1998, 2012a-c, 2016a; Hursh, 2004; Lubienski, 2008) have accurately characterized the conservative network's spread that is resulting in increased focus on efficient education and a free-market ideology in politics that is leading to more privatization, lower taxes in lieu of education, and redistribution of wealth that benefits corporations and wealthy donors.

Policy

This research has several implications for policy. First, the goal of education reform is to ensure that all children, regardless of zip code, succeed. For this reason, policies that impact education systems should be designed to first and foremost to benefit students. The tax credit scholarship program's primary beneficiary was corporate taxpayers and, as a consequence, students and the private schools that offer accredited education are not able to take advantage of the program to its full extent. Similarly, there is no program accountability for ensuring academic outcomes. One interviewee even shared that a legislator called on him to "make sure that we didn't put anything in the way of evaluation on those schools." Multiple interviewees also shared that the program has so much "red tape" that students are not able to access it and that the scholarship still does not help low-income students who also face other financial challenges such as transportation to school.

As Kansas experiences demographic shifts and depopulation of rural areas, policymakers must prioritize solutions that sustainably strengthen education systems in these areas. Interests representing rural schools predict that the ongoing push to lower taxes and decrease school funding will have the greatest impact on small, rural communities. While funding and equity is an important part of policy discussions, policymakers must also consider the impact of teacher employment practices in the recruitment and retention of quality staff in rural schools. School leaders in rural communities provided evidence in testimony that many are voluntarily engaging in continual improvement processes to improve efficiency. Locally elected school boards should be encouraged to identify efficiency opportunities specific to rural education systems through policy incentives. Legislators unfamiliar with the challenges of rural communities should be

educated on the social implications of schools and the impact of education policy on the rural economy.

Analysis of these neoliberal policies found that the reform network is largely supported by low-tax ideology, stifling trust that decisions made in the favor of Reformers are in the best interests of students. The focus on taxes complicates public support for alternative education options. Although it is easy to view neoliberalism as the merits between public and private or a battle for economic gains, some policy actors seeking change are motivated by a genuine belief that the public education system is not meeting the needs of all children. Testimony and interviewees conveyed a need to find solutions for parents and children who believe they are not well-served by the public system. While the state Constitution clearly sets limits on publicly-funding private education, one solution may be to publicly-fund independent research that evaluate the merits of private education in Kansas with the purpose of describing and transferring solutions to the public sector. Further, quality data and evidence of effectiveness may also assist private schools with garnering an increase in private financial support.

Finally, given the rising income inequality and the disproportionate impact of wealthy donors on influencing policy outcomes, policymakers should proactively seek to include representation in education reform efforts from persons with diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Practice

Because of public choice, special interest groups are a strong influence on policy decisions. As such, this research also has implication for practitioners. If public education is to endure or even “compete” with neoliberals, supporters must do more to shape public opinion on education issues. One strategy is to fund and disseminate research on what works in Kansas

schools directly to the broader public. Proponents of education should adopt dissemination strategies to reach the public that have proven successful to national conservative networks such as blogs, opinion editorials, and other mass media outlets.

Similarly, to counter Reformers, education interest groups may find success by building local organizations and grassroots supporters who will engage with local elected officials, while seeking stronger ties and developing policy positions in tandem with other interest groups such as farm and business advocacy. Evidence from this study concludes that storytelling to create emotional appeal may be more influential to policymakers than restating facts or providing statistics.

Given the concern about the impact of wealth in education policy along with the rise of new advocacy groups, the public should demand higher levels of accountability from organizations that engage in state-level education politics. As this case illustrates, lawmakers show willingness to circumvent governance norms to achieve personal benefits and can capitalize on public choice to fundamentally alter education. The myth that voters can provide consequences to such legislators does not hold true, especially with economic incentives to hire former lawmakers as lobbyists. Though shielded by law, special interest groups function as 501(c)'s should achieve public legitimacy through greater transparency of funders. Similarly, 'watch-dog' groups should monitor the engagement of non-profit organizations in lobbying activities to ensure that these groups are operating within the defined legal limitations of their non-profit tax status.

Though not a major theme, as evidenced in the removal of due process for teachers, education policy disproportionately impacts the economic status of women. The history of the profession of education is fraught with sexism, as this female-dominated profession has been

under the control of male-dominated legislatures and lobbyists. Findings revealed that not as many women were engaged at the state-level. There is a need for increased female perspective in lobbying to balance male influence and represent the interests of women in employment practices.

Finally, as evidenced in this study the concept of local control is a major discursive practice that supports the public education system in Kansas. This study found that those who currently have local control – the elected school board members of each district – seek to increase support and resources for public schools. As the national conservative network has realized state-level policy reform may be limited by this concept, it is important to note that a new strategy of influencing local school board elections through financial support of candidates has begun to emerge (Reckhow et al., 2017). Although this study did not uncover this practice, supporters of education should work in local communities to identify and support local school board candidates who believe in a strong public education system. Further, because public choice is a strong predictor of policy outcomes, similar strategies should be undertaken to elect state officials who will both improve and protect the education system.

Limitations

This qualitative study is not meant to provide generalizable findings. Instead its value is in the provision of a detailed description of how one state has responded to neoliberal policy reforms often identified as the ‘globalization of education.’ Findings in this study reflect the social, political, and historical context of one state education system. For example, Kansas Constitutional provisions for education are like some states but differ in employee rights and restrictions on state-funding of private and religious education. However, findings may have applicability to better understand education reform in the context of other states.

This study does not capture all aspects of policy influence. The study bounds are explicit to one context of public discourse (i.e., House and Senate Committees) and perceptions of key policy actors. Missing are key components of the phenomenon that could influence policy such as the personal interactions between legislators and constituents and analysis of the impact of special interest group money. As one interviewee shared,

It comes back to politic and Citizens United. I don't want to overdo it, but it changed the rules. It changed the environment in which we have politics today because today because there are no limits [on the influence of money]. (Interviewee 1)

Finally, the nature of qualitative research relies on the individual researcher as the tool to interpret data. While the use of computer-aided software to explore data patterns aided in validity and replicability of research, choices made throughout the analysis process emphasized my subjective interpretations. Other researchers who work with this discourse may come up with alternate interpretations and conclusions.

Implications for Future Research

To better understand special interest groups, this study could benefit from analysis of the other types of public discourse these organizations engage in, such as social media or printed information. Further research is needed to describe and quantify the influence of money in state-level education policy. A full review of who funds these groups coupled with analysis of the extent that these groups provide campaign donations to elected officials on legislative education committees can help better understand whose interests are being served in state education policy reform. Similarly, to fully understand special interest group influence an analysis of if and how these groups engage with other education policymakers, such as the state and local school boards, is necessary.

An historical analysis of special interest group participation in state education politics could improve understanding of the impact of wealth as well as Citizens United in the proliferation of new nonprofit organizations influencing policy. While the literature suggests many of these groups are funded by wealthy corporations, several organizations in this case study imply on their websites that they are funded by a broad base of public donations. Finally, research is needed to fully understand the extent that special interest groups are able to influence specific policy decisions through finance and the extent that these decisions align with public opinion.

Given the lack of independent research on the outcomes of neoliberal policies implemented in the state's unique context, there is a need to conduct independent research that can be utilized in policy debate. Independent research is necessary to reduce bias inherent with the scholarship conducted and disseminated by national networked think tanks. This study provides a broad overview of neoliberal education policies in Kansas, and many details that arose in the findings could not be explored as they were outside the scope of the proposed research questions. For example, the impact of tax credit scholarships on students as well as overall school finance are important aspects mentioned by interviewees and in testimony that should be further explored. Similarly, private schools that educate these children should be studied, not so much for accountability, but to better understand how these models are effectively serving kids who do not thrive in public schools. Finance models that rely on philanthropy should be investigated to determine viable funding alternatives for private schools that provide quality state-accredited education.

Another topic for future investigation is to evaluate the impact the public charter schools and their potential for addressing dilemmas of rural education. Early in the research process

public charter schools were reviewed to understand legal foundations as well as where and how these schools function. One innovative school model that appears successful is the Walton Rural Life Center, an agriculture-based elementary school in rural Kansas whose students engage in problem-based and hands-on learning. This school model may hold promise for sustaining rural communities through education and skills centered on the state’s most important economic driver – agriculture. Finally, an analysis of public charter decision making processes is imperative to ensure that viable education options are fairly vetted. In Kansas, statute dictates that charter schools are public and that they are authorized by local school boards. Specifically, two interviewees shared stories of seeking entry into the education market through pursuit of a charter only to be shut-out of the system (Table 23).

In sum, more research on education in varying contexts across the state is necessary to understand what works and for whom. Without this knowledge, state education policy may continue to rely on ideological arguments rather than empirical evidence while interest groups seeking lower taxes or public rents increase their share of the allocation of public resources.

Table 23 Perceptions of Charter School Statutes in Kansas

Lobbyists	Private School Leaders
<p>“One of the things and it's been more of a national trend is where you have you have private schools that are taking money out of the public system. That's probably the biggest issue.” (Interviewee 11)</p> <p>“Kansas basically has about the worst charter school laws in the country. Because of the way the Constitution is constructed giving the state school board choice or authorization to oversee. So,</p>	<p>“One of my first huge interests was to begin the conversation with our local school district about starting a charter school. And it was interesting my very first discussion was with an administrator and she was...actually I had been told administrators that were superintendents of elementary middle school and high school levels were beginning to talk about the need for such a school and that the elementary superintendent was pretty interested and kind of encouraged me. But the middle school administrators stopped me straight in my tracks. She put her finger on my chest and she said we are going to put you out of business. She said that in a very short time because we're going to figure out how to teach all kids how to read. And she said I will absolutely not back you with our local school board and anyway I was just stunned. I was stunned. (Interviewee 7)</p>

the only way you get a charter school in Kansas is if the local school district authorizes competition and that just doesn't happen.” (Interviewee 9)	“In the state of Kansas, the authorizing body for charter school laws is the local school district. So that itself would be a problem because they would not authorize any charter schools. So that was one of the things that we wanted to change was to get the authorizing body changed. Of course, that didn't go through. (Interviewee 10)
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Finally, noting that due process rights are an important job benefit for teachers, a study of the impact the removal of these rights had on both teacher recruitment and retention as well as academic achievement should be undertaken. Education supporters noted that the negative impact of this decision is already affecting the quality of education in Kansas.

Both unions report that they are seeing a wave of teacher resignations and retirements, and predict that the Legislature’s anti-due process stance will only worsen the existing teacher shortage in urban and rural districts in Kansas (Ochs, Testimony HB2483, January 24, 2018).

As Marianno (2015) found, some state legislatures made trade-offs for teachers when removing tenure and due process rights in the form of higher wages and benefits. To ensure long-term quality education workforce, it is important to understand where Kansas ranks in terms of supporting the teachers financially as well as if, and how, improvements in teacher employment should be made.

From this case study I conclude that given the importance of public education to democracy and the future economy, state-level education policymaking could improve its focus on student outcomes through an increase in independent, contextual research on what works for different student demographics as well as within both private and public schools in Kansas.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand how special interest groups influence education policy. Specifically, this study focused on the shift toward neoliberal policies that emphasize small government, privatization, and the infusion of business principles as meritorious principles for policy consideration. The study was framed by Buchanan's Public Choice theory (1999) as the reason for the lack of evidence-based policymaking. The literature review provided contemporary research on neoliberalism, contemporary issues in education policy reform, and what is known about special interest groups in education. An historical overview of education in Kansas was provided to situate the context of this study in both place as well as historical social-political change.

This qualitative multi-case study explored differing perspectives of lobbyists within five key K-12 education policy issues in Kansas (i.e., Due Process for Teachers, Tax Credit Scholarship, District Realignment, The Common Core Standards, and Constitutional Amendment), showing that adoption of neoliberal policies was not driven by evidence nor public demand, but through circumvention of governance norms. The analysis of six-year time period of testimonial showed that state-level education policy issues in Kansas align with other states' reform attempts toward neoliberal policies. Findings from this case study can serve as a point of comparison to understand special interest group influence in state-level education politics.

To further interpret political discourse, interviews were conducted with 16 policy actors who had first-hand experience with state-level education policy. The depth of knowledge and experiences these individuals shared improved my ability to understand policies from multiple viewpoints. One of the most important aspects of conducting interviews was listening to individuals who held differing perspectives than the researcher did on private education and the

need for education policy reform. The stories these people shared and the passion for helping children that many expressed allowed the researcher to recognize that the assumptions they held prior to interviews regarding the motives of Reformers were not entirely correct. The ability to recognize how my biases shaped the research was not possible through document review.

The utilization of computer-aided qualitative coding software and Excel pivot tables allowed for analysis of a large body of discourse and the ability to easily combine document and interview data into qualitative codes. These tools allowed for comparison of discourse across participants and policy issues to increase validity of findings and also provide documentation and a framework for other researchers to replicate this study's methods.

Findings illustrate how special interest groups are a vehicle to enhance democratic processes, particularly through membership-based organizations that reach across the state and encourage participation in organizational policy position formation. Personal stories and ideological statements were far more prevalent than scientific dialect or evidence-based research to support policy positions. One of the most interesting findings to me was the extent that scientific dialect was so often and easily discredited by opposing sides. Similarly, Wagner's (2018) 'language of taxation' was a dichotomous construct, but this study revealed that at the state-level, discourse focused on protecting rights granted by the State Constitution is an important discursive strategy to maintain the public education system.

State-level education policy discourse represents a struggle over financial resources. In Kansas, efforts for reform are primarily driven by a low-tax, free-market ideology promoted by special interest groups aligned with business. These groups are supported by a national network that has successfully influenced public opinion toward perceptions of a failing American education system and ideologies of school choice within the private sector. While most of the

neoliberal policies were not supported in this case, the ability and willingness to circumvent governance norms allowed for state-funded private school choice and the reduction of teacher benefits. These policy changes may have long-term implications for public education in Kansas, in particular, for rural education systems. Maintainers should consider stronger efforts toward creating evidence-based messages to inform public opinion about neoliberal school reform efforts, which in turn, will influence who gets elected at the local level. Given that legislators most often aligned with Maintainers, is clear that, for now, public choice demands prioritizing public education.

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Appendix A - 2013-2018 House and Senate Education Committee Bills

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2004	Retaining students from grade-level promotion if not proficient on the reading state assessment for grade three	No hearing		No	Student
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2005	State aid for capital improvements and capital outlays for school districts	No hearing		No	Finance
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2141	Repealer, elections process for certain unified school districts	February 7, 2013	Passed February 7, 2013	No	Misc.
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2221	Enacting the equal access act; school employees; professional employee's organization	February 11, 2013 February 13, 2013	Passed February 13, 2013	Yes	Teacher
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2222	School districts; bullying policies	February 12, 2013 February 14, 2013 February 26, 2013	Passed as Amended February 26, 2013	No	Safety and Security
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2232	Providing professional liability insurance for teachers	February 15, 2013 February 19, 2013 February 25, 2013	Passed as Amended February 25, 2013	Yes	Teacher
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2261	Authorizing the expenditure of unencumbered balances held by school district; removing the cap for contingency reserve fund	February 13, 2013 February 15, 2013	Passed as Amended February 15, 2013	No	Accountability
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2263	Enacting the school district special needs scholarship	February 18, 2013 February 25, 2013	Amended, Failed to Pass February 25, 2013, Motion to Reconsider Failed February 26, 2013	Yes	Choice

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2264	School districts; capital improvements	No hearing		No	Finance
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2280	School districts; establishing Celebrate Freedom Week and related curriculum	February 25, 2013	Passed as Amended February 25, 2013	No	Curriculum
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2289	Prohibiting the use of Common Core Standards	March 21, 2013 March 22, 2013	Failed to Pass March 22, 2013	Yes	Common Core
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2306	School districts; course of instruction; science	No hearing		No	Curriculum
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2307	High School Athletes; cheerleading	No hearing		No	KSHAA
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2319	Creating the coalition of innovative districts act	February 19, 2013 February 25, 2013	Passed as Amended February 25, 2013	Yes	Coalition of Innovative Districts
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2320	Creating the Kansas public charter school act	February 20, 2013 March 12, 2013 March 14, 2013	Failed to Pass March 15, 2013	Yes	Public Charter Schools
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2349	School districts; audit by legislative post audit committee	February 15, 2013 February 20, 2013	Passed as Amended February 20, 2013	No	Audit
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2400	Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program act	March 18, 2013 March 19, 2013 March 20, 2013	Passed as Amended March 20, 2013, Amended into shell of SB22 March 20, 2013	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB104	Creating the Kansas children's internet protection act	March 15, 2013	Passed as Amended March 15, 2013	No	Safety and Security

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2013 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB176	Creating the coalition of innovative districts act	No hearing		Yes	Coalition of Innovative Districts
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2109	School finance; military pupil count	March 15, 2013	March 18, 2013 Passed out	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2140	Repealing K.S.A. 72-60b03	March 11, 2013	March 21, 2013 S Sub for HB 2140 passed out as amended	No	Misc.
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2156	Repealers; school finance; area vocational school fund; local effort as applied to U.S.D. No. 450	March 11, 2013	March 21, 2013 Passed out	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2197	Kansas state high school activities association; membership board of directors and executive board	No action	No action taken	No	KSHAA
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2221	Enacting the equal access act: school employees; professional employees organization	March 13, 2013	March 18, 2013 Passed out	Yes	Teacher
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2222	School districts; bullying policies	No action	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2261	Authorizing the expenditure of unencumbered balances held by school district; removing the cap for contingency reserve fund	March 11, 2013	March 21, 2013 Passed out as amended	No	Accountability
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2280	School districts; establishing Celebrate Freedom Week and related curriculum	No action	No action taken	No	Curriculum
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2319	Creating the coalition of innovative districts act	No action	March 14, 2013 Passed out as amended	Yes	Coalition of Innovative Districts

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2349	School districts; audit by legislative post audit committee	March 14, 2013	March 18, 2013 Passed out as amended	No	Audit
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB103	School district; redefining at-risk pupil	February 12, 2013	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB104	Creating the Kansas children's internet protection act	February 13, 2013	February 18, 2013 Passed out as amended	No	Safety and Security
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB105	School districts; bullying policies	No action	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB131	School finance; capital outlay	February 18, 2013	February 25, 2013 No action	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB132	School finance; ancillary facilities	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB133	School finance; local activities budget	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB137	School districts; related to bullying	February 19, 2013	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB169	Enacting Kansas reads to succeed act	February 25, 2013	February, 26, 2013 No action	No	Curriculum
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB171	School districts; amendments to Kansas uniform financial accounting and reporting act	February 19, 2013	February 26, 2013 Passed out as amended	No	Accountability
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB172	School districts; prohibiting the use of Carnegie units for purposes of determining graduation requirements	No action	No action taken	No	Curriculum
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB173	School districts; accounting for KPERS employer contributions as part of state aid to schools	No action	February 22, 2013 Referred to Ways & Means	No	Finance

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB174	School finance; amendments to certain weightings	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB176	Creating the coalition of innovative districts act	February 20, 2013	February 26, 2013 Passed out as amended	Yes	Coalition of Innovative Districts
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB178	School finance; amending base aid per pupil; increasing state prescribed percentage for local option budget for fiscal years 2014 and 2015	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB192	Credit card surcharge exemption for certain educational institutions	No action	February 13, 2013 Referred to FI&I	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB196	Creating the Kansas public charter school act	March 7, 2013	March 21, 2013 Killed in committee	Yes	Public Charter Schools
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB201	Creating the school district budget law	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB224	School finance; amendments to certain weightings	March 12, 2013	No action taken	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB23	Continuation of statewide tax levy for public schools	February 6, 2013	February 14, 2013 Passed out favorably	No	Finance
2013 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB44	School districts; requirements for identification of and provision of services to students with dyslexia	February 7, 2013	February 25, 2013 No action	No	Special Education
2013-2014 (Not included on index documents)	SCR1608	Constitutional Amendment concerning school finance; suitable provision for finance determined by the legislature	February 13, 2013 February 14, 2013		Yes	Constitutional Amendment
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2004	Retaining students from grade-level promotion if not proficient on the reading state assessment for grade three	No hearing		No	Student

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2005	State aid for capital improvements and capital outlay for school districts	No hearing		No	Finance
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2263	Ensuring the school district special needs scholarship program	No hearing		Yes	Choice
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2264	School districts; capital improvements	No hearing		No	Finance
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2289	Prohibiting use of Common Core Standards	March 21, 2013 March 22, 2013		Yes	Common Core
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2306	School districts; course of instruction; science	No hearing		No	Curriculum
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2307	High school athletes; cheerleading	Contents removed; original language of HB2620 inserted March 13, 2014	House sub for HB2307 Passed as Amended 10-8 March 13, 2014	No	KSHAA
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2320	Creating the Kansas public charter school act	No hearing		Yes	Public Charter Schools
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2400	Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program act	No hearing		Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2475	Personal financial literacy program as a requirement for high school graduation	February 10, 2014 Amended and Tabled 10-8 February 13, 2014 Removed from Table Amended February 18, 2014	Passed favorably as Amended 19-0 February 18, 2014 Referred to Taxation February 27, 2014 Re-referred to Education March 5, 2014 Passed favorably as Amended 19-0 March 13, 2014	No	Curriculum

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2505	An act concerning school districts; relating to the former election process of certain unified school districts	No hearing		No	Misc.
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2521	An act concerning school districts; relating to reporting of students who are not lawfully present in the United States	No hearing		No	Misc.
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2546	An act concerning schools; relating to statewide assessments pertaining to nonpublic schools accredited by the state board of education; amending KSA 2013 Supp. 72-6439 and repealing the existing section	No hearing		Yes	Choice
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2563	An act concerning school districts; relating to food service programs; student meals; accounts; amending K.S.A. 72-5120 and repealing the existing section	No hearing		No	Misc.
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2606	An act concerning schools; enacting the student data accessibility, transparency and accountability act	February 17, 2014		No	Safety and Security
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2620	An act concerning health and human sexuality education' school districts' policies procedures	February 18, 2014 Amended and Continued February 24, 2014 Meeting Canceled February 25 original contents inserted into HB2307 March 13, 2014		No	Curriculum

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2621	An act concerning schools; prescribing curriculum standards' establishing an advisory council on curriculum content standards; providing restrictions on the collection of certain student and teacher data	February 19, 2014 Referred to Taxation February 21, 2014 Re- referred to Education March 13, 2014		Yes	Curriculum
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2686	An act concerning schools; establishing the Kansas legislature award for teaching excellence program	No hearing		No	Teacher
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB104	Creating the Kansas children's internet protection act	No hearing		No	Safety and Security
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB176	Creating the coalition of innovative districts act	No hearing		Yes	Coalition of Innovative Districts
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB22	Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program act	February 21, 2014	No action taken	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB264	School districts; requiring storm shelters for certain construction projects	No hearing		No	Safety and Security
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB335	School districts; drug screening of school district employees; background checks for licensure; revocation of teaching licenses	No hearing		No	Licensure
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB367	Creating the student data privacy act	March 18, 2014 March 20, 2014	Passed as Amended March 20, 2014	No	Safety and Security

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2014 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SCR1619	A concurrent resolution supporting information technology education opportunities in Kansas public schools	March 18, 2014	Passed March 18, 2014	No	Misc.
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2197	Kansas state high school activities association; membership board of directors and executive board	January 28, 2014	February 13, 2014 re-referred & worked February 24, 2014	No	KSHAA
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2280	An act concerning school districts; establishing Celebrate Freedom Week and related curriculum	No action		No	Curriculum
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB196	Creating the Kansas public charter school act	February 14, 2014	No action taken	Yes	Public Charter Schools
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB335	School districts; drug screening of school district employees; background checks for licensure; revocation of teaching licenses	February 10, 2014	February 2, 2014 February 25, 2014	No	Licensure
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB341	An Act concerning school districts; relating to enrollment count for kindergarten attendance	No action	No action taken	No	Finance
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB367	Creating the student data privacy act	February 18, 2014 February 25, 2014	BPA	No	Safety and Security
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB369	An act concerning school districts; relating to agreements for administrative services	No action	No action taken	Yes	Consolidation
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB373	An act concerning school districts; relating to the release of student records	February 13, 2014	No action taken	Yes	Safety and Security
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB376	An act concerning health and human sexuality education	No hearing	No action taken	No	Curriculum

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB378	An Act creating the Kansas educational opportunity act	No action	No action taken	Yes	Choice
2014 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SCR1619	A concurrent resolution supporting information technology education opportunities in Kansas public schools	February 17, 2014	February 19, 2014	No	Misc.
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2008	Repealing school district audit teams and school district performance audit requirements	January 28, 2015	Passed as amended January 28, 2015	No	Audit
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2027	Requiring school district and state department of education audits; creating the efficient operation of schools task force	No hearing	No action taken	No	Audit
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2028	Creating the Kansas education standards study commission	February 3, 2015 February 10, 2015	Tabled February 10, 2015	Yes	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2034	School district; reducing negotiable terms and conditions in the professional negotiations act	February 4, 2015 February 10, 2015		Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2035	Amending the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	No hearing		Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2078	Requiring school districts to adopt school safety and security policies and plans	February 11, 2015 February 16, 2015	Vote to pass out as amended failed; February 16, 2015	No	Safety and Security
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2099	Authorizing school districts to administer certain surveys and questionnaires under the student data privacy act	February 13, 2015	No action taken	No	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2174	Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments	February 18, 2015 February 19, 2015	Passed as Amended February 19, 2015	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2199	School districts; human sexuality education; policies and procedures	February 17, 2015 February 19, 2015	Passed February 19, 2015	No	Curriculum
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2203	School district agreements for consolidation of administrative services	February 18, 2015 February 19, 2015	Tabled February 19, 2015	Yes	Consolidation
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2207	Development and implementation of ethnic studies in schools	February 20, 2015	No action taken	No	Curriculum
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2220	Teachers' contracts; due process	No hearing		Yes	Due Process
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2232	Personal financial literacy course as a requirement for high school graduation	February 11, 2015 February 16, 2015 February 24, 2015	Tabled date certain to February 23, 2015 Tabled indefinitely February 24, 2015 Sub- committee created March 16, 2015 Sub- committee letter draft approved by full committee April 2, 2015	No	Curriculum
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2257	Amendments to the professional negotiations act	No hearing		Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2262	Providing a compliance deadline and penalties for non-compliance with the student data privacy act	March 4, 2015	No action taken	No	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2292	Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act	February 23, 2015 March 20, 2015	Failed to pass March 20, 2015	Yes	Common Core
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2345	Preventing school board members from having a conflict of interest	March 5, 2015	No action taken	No	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2353	Eliminating an obsolete reference to nonproficient pupils in the virtual school act	February 20, 2015	Passed February 20, 2015	No	Student

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2378	Establishing the Kansas legislature award for teaching excellence program	March 11, 2015	No action taken	No	Teacher
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2393	Requiring school districts to use generally accepted accounting principles; financial publication requirements	March 5, 2015 March 10, 2015	Tabled March 10, 2015 Sub-committee created March 16, 2015	No	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HCR5011	Foresight 2020 strategic plan	No hearing	No action taken	No	Misc.
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB136	Amending the professional negotiations act	No hearing		Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB188	Publication requirements under Kansas uniform financial accounting and reporting act	March 23, 2015	Passed as amended March 23, 2015	No	Accountability
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB60	Substitute for SB60 by Committee on Education-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association	March 17, 2015	Tabled March 19, 2015	Yes	KSHAA
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB70	Background checks and licensure of teachers: background checks for school employees with direct contact with students	March 18, 2015	Passed as amended March 19, 2015	No	Licensure
2015 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB8	Repealing school district audit teams and school district performance audit requirements	March 19, 2015	Passed to Consent Calendar March 19, 2015	No	Audit
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2008	An Act repealing K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 46-1130 and 46-1132; concerning school district performance audits	No hearing		No	Audit

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2170	An Act concerning schools and school districts; relating to seclusion and restraint of pupils	March 11, 2015	March 19, 2015 S Sub Sub HB 2170	No	Safety and Security
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2326	An Act concerning contract negotiations for certain professional employees		March 19, 2015 S Sub for HB2326	Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2353	An Act concerning eliminating an obsolete reference to nonproficient pupils in the virtual school act	March 10, 2015	No action taken	No	Misc.
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB136	An Act concerning school districts; relating to the professional negotiations act	February 10, 2015	February 24, 2015 BPA; March 19, 2015 Contents inserted into S SubHB2326	Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB137	An Act concerning education; relating to the school district finance and quality performance act; virtual school act; student data privacy act; tax credit scholarship programs	Referred to Ways and Means		Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB176	An act concerning school districts; relating to the professional negotiations act	February 23, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Professional Negotiations
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB188	An Act concerning school districts; relating to the Kansas uniform financial accounting and reporting act	February 17, 2015	February 19, 2015 BPA	No	Accountability
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB2	Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teacher	January 28, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Teacher
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB294	An Act concerning education; relating to the financing and instruction thereof	March 24, 2015 March 25, 2015	No action taken	No	Finance

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB32	Requiring school district and state department of education audits; creating the efficient operation of schools task force	January 21, 2015 February 3, 2015 February 4, 2015	February 11, 2015 BPA	No	Audit
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB33	Creating the Kansas education standards study commission	January 21, 2015 February 11, 2015 February 12, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Accountability
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB60	An Act concerning schools; relating to the Kansas state high school activities association: relating to participation by certain students	February 2, 2015	February 17, 2015 Sub SB60 BPA	Yes	KSHAA
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB67	An Act concerning schools; relating to curriculum standards; amending K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 72-6439 and repealing the existing section	No hearing		Yes	Common Core
2015 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB8	Repealing school district audit teams and school district performance audit requirements	January 22, 2015	January 28, 2015 BPA	No	Audit
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2027	Requiring school district and state department of education audits; creating the efficient operation of schools task force	No hearing	No action taken	No	Audit
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2028	Creating the Kansas education standards study commission	February 3, 2015 February 10, 2015	Tabled February 10, 2015	Yes	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2035	Amending the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	No hearing	No action taken	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2078	Requiring school districts to adopt school safety and security policies and plans	February 11, 2015 February 16, 2015	Vote to pass out as amended failed; February 16, 2015	No	Safety and Security

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2099	Requiring school districts to administer certain surveys and questionnaires under the student data privacy act	February 13, 2015	No action taken	No	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2199	School districts; human sexuality education; policies and procedures	February 17, 2015 February 19, 2015 Removed from House Calendar and referred to Appropriations February 26, 2015 Referred to Education Committee January 21, 2016	Passed out February 19, 2015 Passed out February 16, 2016	No	Curriculum
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2203	School district agreements for consolidation of administrative services	February 18, 2015 February 19, 2015	Tabled February 19, 2015	Yes	Consolidation
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2207	Development and implementation of ethnic studies in schools	February 20, 2015 February 15, 2016	Passed out as amended February 15, 2016	No	Curriculum
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2220	Teachers' contracts; due process	No hearing	No action taken	Yes	Due Process
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2232	Personal financial literacy course as a requirement for high school graduation	February 11, 2015 February 16, 2015 February 24, 2015	Tabled date certain to February 23, 2015 Tabled indefinitely February 24, 2015 Sub-committee created March 16, 2015 Sub-committee letter draft approved by full committee April 2, 2015	No	Curriculum
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2257	Amendments to the professional negotiations act	No hearing	No action taken	Yes	Professional Negotiations

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2262	Providing a compliance deadline and penalties for non-compliance with the student data privacy act	March 4, 2015	No action taken	No	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2292	Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act	February 23, 2015 March 20, 2015 February 17, 2016 Removed from House Calendar and referred to Education March 8, 2015 March 18, 2015	Vote to pass out failed March 20, 2015 Amended with language of HB2676 and substitute bill passed out as amended February 17, 2016 Amended with substitute language and substitute for substitute bill passed out as amended March 18, 2016	Yes	Common Core
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2378	Establishing the Kansas legislature award for teaching excellence program	March 11, 2015	No action taken	No	Teacher
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2393	Requiring school districts to use generally accepted accounting principles; financial publication requirements	March 5, 2015 March 10, 2015	Tabled March 10, 2015 Sub-committee created March 16, 2015	No	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2441	Extending the school district efficiency audit sunset and exemption time frame	January 21, 2016 January 25, 2016	Passed out favorably to Consent Calendar January 25, 2016	No	Audit
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2457	Amending the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	February 2, 2016 February 8, 2016	Passed out as amended February 8, 2016	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2486	Creating the school district bond project review board	February 1, 2016 March 8, 2016 March 14, 2016 March 15, 2016	Substitute billed passed out as amended March 15, 2016	No	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2504	School district realignment	February 3, 2016	No action taken	Yes	Consolidation
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2532	Including financial literacy as an educational capacity	February 11, 2016 February 15, 2016	Passed out favorably February 15, 2016	No	Curriculum
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2533	Creating the student online personal protection act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2588	Requiring encryption of student data	February 15, 2016 March 10, 2016	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2596	Creating the classroom-based funding act	February 16, 2016	No action taken	Yes	Finance
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2630	Amending the special education for exceptional children act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Special Education
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2663	Creating the school district finance and quality performance act of 2016	No hearing	No action taken	No	Accountability
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2676	Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards	No hearing	No action taken	Yes	Curriculum
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2698	Requiring school districts to adopt certain policies against bullying, harassment and cyberbullying	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HCR5011	Foresight 2020 strategic plan	No hearing	No action taken	No	Misc.

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB136	Amending the professional negotiations act	March 14, 2016	Amended with language of HB2531 and substitute bill passed out as amended March 14, 2016	Yes	Professional Negotiations
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB312	Extending the school district efficiency audit sunset and exemption time frame	March 2, 2016	Passed out as amended March 2, 2016	No	Audit
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB323	Substitute for SB 323 by Committee Education-Creating the Jason Flatt act; requiring suicide prevention training for school district personnel	March 9, 2016 March 10 ,2016	Passed out as amended March 10, 2016	No	Safety and Security
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB342	Creating the student online personal protection act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2016 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	SB60	Substitute for SB60 by Committee on Education-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association	March 17, 2015	Tabled March 19, 2015	Yes	KSHAA
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2008	An Act repealing K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 46-1130 and 46-1132; concerning school district performance audits	March 3, 2016 Hearing canceled	March 14, 2016 S Sub HB2008 BPA (Contains contents of SB444)	No	Audit
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2441	Extending the school district efficiency audit sunset and exemption time frame	No hearing	March 16, 2016 S Sub HB2441 BP (Contains contents of SB444)	No	Audit
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2534	Amendments to the freedom from unsafe restraint and seclusion act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB176	An Act concerning school districts; relating to the professional negotiations act	February 23, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Professional Negotiations
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB2	Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teacher	January 28, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Teacher
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB294	An Act concerning education; relating to the financing and instruction thereof	March 24, 2015 March 25, 2015	No action taken	No	Finance
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB312	Extending the school district efficiency audit sunset and exemption time frame	January 21, 2016	February 2, 2016 BP & CC	No	Audit
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB323	Creating the Jason Flatt act; requiring suicide prevention training for school district personnel	January 26, 2016	February 11, 2016 Sub SB323 BPA	No	Safety and Security
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB324	Winter Celebration curriculum	January 28, 2016 February 9, 2016	No action taken	No	Curriculum
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB33	Creating the Kansas education standards study commission	January 21, 2015 February 11, 2015 February 12, 2015	No action taken	Yes	Accountability
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB342	Creating the student online personal protection act	January 28, 2016 February 8, 2016	February 17, 2016 BPA March 14, 2016 Contents inserted into S Sub HB2008	No	Safety and Security
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB356	Creating the school district bond project review board	February 10, 2016 February 17, 2016 February 18, 2016 March 15, 2016 March 16, 2016	March 17, 2016 Sub SB356 BPA	No	Accountability

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB357	Requiring a longitudinal reading program study by the department of education	February 2, 2016 February 15, 2016	No action taken	No	Accountability
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB444	Creating a language assessment program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing	March 7, 2016 March 8, 2016	March 16, 2016 Contents inserted into HB2441	No	Special Education
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB464	Amending the school classification system of the Kansas state high school activities association	March 3, 2016 March 9, 2016	No action taken	Yes	KSHAA
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB513	Creating the student physical privacy act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2016 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB67	An Act concerning schools; relating to curriculum standards; amending K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 72-6439 and repealing the existing section	No hearing		Yes	Curriculum
2017 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2078	Authorizing the reduction or elimination of property tax exemption by a school district	January 25, 2017	No Action	No	Finance
2017 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2179	Due process for terminating teachers' contracts	February 14, 2017	No Action	Yes	Due Process
2017 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2252	Amending the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	No Hearing Scheduled	No Action	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2017 House Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2374	Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	March 23, 2017	No action taken	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2017 Senate Education Committee Action Index	HB2048	School district plan addressing child sexual abuse; establishing Erin's law	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2017 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB145	Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system	February 13, 2017	No action taken	Yes	KSHAA
2017 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB206	Creating the student privacy and data protection act	No hearing	No action taken	No	Safety and Security
2017 Senate Education Committee Action Index	SB238	Amending the compulsory school attendance requirements	No hearing	No action taken	No	Student
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2078	Authorizing the reduction or elimination of property tax exemption by a school district	January 25, 2017	No Action	No	Finance
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2179	Due process for terminating teachers' contracts	February 14, 2017	No Action	Yes	Due Process
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2252	Amending the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	No Hearing Scheduled	No Action	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2374	Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act	March 23, 2017	No Action	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2483	Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts	January 24, 2018	2/19/18 BNP	Yes	Due Process
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2484	Provision of assistive technology, sign language and Braille services for students with a disability (18RS2964)	Reintroduced as HB 2613		No	Special Education
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2485	Requiring transportation of certain students when no safe pedestrian route is available. (18RS2430)	February 14, 2018	No Action	No	Misc.
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2540	Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association (18RS2784)	January 31, 2018	No Action	Yes	Choice
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2578	Concerning school districts: relating to the publication of bullying policies (18RS2814)	February 8, 2018	2/12/18 BP	No	Safety and Security
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2602	Concerning required screenings for dyslexia. Substitute Bill creates legislative task force on dyslexia	February 7, 2018	Substitute Bill 2/14/18 BPA	No	Special Education

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2613	Provision of assistive technology, sign language and Braille services for students with a disability (18RS2694)	February 13, 2018	3/8/18 BNP	No	Special Education
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2692	Students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder; requiring the provision of applied behavior analysis	No Hearing Scheduled		No	Special Education
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2694	Creating Community leaders service act	No Hearing Scheduled		No	Misc.
2018 House Bill Education Committee Bill Action Index	HB2723	Permitting residents to petition and vote for a transfer of school district territory; concerning requirements and procedure	February 14, 2018	No Action	Yes	Choice
2018 House Bill Judiciary Committee Action Index	HCR5029	Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review	April 3, 2018 April 4, 2018	Be passed as amended April 4, 2018	Yes	Constitutional Amendment
Not included in index, but found on legislative website (e.g., Minutes, Testimony, other documents)	HB2540	Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association	January 31, 2018		Yes	KSHAA

Document Title	Bill Number	Subject	Date of Hearing/ Discussion	Date of Final Action	Include in Study	Type
Not listed in index, but found on legislative website	HB2252	Amending the tax credit for low income students scholarship program act	No hearing	No action	Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship
Not listed in index, but found on legislative website	HB2374	Expanding the tax credit for low income students scholarship program	March 23, 2017		Yes	Tax Credit Scholarship

Appendix B - Policy Actors

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Steve	Abrams	M	Arkansas City	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	SCR1608-Constitutional amendment concerning school finance P
Linda	Aldridge	F	Topeka	USD501 Topeka Public Schools	Director of Special Education	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Jeff	Allmon	M	McPherson	USD418 McPherson USD	Teacher	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act P
Clay	Aurand	M	Belleville	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HB2723-Permitting Residents to petition and vote for a transfer of school district property P
John	Axtell	M	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
David	Barnes	M	Topeka	USD501 Topeka Public Schools	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Tammy	Bartels	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Dennis	Batliner	M	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Jeff	Baxter	M	Leavenworth	USD453 Leavenworth High School	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Chris	Beemer	M	Milford	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Susan	Beeson	F	Lost Springs	USD397 Centre Schools	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Stacey	Bell	F	Tecumseh	Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics (President)	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Elizabeth	Benditt	F	Leawood	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Tom	Benoit	M	Palco	USD269 Palco Board of Education and Schools for Quality Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Mike	Berblinger	M	Buhler	USD313 Buhler	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Gail	Billman	F	Altamont	USD506 Labette County Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Elizabeth	Bishop	F	Wichita	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review U
Jenifer	Boles	F	Shawnee Mission	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Lara	Bors	F	Garden City	USD457 Garden City Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. O
John	Bradford	M	Lansing	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments P
John	Bradford	M	Lansing	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HB2504-District Realignment P
Bill	Brady	M	Unknown	Schools for Fair Funding	Teacher and Education	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
					Profession Organization	exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review
Blake	Branson	M	Bel Aire	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Carol	Brent	F	Salina	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Roberta	Bretz	F	Goodland	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Teresa	Briggs	F	Topeka	League of Women Voters	Advocacy Group - Political	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Gary	Brockus	M	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Mike	Brown	M	Olathe	Johnson County Commissioner	Other Government Body	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Chris	Brown	M	Unknown	Kansans For Liberty	Advocacy Group - Political	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 P/N
G.A.	Buie	M	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association O
G.A.	Buie	M	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2504-District Realignment O
Henry	Burke	M	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Civil Engineer	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Will	Burton	M	Abilene	USD435 Abilene Schools	Educator and Activities Director	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association O
Dr. Mary	Byrne	F	Springfield, MO	Missouri Coalition Against Common Core (co-founder)	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Craig	Campbell	M	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Shawn	Cardin	M	Central Heights	USD288 Central Heights Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Dr. Walt	Chappell	M	Wichita	Educational Management Consultants (President)	Consultant	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Dr. Walt	Chappell	M	Wichita	Educational Management Consultants (President)	Consultant	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act P
Dr. Walt	Chappell	M	Wichita	Educational Management Consultants (President)	Consultant	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 O
Dr. Walt	Chappell	M	Wichita	Educational Management Consultants (President)	Consultant	HB2504-District Realignment P
Lucy	Clark	F	Hoisington	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Frank	Clark	M	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	Former Instructor and Administrator	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act
Greg	Clark	M	Central Plains	USD112 Central Plains	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Tracy	Clarkson	F	Salina	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Alan	Cobb	M	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Timothy	Cole	M	Eudora	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen (Parent/Home Educator)	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association P
Jessica	Cole	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Molly	Cole	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Jessica	Cole	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Molly	Cole	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Molly	Cole	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
William and Sanda	Coleman	F	Wichita	The Jeanine Coleman Academy of Arts and Letters	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Terry	Collins		Troy	Kansas Association of Special	Teacher and Education	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
				Education Administrators	Profession Organization	
Terry	Collins		Troy	Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
Terry	Collins		Troy	Doniphan County Education Cooperative #616	Special Education Cooperative Services	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Terry	Collins		Troy	Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Sandra	Connary	F	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Darlene	Cornfield	F	Wichita	Northfield School	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Darlene	Cornfield	F	Valley Center	Northfield School	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Donald	Cotter	M	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Mike	Crawford	M	Hugoton	USD210 Hugoton	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 P
Shannon	Crouch	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Troy	Damman	M	Cawker City	USD272 Waconda	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Tom	Davis	M	Wichita	Wichita Collegiate School	Private School	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system O
Julie	Davis	F	Winfield	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Diane	DeBacker	F	Topeka	Kansas State Department of Education	Other Government Body	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act N
Judith	Deedy	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2504-District Realignment O
Judith	Deedy	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Judith	Deedy	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Callie Jill	Denton	F	Topeka	Kansas Trial Lawyers Association	Professional Association	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2504-District Realignment O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts P
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2483-Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 N
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers N
Mark	Desetti	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers N
Allie	Devine	F	Topeka	Kansas Coalition for Fair Funding	Advocacy Group - Business	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Tom	Dolenz	M	Fowler	USD225 Fowler	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Rick	Doll	M	Lawrence	USD497 Lawrence Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
David	Dorsey	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts O
David	Dorsey	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
David	Dorsey	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act P
John	Drew	M	Belle Plaine	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act
Susan	Dringenberg	F	Parsons	USD503 Parsons Middle School	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Craig and Rainey	Dugan	F	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Dan	Duling	M	Pittsburgh	SEK Interlocal 637	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Carolyn	Dunn	F	Stafford	Stafford County Economic Development (Executive Director)	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2504-District Realignment O
Dr. James	Ellis	M	Lawrence	University of Kansas (Science Teacher Educator)	Scholar	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Rich	Felts	M	Manhattan	Kansas Farm Bureau	Advocacy Group - Farm	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Jamie	Finkeldei	M	Wichita	KS Assoc of Independent and Religious Schools	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system O
Jamie	Finkeldei	M	Wichita	Catholic Diocese of Wichita	Advocacy Group - Religious	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program P
Larry	Fischer	M	Topeka	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Brandi	Fisher	F	Mission	Mainstream Coalition	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Brandi	Fisher	F	Mission	Mainstream Coalition	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Terri	Fleming		Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Ryan	Flicknor	M	Manhattan	Kansas Farm Bureau	Advocacy Group - Farm	HB2504-District Realignment O
Leah	Fliter	F	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association O
Leah	Fliter	F	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2723-Permitting Residents to petition and vote for a transfer of school district property N
Becca	Flowers	F	Pratt	USD438 Skyline Schools	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Dr. William	Ford	M	Overland Park	Saint Thomas Aquinas High School	Catholic School	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system O
Trista	Fox	F	Plains	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts P
James	Franko	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Jim	Freeman	M	Wichita	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act N
Leena	Fry	F	Lenexa	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
John	Fuchs	M	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen (Parent/Home Educator)	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association P
Amy	Futhey	F	Caldwell	USD360 Caldwell Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Craig	Gabel	M	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2203-School districts-consolidation of administrative services O
Craig	Gabel	M	Wichita	Kansans For Liberty	Advocacy Group - Political	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Jan	Gallagher	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Sean	Gatewood	M	McPherson	Kansas Farmers Union	Advocacy Group - Farm	HB2504-District Realignment O
Kristin	George	F	Pratt	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

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Cory	Gibson	M	Valley Center	USD262 Valley Center Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Diane	Gjerstad	F	Wichita	USD259 Wichita Public Schools	Superintendent	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
Jeff	Glendening	M	Topeka	Americans for Prosperity	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act P
Karen	Godfrey	F	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act O
Karen	Godfrey	F	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts O
Erin	Gould	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act O
Nathan	Grebowiec	M	Manhattan	Schools for Quality Education	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
George	Griffith	M	Trego	USD208 Trego County	Superintendent	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Lanell	Griffith	F	Topeka	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Dr. George	Griffith	M	WaKeeney	USD208 Trego County	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
William	Hall	M	Salina	USD305 Salina Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Sandy	Halling	F	Bucklin	USD459 Bucklin Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O

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Melanie	Hamilton	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
David	Hand	M	Kanopolis	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2504-District Realignment O
George	Hanna	M	Tecumseh	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Pat	Happer		Meriden	USD340 Jefferson West	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Penny	Hargrove	F	Hiawatha	USD415 Hiawatha	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Marcel	Harmon	M	Lawrence	USD497 Lawrence Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Marcel	Harmon	M	Lawrence	USD497 Lawrence Schools	Local Elected School Board	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Kenneth	Harshberger	M	Meade	USD226 Meade	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Janet	Hartman	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Randy	Heatherly	M	Girard	USD248 Girard Middle School	Principal	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system P
Abby	Hedrick	F	Paola	USD368 Paola Schools	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
John	Heim	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act O
David	Hendershot	M	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Educator and Activities Director	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of O

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						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act
Karen	Herpak	F	Saint Mary's	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Jeff	Hines	M	Paola	USD368 Paola	Educator	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system P
Jeff	Hines	M	Paola	USD368 Paola High School	USD (Asst Principal, Activities Director)	SB464-Amending the school classification system of the Kansas state high school activities association P
Heidi	Holliday	F	Topeka	Kansas Center for Economic Growth	Policy Entrepreneurs	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Fred	Hollingshead	M	Topeka	USD450 Shawnee Heights Schools	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Deena	Horst	F	Salina	Kansas State Board of Education	Other Government Body	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Mike	Howerter	M	Parsons	Labette Community College Trustee	Other Government Body	HB2504-District Realignment P
Michael	Hubka	M	Roeland Park	Bishop Miege High School	Catholic School	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system O
Michael	Hubka	M	Wichita	Bishop Miege High School	Catholic School	SB464-Amending the school classification system of the Kansas state high school activities association O
Lisa	Huesers	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Patricia	Jackson	F	Meade	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of P

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						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act
Wade	Jacobs	M	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Tina	Jinkens	F	Eudora	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Lori	Johnson	F	Girard	USD248 Girard Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Todd	Johnson	M	Wichita	Sedgwick County Republican Party	Political Party	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Andrea	Johnson	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Sarah	Jurak	F	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Scott	Kaye	M	Andover	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Katherine	Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer	F	Oakley	Northwest Kansas Service Center (Director)	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2504-District Realignment O
Katherine	Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer	F	Oakley	Northwest Kansas Service Center (Director)	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O

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Kathy	Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer	F	Oakley	Northwest Kansas Service Center (Director)	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
Katherine	Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer	F	Oakley	Northwest Kansas Service Center (Director)	Special Education Cooperative Services	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
	Kimball		Lawrence	USD497 Lawrence Public Schools, Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Megan	King	F	Lawrence	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Lance	Kinzer	M	Olathe	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship P
Collin	Klein	M	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Shalin	Klein	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Collin	Klein	M	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	K-State Quarterback, home schooled in Loveland, CO	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Forrest	Knox	M	Altoona	Senator	State Elected Official	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Forrest	Knox	M	Altoona	Senator	State Elected Official	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Shirley	Koehn	F	Waverly	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of P

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						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act
Brian	Koon	M	Topeka	Kansas Families for Education	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2504-District Realignment O
Brian	Koon	M	Topeka	Kansas Families for Education	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts P
Brian	Koon	M	Topeka	Kansas Families for Education	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Lori	Kopp	F	Topeka	USD501 Topeka Public Schools	Educator	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments N
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2203-School districts-consolidation of administrative services N
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2320-Creating the Kansas Public Charter School Act O
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Tom Krebs Consulting	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O

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Tom	Krebs	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Carolyn	Kuhn	F	Topeka	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Stephanie	Kupper	F	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Cynthia	Lane	F	Kansas City	USD500 Kansas City Kansas Public Schools	Superintendent	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act P
Cynthia	Lane	F	Kansas City	Kansas City Kansas Public Schools	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 N
Cynthia	Lane	F	Kansas City	USD500 Kansas City Kansas Public Schools	Superintendent	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts P
Jacob	LaTurner	M	Pittsburgh	Senator	State Elected Official	SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers P
Jacob	LaTurner	M	Pittsburgh	Senator	State Elected Official	SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers P
Mark	LaTurner	M	Oswego	USD504 Oswego	Concerned Citizen (Superintendent)	SCR1608-Constitutional amendment concerning school finance O
Dennis	Lauver	M	Salina	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Irma	Lightner-Reimer	F	Alma	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

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Jeffrey	Locke	M	Santanta	USD507 Santanta Schools (Instructor of Art)	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Karen	Loggia	F	Leawood	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Robert	Love	M	Wichita	Northfield School	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Rebecca	Love Elder	F	Wichita	Northfield School	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Jerry	Lunn	M	Overland Park	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act P
Carolyn	Lunsford	F	Easton	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Larry	Lysell	M	Palco	USD269 Palco Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Betty	Majors	F	Meriden	USD340 Jefferson West Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Mary	Martin	F	Lenexa	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Blake	Matousek	M	Derby	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Jennifer	McCoy	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

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Harry	McDonald	M	Mission	Mainstream Coalition	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Angie	McDonald	F	McPherson	USD418 McPherson USD	Educator	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act P
Nikki	McDonald	F	Olathe	Olathe Public Education Network	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Debby	McDonald	F	Prairie Village	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Peggy	McLoughlin	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Kevin	McWhorter	M	Goddard	USD265 Goddard Public Schools	Superintendent	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Jerry	Meier	M	Topeka	KS Assoc. of Middle Level Educators and Bd. Member, KS Assoc. of Middle Level Administrators	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association O
Chad	Meitner	M	Hays	Thomas More Prep Marian	Catholic School	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system O
Jason and Brenda	Menges	M - F	Wichita	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Bradley	Menze	M	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

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Deb	Meyer	F	Shawnee Mission	USD512 Shawnee Mission School	Superintendent	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Deb	Meyer	F	Shawnee Mission	USD512 Shawnee Mission	Superintendent	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
Marvin	Miller	M	Wellington	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2504-District Realignment O
Dr. Ferrell	Miller	M	Junction City	USD475 Geary County Schools	Local Elected School Board	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Les and Natasha	Miller	F	Fredonia	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Russell	Miller	M	Newton	USD373 Newton (Assistant Superintendent)	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Jerry	Minneman	M	Brookeville	USD307 Ell-Saline	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Deann	Mitchell	F	Olathe	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Pastor Wade	Moore	M	Wichita	Christian Faith Centre and Urban Preparatory Academy	Christian School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Pastor Wade	Moore	M	Wichita	Christian Faith Centre and Urban Preparatory Academy	Christian School	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments P
Pastor Wade	Moore	M	Wichita	Christian Faith Centre and urban Preparatory Academy	Christian School	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program P
Shane	Morrison	M	Argonia	USD359 Argonia	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Bev	Mortimer	F	Concordia	USD333 Concordia	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 P

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Bill	Mullins	M	Marysville	USD364 Marysville	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 P
Gary	Musselman	M	Topeka	Kansas State High School Activities Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association N
Gary	Musselman	M	Topeka	Kansas State High School Activities Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association O
Gary	Musselman	M	Topeka	Kansas State High School Activities Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association O
Gary	Musselman	M	Topeka	Kansas State High School Activities Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB145-Amending the Kansas state high school activities association school classification system N
Gary	Musselman	M	Topeka	Kansas State High School Activities Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB464-Amending the school classification system of the Kansas state high school activities association N
David	Myers	M	Atchison	USD409 Atchison Public Schools	Director of Special Education	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Hosanna	Myers	F	Whitewater	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Michelle	Neal	F	Salina	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Brad	Neuenswander	M	Topeka	Kansas State Department of Education	Other Government Body	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O

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Lisa	Ochs	F	Kansas City	American Federation of Teachers	Labor - Union	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts P
Lisa	Ochs	F	Kansas City	American Federation of Teachers	Labor - Union	HB2483-Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts O
Lisa	Ochs	F	Kansas City	American Federation of Teachers	Labor - Union	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Kathy	O'Hara	F	Kansas City	Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas	Advocacy Group - Religious	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments P
Mike	O'Neal	M	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2203-School districts-consolidation of administrative services P
Mike	O'Neal	M	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship P
Mike	O'Neal	M	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act N
Mike	O'Neal	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Mike	O'Neal	M	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program P
Heather	Ousley	F	Merriam	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Thomas	Palace	M	Topeka	Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association of Kansas	Advocacy Group - Business	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Karla	Parsons	F	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P

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Jennifer	Patel	F	Lenexa	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Chad	Perry	M	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Megan	Peters	F	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Wendy	Phelan	F	Iola	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Wendy	Phelan	F	Iola	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Jeanine	Phillips	F	Wichita	Fundamental Learning Center	Private School	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship P
Jeanine	Phillips	F	Wichita	Fundamental Learning Center	Private School	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program P
Dawnelle	Priest	F	Dodge City	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Roberta	Proctor	F	Topeka	Kansas Organization of State Employees	Labor - Union	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts P
Courtney	Rankin	F	Dodge City	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Elisha	Rasmussen	F	Toronto	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P

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Elisha	Rasmussen	F	Toronto	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Marsha	Ratzel	F	Prairie Village	USD512 Prairie Village School	Teacher	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Jana	Rea	F	Lawrence	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Dr. Melissa	Reed	F	Emporia	Concerned Citizen	Educator	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Rob	Reynolds	M	Douglass	USD396 Douglass Public Schools	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Jeffrey	Richardson	M	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
David	Rine	M	Arlington, VA	George Mason University (professor)	Scholar	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Greg	Rinehart	M	Macksville	USD351 Macksville Schools	Superintendent	HB2504-District Realignment O
Steve	Roberts	M	Overland Park	Kansas State Board of Education	Other Government Body	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act P
Tom	Robinett	M	Overland Park	Overland Park Chamber of Commerce (Vice-President of Government Affairs)	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O

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Nicole	Rome	F	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Robb	Ross	M	Colby	USD315 Colby	Educator	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association O
Kindra	Rowley	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Teacher (3rd grade)	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Chris	Ruder	M	McPherson	USD418 McPherson	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 N
Barbara	Salvidar	F	Topeka	Concerned Women for America (State Director)	Advocacy Group - Religious	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Dr. Teresa	San Martin	F	Topeka	Kansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Andy	Sanchez	M	Topeka	AFL-CIO	Labor - Union	HB2483-Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts O
Ronald	Sarnacki	M	Winfield	Cowley County Special Services Cooperative	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Ronald	Sarnacki	M	Winfield	Cowley County Special Services Cooperative	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship O
David	Schanuer	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts * Incorrect contents in pdf with this name. -
David	Schauner	M	Topeka	Kansas National Education Association	Labor - Union	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
						exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review
Taylor	Schettler	F	Topeka	Kansas Chamber	Advocacy Group - Business	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act P
Rosy	Schmidt	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Michael	Schutteloffel	M	Topeka	Kansas Catholic Conference	Advocacy Group - Religious	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship P
Scott	Schwab	M	Olathe	Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act P
Tracy	Sealine	F	Souix City, IA	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Tracy	Sealine	F	Souix City, IA	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Teresa	Selensky	F	Grainfield	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Amber	Sellers	F	Overland Park	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Cheryl	Semmel	F	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts N
Cheryl	Semmel	F	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2203-School districts-consolidation of administrative services O
Cheryl	Semmel	F	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
					Profession Organization	
Cheryl	Semmel	F	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act N
Cheryl	Semmel	F	Topeka	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB136-Amending the professional negotiations act P
Phillis	Setchell	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Kevin	Shepard	M	Independence	Tri-County Special Education Cooperative/Interlocal No. 607	Special Education Cooperative Services	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
Prafulla	Shintri		Leawood	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Sharon	Shobney	F	Delia	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Denise	Shultz	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Jabar	Shumate	M	Tulsa, OK	Oklahoma Senator	Other Government	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship P
Jabar	Shumate	M	Tulsa, OK	Oklahoma Senator	Other Government Body	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program P
Mary	Sinclair	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Mary	Sinclair	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts O
Mary	Sinclair	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act N
Mary	Sinclair	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Jonathan	Small	M	Tulsa, OK	Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2400-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship P
David	Smith	M	Kansas City	United School Administrators of Kansas	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Erica	Smith	F	Arlington, VA	Institute for Justice (attorney)	Think Tank	HB2174-Tax credit for low income students scholarship program act amendments P
Scott	Smith	M	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Dr. Marty	Stessman	M	Shawnee Heights	USD450 Shawnee Heights Schools and United School Administrators	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. O
Rod	Stewart	M	Washington	USD108 Washington County Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Angela	Stiens	F	Shawnee	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Tricia	Stockebrand	F	Yates Center	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Tricia	Stockebrand	F	Yates Center	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Lori	Stockstill	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. O
Brian	Stone	M	Wichita	Fundamental Learning Center	Private School	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Paul	Stout	M	Topeka	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Denise	Sultz	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2504-District Realignment O
Denise	Sultz	F	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act O
Abby	Swygard	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association P
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2028-Creating the Kansas education standards study commission P
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education	HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts O

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
					Profession Organization	
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2319-Creating the coalition of innovative districts act P
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2483-Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers N
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB33-Establishing the Kansas Education Study Committee P
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2504-District Realignment O
Mark	Tallman	M	Topeka	Kansas Association of School Boards	Teacher and Education	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
					Profession Organization	
Larry	Tawney	M	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2504-District Realignment P
Matt	Teagarden	M	Topeka	Kansas Livestock Association	Advocacy Group - Farm	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Eric	Teetsel	M	Topeka	Family Policy Alliance of Kansas	Advocacy Group - Religious	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association P
Donn	Teske	M	McPherson	Kansas Farmers Union	Advocacy Group - Farm	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Kara	Thomason	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Alicia	Thompson	F	Unknown	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Teresa	Throckmorton	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act O
Teresa	Throckmorton	F	Shawnee Mission	Game On for Kansas Schools	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Greg	Tice	M	Renwick	USD267 Renwick Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2504-District Realignment N
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB196-Creating the Kansas public charter school act P
Dave	Trabert	M	Topeka	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2028-Creating the Kansas education standards study commission P
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2203-School districts-consolidation of administrative services N

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2320-Creating the Kansas Public Charter School Act P
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2596-Creating the classroom-based funding act N
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB176-Limiting negotiations under the professional negotiations act P
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 O
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SB33-Establishing the Kansas Education Study Committee P
Dave	Trabert	M	Wichita	Kansas Policy Institute	Policy Entrepreneurs	SCR1608-Constitutional amendment concerning school finance P
Elizabeth	Tracy	F	Argonia	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2504-District Realignment O
Tom	Trigg	M	Blue Valley	USD229 Blue Valley Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Tom	Trigg	M	Blue Valley	USD229 Blue Valley Schools	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 N
Bob	Voboril	M	Wichita	Catholic Diocese of Wichita	Advocacy Group - Religious	HB2374-Expanding the tax credit for low income student's scholarship program act P
Melissa	Wangemann	F	Topeka	Kansas Association of Counties	Other Government Body	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review N
Randy	Watson	M	McPherson	USD418 McPherson	Superintendent	SB176-Creating the coalition of innovative school districts P
Randy	Watson	M	McPherson	Coalition of Innovative Districts	Superintendent	SB294-Creating the Education Finance Act of 2015 N
Ken	Weaver	M	Emporia	Dean of the Teachers College, Emporia State University	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act O
Jeremy	Weber	M	Topeka	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
						Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act.
Patricia	Welicky	F	Bonner Springs	USD204 Bonner Springs Board of Education	Local Elected School Board	HB2504-District Realignment O
Michael	White	M	Topeka	Kansas Contractors Association	Advocacy Group - Business	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P
Darrel	Wilson	M	Manhattan	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Devin	Wilson	M	Topeka	Kansas PTA	Advocacy Group - Parent/Teacher/Community	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Devin	Wilson	M	Lenexa	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	SB22-Enacting the corporate education tax credit scholarship program O
Dr. Corbin	Witt	M	Junction City	USD475 Geary County Schools	Superintendent	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. O
Richard	Wood	M	Pittsburgh	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Robert	Wood	M	Pittsburgh	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Roger	Wood	M	Pittsburgh	Concerned Citizen	Concerned Citizen	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act P
Patrick	Woods	M	Topeka	USD501 Topeka Public Schools	Local Elected School Board	SB136-Amending the professional negotiations act P

First Name	Last Name		Location	Organization	Special Interest Group Type	Bill and Policy Position (Proponent, Opponent, Neutral, Unknown)
Ze-ev	Wurman	M	Palo Alto, CA	Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Department, U.S. Department of Education (former Senior Advisor)	Policy Entrepreneurs	HB2292-Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting the local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act. P
Gay	Younkin		Mulvane	USD263 Mulvane Public Schools	Director of Special Education	HB2263-Enacting the school district special needs scholarship O
				Kansas Music Educators Association	Teacher and Education Profession Organization	SB60-Authorizing participation by less than full-time students in activities regulated by Kansas state high school activities association O
				Central Kansas League	Sports League	HB2540-Authorizing participation by certain students in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association O
SIGNED By 5 School District Leaders		4 M, 1 F		Shawnee County School Districts	Superintendent	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review O
Clay Aurand, Steven Johnson & Troy Waymaster		3 M		Representative (elected)	State Elected Official	HCR5029-Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review P

Appendix C - Special Interest Group Mission Statements

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
AFL-CIO	We are the democratic, voluntary federation of 55 national and international labor unions that represent 12.5 million working men and women. We strive to ensure all working people are treated fairly, with decent paychecks and benefits, safe jobs, dignity, and equal opportunities.
American Federation of Teachers-Kansas	The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.
Americans for Prosperity	We protect the American Dream by fighting each day for lower taxes, less government regulation and economic prosperity for all.
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas	Growing as disciples of Jesus, Making Disciples for Jesus
Catholic Diocese of Wichita	Faith. Excellence. Tradition. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wichita are award-winning, accredited schools that educate the whole person-mind, body, and spirit. In parish schools, the mission is determined by the Catholic Church. In parish schools, right and wrong come first and then test scores and state championships follow.
Christian Faith Centre and Urban Preparatory Academy	Our mission is to provide students with a world-class school that gives students the knowledge, skills, character, and disposition to meet and exceed Kansas State Common Core Learning Standards, and prepares students for college and career. We will be a leading example of education in our community by becoming the first school of choice. We will grow a grade level each year until we reach 12th grade.
Concerned Women for America-Kansas Chapter	<u>Mission:</u> Concerned Women for America protects and promotes Biblical values and Constitutional principles through prayer, education, and advocacy. <u>Vision:</u> Concerned Women for America is leading a movement dedicated to impacting the culture for Christ through education and public policy.
Educational Management Consultants, LLC	Each of our education management consultants has years of classroom and administrative experience. We specialize in helping school district and college administrators find creative ways to provide quality, relevant instruction while reducing operating costs.

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
Family Policy Alliance of Kansas	At Family Policy Alliance of Kansas, our vision is a Kansas and a nation where God is honored, religious freedom flourishes, families thrive and life is cherished.
Fundamental Learning Center	Fundamental Learning Center empowers children, especially those with dyslexia, by teaching them to read, write and spell; educates adults by providing research-based literacy programs for children; and enlightens parents and the broader community to the educational and health needs of their children.
Game On for Kansas Schools	Game on for Kansas Schools is a nonpartisan grassroots effort by a group of parents, teachers, and concerned community members. We believe high-quality public education is a right for all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas schools to ensure they have the resources necessary to deliver that education to all Kansas students. We inform the community about issues and legislation affecting students in Kansas.
Institute for Justice	The Institute for Justice (IJ) is the National Law Firm for Liberty. IJ litigates to limit the size and scope of government power and to ensure that all Americans have the right to control their own destinies as free and responsible members of society.
Kansans for Liberty	We are re-establishing the ideals of community unity, family sanctity, and leadership accountability in the state of Kansas.
Kansas Association of American Educators	KANAAE is a statewide non-union, professional educators' organization, advancing the profession by offering a modern approach to teacher representation and educational advocacy, as well as promoting professionalism, collaboration and excellence without a partisan agenda.
Kansas Association of Counties	The Kansas Association of Counties is a quasi-public agency, which seeks to advance the public interest by promoting effective, responsive county government in Kansas.
Kansas Association of Independent and Religious Schools	Through its common commitment to quality education, KAIRS serves to unify its member schools while respecting their diversity. KAIRS provides a framework for communication and cooperation among independent and religious schools in the state of Kansas, preschool through secondary. In addition, KAIRS strives to maintain productive relationships with the Kansas State Board of Education, the Kansas Department of Education, the Kansas Board of Regents, the local, state, and federal governments, and other agencies that impact quality education.
Kansas Association of School Boards	KASB is a not-for-profit organization located in Topeka, Kansas and dedicated to serving members of governing boards for unified school districts, community colleges, area vocational-technical schools and cooperatives, interlocals and regional service centers. KASB will 1) Provide a culture of collaboration and service. 2) Be a voice of public education. 3) Improve student education outcomes.

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators	<u>Mission:</u> Special Education Leaders united in advocacy and committed to the success of all children. <u>Vision:</u> To be the voice of special education, to actively provide mentoring and support for leaders, and to advance the profession through policy and practice.
Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics	The goals of the Association are: a. To create and maintain greater interest in the learning and teaching of mathematics. b. To provide services and opportunities for professional growth and development of teachers of mathematics. c. To provide a forum through which teachers and others interested in mathematics learning and education can discuss and respond to issues and activities affecting mathematics education in Kansas and the nation. d. To promote the value of learning mathematics and take positions which will positively affect mathematics education in Kansas. e. To foster cordial relations among and between the various groups in Kansas who are interested in and impacted by mathematics education in the state.
Kansas Catholic Conference	Promoting Justice in Public Policy. The Conference operates at the intersection of faith and politics. By applying Catholic moral principles to the important political questions of the day, the Conference strives to ensure that citizens and elected officials evaluate public policy options in light of a moral framework that transcends party affiliation or partisan politics.
Kansas Center for Economic Growth	The Kansas Center for Economic Growth is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts research and analysis to promote balanced state policies that help ensure all Kansans prosper. The Kansas Center for Economic Growth's mission is to advance responsible policies by informing public discussion through credible, fact-based materials. We serve policymakers, the media and all Kansans who want to engage in making our state a place where opportunity and economic growth are widely shared. The Kansas Center for Economic Growth, launched in 2013, grew out of work that had been conducted as part of the Fiscal Focus project with Kansas Action for Children.
Kansas Chamber of Commerce	The mission of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce is to continually strive to improve the economic climate for the benefit of every business and citizen and to safeguard our system of free, competitive enterprise. The vision of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce is to make Kansas a top state to do business.
Kansas Coalition for Fair Funding	The Kansas Coalition for Fair Funding, Inc. is working to pass a constitutional amendment clarifying that the legislature shall determine the total amount of funding that constitutes suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state. The principle organizational members of the coalition are the Kansas Contractors Association; the Kansas Farm Bureau, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, the Kansas Livestock Association and the Kansas Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association.
Kansas Contractors Association	The Kansas Contractors Association is a professional association of contractors and those who provide supplies and services to the heavy, highway and utility construction industry. Working together, our members promote a better

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
	industry by advancing their level of skill, integrity and responsibility while improving the quality of life in our communities.
Kansas Families for Education	Kansas Families for Education, established in 2002 is a non-partisan, grassroots, volunteer organization of Kansas parents and taxpayers committed to our state's constitutional mandate that the legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the education interests of the state. We demand an excellent education for EVERY child in Kansas regardless of their zip code. KFE's members are located in every corner of the state.
Kansas Farm Bureau	Kansas Farm Bureau is and will remain the Voice of Agriculture to the legislature, Congress and the general public. We will educate when needed, protect when challenged and fight for our members to strengthen the lives of rural Americans and to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities.
Kansas Farmers Union	Kansas Farmers Union is the state's oldest active general farm organization working to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life for family farmers and ranchers and rural communities. We believe family ownership of farm land is the basis for the world's most viable system of food and fiber production. Maintaining this family farm system will preserve our natural and human resources as well as promote a strong rural economy and vibrant social structure. Kansas Farmers Union represents our members, who are engaged in diverse farming and ranching pursuits, through education, legislation and cooperation.
Kansas Livestock Association	<u>Mission:</u> Advance members' common business interests and enhance their ability to meet consumer demand.
Kansas Music Educators Association	The mission of the Kansas Music Educators Association is to support music educators by fostering leadership, providing professional development, and promoting the advocacy of music learning in schools and communities.
Kansas National Education Association	<p><u>Equal Opportunity:</u> We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.</p> <p><u>A Just Society:</u> We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.</p> <p><u>Democracy:</u> We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.</p> <p><u>Professionalism:</u> We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.</p> <p><u>Partnership:</u> We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.</p> <p><u>Collective Action:</u> We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As</p>

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
	education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.
Kansas Organization of State Employees	The KS Organization of State Employees (KOSE) is the largest union of state employees in Kansas. All non-supervisory, non-confidential employees in the executive branch of state government (exclusive of higher education) are eligible to join.
Kansas Parent Teacher Association	<u>Vision:</u> Every child's potential is a reality. <u>Mission:</u> To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.
Kansas Policy Institute	<u>Vision:</u> Equal opportunity for every Kansan to pursue success and the fulfillment of their individual promise of liberty as set out in America's founding documents. <u>Mission:</u> We engage citizens and policy makers with research and information to enact public policy solutions that protect the constitutional right to freedom of all Kansans, give them greater access to better educational opportunities, and allow them to keep more of what they earn. By protecting and promoting freedom, we will improve everyone's quality of life, make Kansas more competitive with other states, and attract new citizens and businesses.
Kansas State Board of Education	The Mission of the State Board of Education is to prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents. The Kansans CAN Vision is to Lead the World in the Success of Each Student.
Kansas State Department of Education	The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) is a dynamic, dedicated service agency that provides leadership, resources, support and accountability to the state's K-12 education system. KSDE administers the state's governance of education, standards and assessments, special education services, child nutrition and wellness, title programs and services, career and technical education, and financial aid. It is the goal of the agency to provide all Kansas children with equal access to a quality, high-level education that promotes student achievement and prepares all students for global success.
Kansas State High School Activities Association	The Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) serves students by providing leadership for the administration of education based interscholastic activities.

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
Kansas Trial Lawyers Association	KTLA's object shall be to uphold and defend the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Kansas in order to protect the rights of Kansans; to improve the administration of justice; to promote a high standard of ethics in the profession; to improve trial techniques and train lawyers in advocacy; to champion the right to trial by jury and independence of the judiciary; and to coordinate and promote the activities of its members in the interest of the legal profession and the public. As a specialty bar association, KTLA represents those trial lawyers who advocate for the rights of individuals harmed through no fault of their own, hold those who injure others accountable for their actions, and work to improve client representation in the field of criminal defense.
League of Women Voters-Kansas	The League of Women Voters of Kansas is a grassroots, volunteer, political organization with nine local Leagues across the state. For nearly 100 years, LWVK has encouraged the informed and active participation of citizens in government and has influenced public policy through education and advocacy. The League never endorses candidates or political parties.
Mainstream Coalition	<u>Mission:</u> The MainStream Coalition informs and engages individuals to advocate for good governance, quality public education, healthy communities and sustainable fiscal policy. <u>Quality Public Education:</u> MainStream affirms the right of every Kansan to an affordable, equitable, and excellent public education, from early childhood to post graduate opportunity, adequately funded by the state, that respects the professions that care for our children. <u>Public Education Finance:</u> The MainStream Coalition asserts that access to excellent, equitable public education, from early childhood to post-graduate career, is a right. Fully funding this education is a responsibility of government. Quality public education has proven to enhance economic success and health outcomes for students. The Kansas Supreme Court has repeatedly found the state to be underfunding public education, and this must stop.
Missouri Coalition Against Common Core	Working to regain local control of education in Missouri. Our two goals are to 1. Take control of education out of DC and private corporation's hands and return it to our local communities, and 2. Protect our children's privacy by restricting government's ability to collect and share information about them.
Northfield School of the Liberal Arts	Our door is open to anyone willing to develop lifelong learning tools. We aim to revitalize education by preserving and living out the ancient Liberal Arts tradition in modern times.
Northwest Kansas Education Service Center	The Kansas Association of Education Service Agencies is an association of seven education service centers in Kansas that are totally committed, collectively and individually, to helping every school, every educator, and every student succeed.
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs	To promote the flourishing of the people of Oklahoma by advancing principles and policies that support free enterprise, limited government, and individual initiative.

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
Olathe Public Education Network	Over the past several years, we have watched elected officials in Topeka continue to undermine public schools with their votes to inadequately fund public education in Kansas. These votes have had real-life consequences in our classrooms. The bickering and inability to compromise in Topeka has resulted in continuing uncertainty as the Kansas Supreme Court has repeatedly sent their budgets back as insufficient and unconstitutional. The school funding issues need to be resolved and we need to ensure the legislators we send to the Kansas statehouse have our children's best interest at heart.
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce	The mission of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce is to enhance the business environment and quality of life in our community.
Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association of Kansas	A statewide trade association that represents over 300 independent petroleum marketers and convenience store retailers throughout Kansas.
Schools for Fair Funding	Schools for Fair Funding is a coalition of more than 50 school districts representing one-third of Kansas public school children. We want policy makers to restore funding for our public school classrooms. Save our communities and neighborhood public schools.
Schools for Quality Education	An organization of over 100 rural school districts throughout the state of Kansas. SQE was formed with the five following purposes: 1) to provide quality educational opportunities for all children of Kansas; 2) to oppose further Kansas unified school district consolidation without the approval of the patrons involved; 3) to pursue the quality of excellence in education; 4) to give identity, voice, and exposure to the particular quality of rural schools; 5) to enhance the quality of life unique in the rural community.

Special Interest Group	Mission/Vision Statement (or "About Us," " Our Background" on organizational website)
Sedgwick County Republican Party	<p>The Kansas Republican Party believes that the primary goal of education should be to prepare Kansas students for success through rigorous, quality, academic instruction according to each student's God given gifts and talents. We support the constitutional establishment of the State Board of Education as an elected body and accountable to Kansas voters. Kansas educational standards established and adopted by the State Board of Education should ensure that all subjects that intersect with faith or politics should be taught objectively and without religious or political bias. Public education is an indispensable service, which is to be supervised by the state and conducted by local schools supervised by local school boards. We want Kansas public schools to be the best in the nation, and our students, upon high school graduation, should be fully prepared without the need of costly remediation, to advance into their adult lives, be it at home, work, community college, technical school, or the university. Higher education should seek ways to reduce tuition costs and be places of learning and impartial instruction, not zones of intellectual intolerance and political correctness. Furthermore, it is an abuse of the public trust for public schools to use taxpayer dollars to hire lobbyists and to fund lawsuits against the state. We call for yearly auditing of all public school districts for efficient and transparent use of state funds. We believe Kansas public and private schools and homeschooling serve our state well, and that greater innovation and healthier competition in education will enhance educational opportunities for Kansas children. Furthermore, we support base state funding following the student as a means of encouraging competition and promoting school choice. Kansas students should no longer be subjected to sex education, surveys and data collection of any kind on their performance, personal and family lives without the express consent of their parents. We call for the study of the Constitution and American History by sourcing the original documents of our founding fathers. Civics and financial literacy should also be included in primary and secondary school curriculums. We call for legislation protecting the body privacy rights of all students.</p>
Stafford County Economic Development	To promote economic and population growth throughout the County by assisting our local businesses, engaging in community activities, and promoting Stafford County as a great place to live, work and play!
The Jeanine Coleman Academy of Arts and Letters	No Information Available
Tom Krebs Consulting	No Information Available
United School Administrators of Kansas	<p><u>Mission:</u> Developing and uniting educational leaders to support and advocate for the success of every Kansas student. <u>Vision:</u> World Class Leadership, World Class Student Success</p>

Appendix D - Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- 1) Please tell me a little about yourself and the work you do in education policy.
- 2) What do you believe are the most important policy issues in K-12 education in the past 5 years? The next 5-10 years?
- 3) What are the specific policies that you are interested in/work on? Why do you advocate/lobby for [policy]?
 - a. What are the benefits of [policy]?
 - b. What, if any, are the drawbacks of [policy]?
 - c. What may be unintended outcomes?
- 4) What do you think about the following policy issues?
 - a. Due Process
 - b. Coalition of Innovative Districts
 - c. Corporate Tax Credit for Low Income Student Scholarship
 - d. Public Charter Schools
 - e. District Realignment
 - f. Constitutional Amendment
 - g. Common Core
- 5) Please tell me more about how you/your organization determines its policy position.
- 6) What, if any, other organizations, groups, or individuals do you work with on education policy issues?
- 7) What activities do you believe are most effective in influencing education policy?
- 8) What groups/individuals do you look for to help guide/inform your policy positions?
 - a. Are there certain scholars, professional organizations, publications that help you frame your policy position?
- 9) How do you frame your message?
- 10) What do you believe is the purpose of education?
- 11) What do you believe the role of government should be in education?
- 12) Is there anything else you'd like to share about? Is there anything else I should have asked?
- 13) Do you have any documents that may be useful to my research?
- 14) Is there anyone else you think I should talk with to better understand K-12 education policy in Kansas?

Appendix E - Codebook

Code	Description
Archaeology of Knowledge	Sources of knowledge and information policy actors get information cite to support policy positions (Foucault, 1972).
Coalition of Innovation Districts	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
Common Core	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
Constitutional Amendment	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
Corporate Tax Scholarship	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
District Realignment	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
Due Process for Teachers	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee perceptions. 2. Testimony
Public Charter Schools	Neoliberal Policy: 1. Interviewee Perceptions. 2. Testimony
<i>In Vivo Code</i>	<i>Emerging themes: code developed during first cycle coding</i>
Choice	School choice as basis for policy preference.
Competition	Competition as basis for policy preference.
Data Manipulation	Policy actor mentions belief that opponents manipulate data in testimony.
Determine Policy Position	Policy actor shares personal story of experience or professional qualifications.
Education Fail v Succeed	Perception of current status of the state education system.
Finance	Lower costs of education as basis for policy preference.
Home School	Parent home-schools child as basis for policy preference.
Local Control	Local control as basis for policy preference.
Religion	Religion as basis for policy preference.
Sign Offs	Farewell phrase to end testimony.
Sports	1. Participation in public school sports desired by home schooled children. 2. School or community personnel uses ideological dialect of local pride in sports team as policy justification.
Taxpayer	Taxpayer arguments as basis for policy preference.
<i>Language</i>	<i>Answers key research question: How do these groups use language to maintain or try to change power relations?</i>
Constitutional Dialect	Used as a compliment to Scientific and Ideological. Text coded here are policy positions based upon State Constitution, and the system of norms that has evolved for school organization and management in Kansas.
Ideological Dialect	Seeks to create images that resonate with the sentiments of the population and use that resonance to lead voters to support particular political programs (Wagner, R.E., 2018).
Scientific Dialect	Explains how observed patterns of taxing and spending reflect institutionally governed processes of fiscal competition (Wagner, R.E., 2018). Reflects a detached, disinterested observation.

Policy Diffusion	Political leaders look to their neighbours for economic policy solutions (Wong & Langevin, 2007).
Strategies	Answers key research question: How do different policy actors pursue their policy preferences?
<i>Public Choice</i>	<i>Politics as trade-offs between special interest groups and legislators (i.e., actions based upon the benefit of politician's re-election) (Buchanan, 1999)</i>
Rent Seeking	Policy actors seek to maximize their own advantages through the rules of government (Buchanan, 1999).
Provider Capture	Policy actors who provide government service receive most of the benefit of such expenditure and use it for their own interests, with very little of the expenditure impacting collective needs (Buchanan, 1999).
Purpose of Education	Beliefs policy actors express regarding the purpose of education. 1. Interviewee Perceptions. 2. Testimony
Role of Government in Education	Beliefs policy actors express regarding the role of government in education. 1. Interviewee Perceptions. 2. Testimony
Versus	Us versus Them themes (Saldana, 2016).
<i>Who participates</i>	<i>Answers key research question: Who participates in K-12 state education policy?</i>
Actor Networks	Groups/organizations work together.

Appendix F - Due Process for Teachers

Introduction

While decisions about employment are made at the district level by Superintendents and locally elected school boards, laws governing employment rights of school personnel are the purview of the Kansas legislature under the Professional Negotiations Act. Prior to 2014 teachers in Kansas were guaranteed the right to appeal with a transparent set of steps in termination decisions, called due process. Often misunderstood by many as tenure practices that restrict employee removal, the in practice due process was strongly opposed by school boards and administrators. To bring public education in-line with business sector practices where ‘no one gets tenure,’ a sole legislator was able to circumvent the political process to enact social change. This policymaking course was described after-the-fact in later testimony seeking reinstatement of these rights:

In the 2014 legislative session, the repeal of this statute was never proposed as a bill. The proposal was never subject to a public hearing. And the proposal did not have broad legislative support even in a legislature that would be considered far more conservative than now. The repeal of the due process statute came as a Senate floor amendment to an education budget bill in the wee hours of an April morning. And by wee hours, we’re talking about past midnight just for clarification. Other policy provisions that had failed either in committee or on the floor as stand-alone bills were also logrolled into the education budget bill. The conference committee negotiators who were among the minority of legislators who supported these ideas, refused to remove them. They wound up in the education budget conference committee report brought before the full House long after midnight of a second 22-hour day. At that time, the education bill failed to get

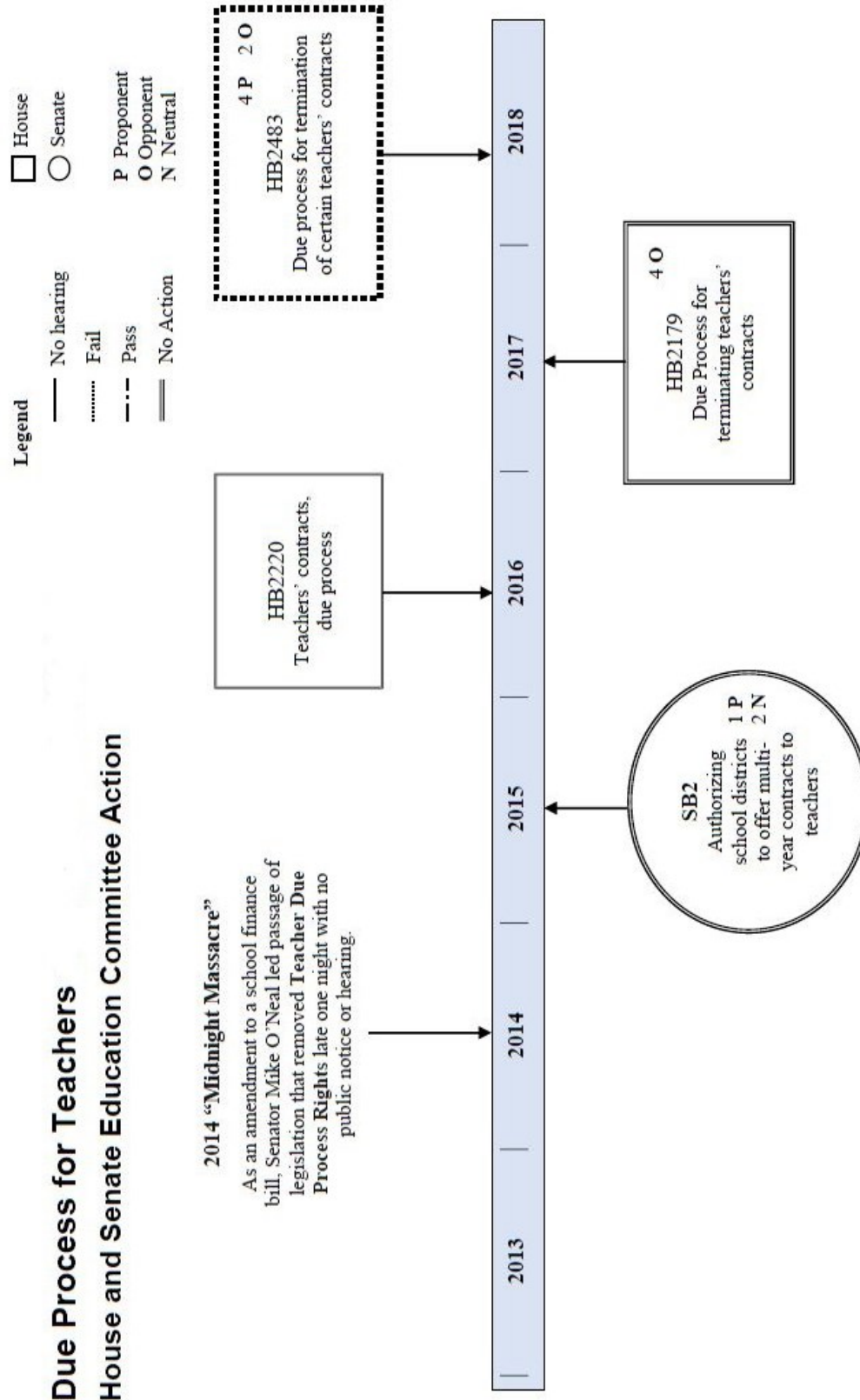
the needed 63 vote majority to pass. A call of the House was put on and the members remained locked in the chamber for several hours until the 63rd vote could be pressured into casting a vote against conscience. What a shameful lesson that night was in intimidation, tyranny, and total disrespect for the legislative process (Desetti, Testimony HB2483, January 24, 2018).

There was no public hearing for the removal of due process rights for teachers because the bill was not included on any agenda. The change in due process status instead came as part of a bulk package of education statute changes, including the inception of the tax credit scholarship program, as summarized by the Kansas Legislative Research Department:

In the act governing due process procedures, the bill would strike from the definition of “teacher” any professional employee who is required to hold a certificate to teach in any school district. Instead, “teacher” would be defined as any teacher or instructor in any technical college, the institute of technology, or community college (Kansas Legislative Research Department, 2014 Summary of Legislation, Senate Sub. for HB2506).

No public discourse exists to understand differing perspectives for and against due process for teachers. However, interviewees shared their thoughts on the matter representing both supportive and opposing positions on due process for teachers. The remainder of this policy topic case study summarizes interviewee perceptions and two hearings held after the ‘midnight massacre’ that sought to restore some aspect of due process rights for teachers (See Figure F.1).

Figure F-1 Evolution of Due Process for Teachers Policy Discourse



Who Participates

After due process was removed in 2014, three bills were introduced to reinstate some aspect of due process rights for teachers in Kansas. Participants in this discourse included three different labor unions, one parent and school advocacy group, along with the two most frequently participating education lobbying groups. In 2015, two legislators provided oral testimony to the Senate Committee on Education requesting school districts be allowed to offer teachers multi-year contracts. Although no record of their discourse exists, one interpretation is SB2 responds to what was seen by many as an injustice when due process was taken away. House Bill 2179-*Due process for terminating teachers' contracts*, heard during the 2017 session brought two special interest groups together to oppose putting back into place due process rights for teachers. Both special interest groups gained when due process was removed in 2014. School boards, represented by the Kansas Association of School Boards, gained power in employment relations and did not want to give this newly found authority away, while the Kansas Policy Institute voiced support for the concept of local control by explaining:

Contrary to the hype that surrounded the passage of HB 2506, the law does not eliminate due process for teacher as was so falsely reported and misunderstood. It simply put control of due process back in the hands of local school boards – making due process a local issue and following a basic Kansas tenant regarding public education, that being local control. We believe that when decisions are made closest to where those decisions impact, the better (Dorsey, Testimony HB2179, February 14, 2017).

Due process for teachers had the strongest support from four labor unions (KNEA, Kansas Organization of State Employees, AFL-CIO, AFT), several of whom participated in more than one hearing.

Proponents Versus Opponents

Policy actor perspectives are only available for the hearings held to consider whether to reinstate some aspect of due process for teachers. House Bill 2179-*Due process for terminating teachers' contracts* had three unions and two parent advocacy groups supporting the proposal, while KPI and KASB opposed (Table F.1) claiming that a process was unnecessary because school boards have the sole power to terminate employees. The next hearing, HB2483-*Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts*, had four opponents who all agreed that the proposal did not provide enough protections.

Table F.1 Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type

	Proponent	Neutral	Opponent
SB2-Authorizing school districts to offer multi-year contracts to teachers			
Labor Union		2	
State Elected Official*	2		
Teacher and Education Profession Association		1	
*No written testimony			
HB2179-Due process for terminating teachers' contracts			
Advocacy - Parent/Teacher/Community	1		
Labor Union	3		
Policy Entrepreneur			1
Teacher and Education Profession Organization			1
HB2483-Due process for termination of certain teachers' contracts			
Labor Union			3
Teacher and Education Profession Association			1

During these hearings, lobbyists share differing perspectives about whether some due process rights should be restored. As shown in Table F.2, these perspectives relied upon personal observations rather than data-based information and research.

Table F.2 Differing Perspectives on Restoring Due Process Rights for Teachers

Opponent	Proponent
“In discussing this issue at 10 Regional Meetings across the state, the strong consensus was that our members believe local boards, who are the employers and managers of the school system and are responsible for student achievement and management of district funds, should make the decision on removing teachers. We also support an appeal or recourse if boards make decisions that are arbitrary or capricious.	“Experience tells us that when individual employees are each on their own, and can be fired or disciplined for any reason and with no due process, they’re far less able to speak up on issues such as workplace safety, discrimination, harassment or the quality of the

However, we do not believe the previous system was the best way to achieve those two goals.” (Tallman, Testimony HB 2483, January 24, 2018)	services the public receives.” (Ochs, Testimony HB 2483, January 24, 2018)
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Determining the Policy Position

There were no references to research, popular media sources, or other states’ policies provided as rationale. Policy positions supporting restoration of due process rights were based upon traditional norms of public employment, and the idea that teachers need protection from arbitrary decision-making, often from parents who disagree with curriculum. This sentiment is exemplified by a pro-education advocacy group, who said:

I am often asked why teachers need due process. The fact is, a public school teacher’s job may run counter to political realities at times, and without due process, a teacher may be fired for doing a good job. To do their jobs well, teachers are expected to: challenge obsolete educational methodologies; push through entrenched district bureaucracies; advocate for students even if doing so is unpopular; to faithfully grade all students accurately, even the offspring of politically powerful members of the community; to demand a student receive special education services against the interests of a district trying to keep costs low, and many other examples. To expect teachers either to do these things as we rightfully demand of them, or to have a stable career, is not a reasonable expectation, and not an expectation that will make public schools better. Teachers need due process, so that people who object to their lawful efforts must show cause for termination instead of mere personal prejudice – or no cause at all. Without due process, teachers may be subject to termination for doing the right thing (Koon, Testimony HB2179, February 14, 2016).

As mentioned, the two lobbyists who opposed reinstating due process rights agreed that the new political reality gave rightful power for employment decisions to locally elected school boards. Only two interviewees opposed due process for teachers and expressed opinions aligned with the neoliberal viewpoint that education should mirror business sector practices, summed up as “*why do teachers get special protections?*” (Interviewee 3)

The Language of Due Process

Policy discourse from special interest groups can generally be placed into two dichotomous categories, scientific or ideological, to understand how these groups use language to persuade lawmakers. In the case of Due Process, much of the discourse was framed as explanation of how due process works in practice (see Table F.3) or historical accounting of events preceding the removal of this teachers’ right.

Scientific Dialect

Testimony can generally be characterized and understood as either stating the facts (i.e., scientific dialect) or stories to appeal to human emotion (i.e., ideological dialect). Every piece of written testimony on due process centered on scientific dialect. One lobbyist used scientific dialect to record the historical context of the removal of due process, while most other messaging from lobbyists explained teachers’ rights and how policy proposals would impact school boards and teachers. Several testimonials sought to explain the difference between perceptions of tenure and due process rights, while remind others that school administrators have a responsibility to implement quality employee performance review as part of the due process procedures.

It’s frustrating to me when I hear people say due process “limits flexibility” or prevents an employer from “getting rid of bad employees.” First, under the terms of this bill, the

right to a due process hearing does not attach until the teacher is in his/her third year of employment. Essentially, the teacher is in what is more or less a probationary period for his/her first two years. This gives the district ample time to identify any performance deficiency. Second, it is incumbent on any employer to document employee performance through regular performance evaluations and feedback sessions. Most employers do so as a matter of legal necessity, as documenting performance deficiencies can shield employers from claims that an employee was fired for an alternate, discriminatory reason such as sex or age. If an employer has documented poor performance, the employer can easily prevail at a due process proceeding (Proctor, Testimony HB2179, February 14, 2017).

Ideological Dialect

Ideological dialect (n = 2 of 13, 15.4%) was not prevalent in due process discourse largely because participation was limited to experienced lobbyists. One of these testimonials discussed employee performance management responsibilities in an ideological manner, while another shared the result of the ‘midnight massacre’: “KNEA and AFT-Kansas both report that teachers are voicing how disheartening and discouraging they find the lack of respect and professional dignity accorded to them by the Legislature” (Ochs, Testimony HB2483, January 24, 2018).

Different Meanings

Differing perspectives on what due process means was common in testimony and interviews.

While the exact definitions vary from state to state, and can often be complicated, I wish to shed a little light on the inaccuracy of using the words ‘tenure’ and ‘due process’

interchangeably. These are distinct legal statuses, not mere synonyms (Koon, Testimony HB2179, February 14, 2017).

Table F.3 Due Process vs Tenure

Kansas Definition of Due Process	Definition of Tenure
Sec. 51. On and after July 1, 2014, K.S.A. 2013 Supp. 72-5438 is hereby amended to read as follows: 72-5438. (a) Whenever a teacher is given written notice of intention by a board to not renew or to terminate the contract of the teacher as provided in K.S.A. 72-5437, and amendments thereto, the written notice of the proposed nonrenewal or termination shall include: (1) A statement of the reasons for the proposed nonrenewal or termination; and (2) a statement that the teacher may have the matter heard by a hearing officer upon written request filed with the clerk of the board of education or the board of control or the secretary of the board of trustees within 15 calendar days from the date of such notice of nonrenewal or termination. (Senate Sub. for HB2506, 2014)	Tenure: The right to keep a job permanently. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Pro-education lobbyists portray a legislature who incorrectly believed that due process for teachers is the same as tenure practices wherein employment is permanent, as exemplified in the following explanation:

What is meant by “due process”? Due process essentially means that if any agency or other public employer wants to fire a public employee, that employer must be able to give a good and defensible reason (also known as “just cause”) for such an action. Due process means that the employee is entitled to know why he or she is being fired—and has the right to tell his or her side of the story, often in the context of a hearing. Due process doesn’t mean “lifetime job security” or that a public employee can’t be fired. But the concepts of due process and just cause do protect employees from specific abuses, such as workplace rules being administered in ways that aren’t uniform or employees being fired before the charges against them are investigated or substantiated (Ochs,

Testimony HB2483; January 24, 2018).

An interview participant shared that from a message framing perspective “opponents of due process have a huge advantage. The word tenure is opposed by rank and file, who believe no one should have guaranteed employment regardless of position. On the flip side, due process sounds like some lawyer-like word that they don’t understand.” (Interviewee 1)

Strategies

It is unclear from documents if unions coordinated their discourse and efforts to restore due process rights, but three different labor unions supported policies to protect workers’ rights. This support does not indicate union interest in education policy, but rather shows their concern for precedent and potential ramifications for all public sector employees and rights.

One politician was willing to circumvent traditional governance processes that provide transparency and accountability to tax payers to achieve his preferences. Removal of due process for teachers highlights how policy develops based upon political motivations rather than research evidence. Public choice theory assumes that policy decisions are made to benefit the elected official, which leads to the conclusion that the individual who was willing to circumvent legislative norms believed the payoff of such a decision would improve chances of re-election. Given that the policy would not bring support from a large voting bloc, the rival explanation that this action was motivated by potential campaign contributions is strong.

Versus: Political Struggle to Gain or Maintain Power

Political discourse around due process rights for teachers illustrates a neoliberal strategy to reduce power of teachers through erosion of state-granted rights. Through this issue, school boards increased their perceived power over employees through the removal of a procedure that included an unbiased, third party arbitrator. Several politicians used the opportunity to advocate

for a bill to restore teacher rights, potentially as a strategy to gain or maintain support of the teacher and education-related special interest groups.

Appendix G - Tax Credit Scholarship Program

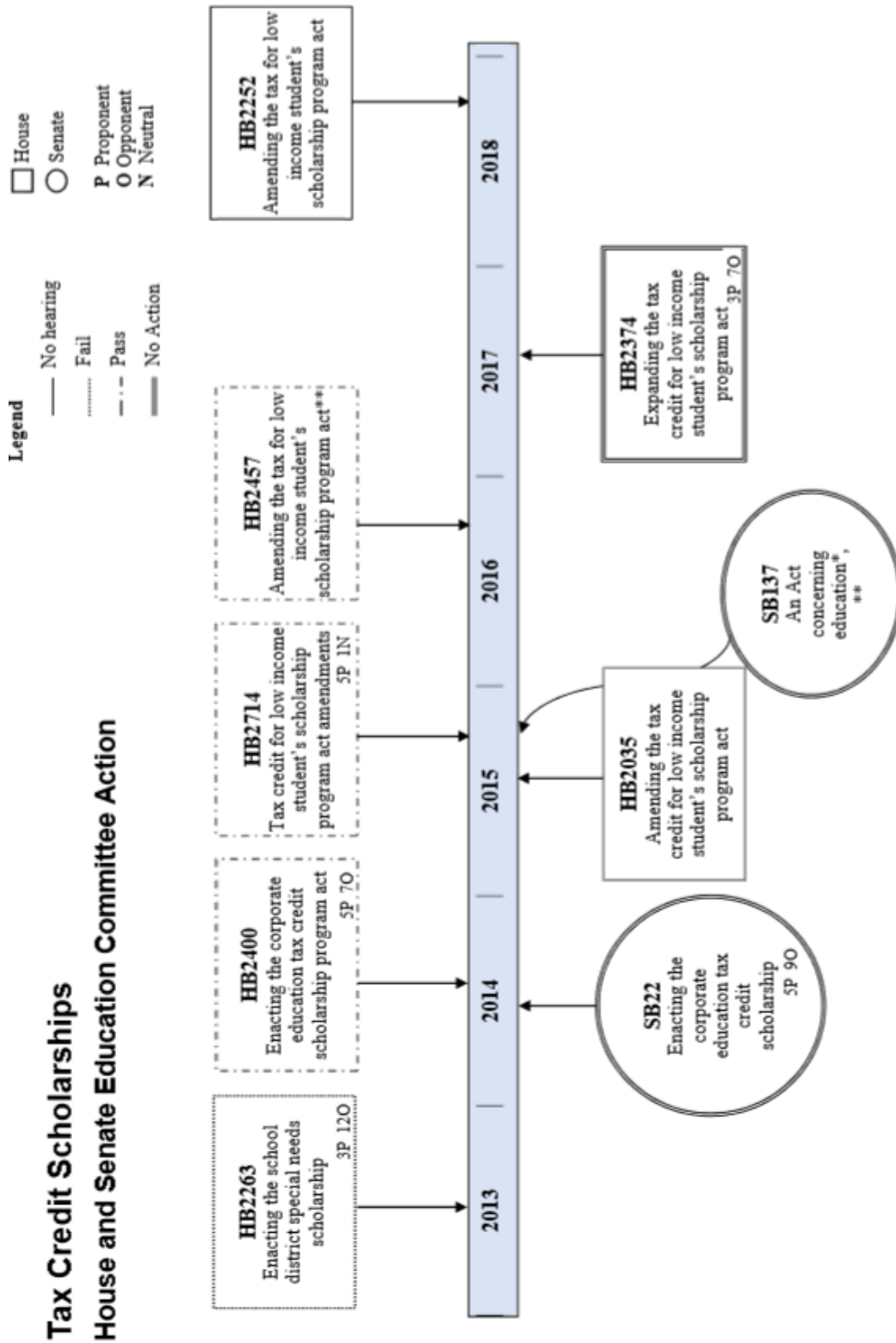
Introduction

Governor Brownback signed the tax credit scholarship program into law on May 1, 2014. The first Kansas policy authorizing school choice to include private and religious schools was packaged as a tax credit scholarship funded by corporate donations. Policy discourse was initially framed as a method to provide more resources and opportunities for students who require special education, which failed due to its disregard of the slew of federal and state laws that outline the rights of students with disabilities. The following effort (i.e., HB2400, 2013 and SB22, 2014) focused on primarily selling the policy as a tax credit for corporations without consideration for restricting student eligibility. Although neither education committee took action on these proposed bills, several testimonials and interviewees shared how this policy was adopted without scrutiny. A detailed testimonial recited step-by-step the context of the political process for adopting this policy:

The scholarship program, originally in Hs Sub for SB 22, failed in a division vote on the House floor, 56-63 in 2013. It was amended into HB 2506 in 2014 during a debate in the Senate. There were no Senate hearings on the bill. The inclusion was performed at the urging of a former House Ed chair that was not returned to Topeka for this session. Three other vocal supporters from the Ed committee also lost their bid to return this session. The whole program was passed in the House late at night packaged with many other bills; House members that voted the bill down once were not given a second opportunity to judge the worth of the program on its own merits. And even with that kind of pressure, it passed in the House with the bare minimum necessary, 63 votes (Krebs, Testimony HB2473, March 23, 2017).

Efforts to enact and amend a tax credit scholarship program appeared in nine different Senate and House bills over the six-year time period. Although strongly opposed by education professionals, a small coalition of business advocacy and religious and private schools succeeded in supporting these bills. House Bill 2400-*Enacting the tax credit scholarship program act*, passed in 2014, created rules for transferring tax-payer money to approved scholarship granting organizations who would then pay out these funds, minus a service fee, to qualified participating schools. The scholarship program was successfully amended twice. The first-time allowing individuals to donate to the scholarship fund and receive the tax credit (i.e., HB2174), and the second time, without any non-government testimony, to lower the income level for student eligibility and reduce the deduction from 100 to 90 percent (i.e., HB2457). Although eleven members voted the bill out of committee, only six of these individuals were willing to record their name as a vote in vote.

Figure G.1 Tax Credit Scholarship Policy Development Timeline



*Full title: An Act concerning education; relating to the school district finance and quality performance act; virtual school act; student data privacy act; tax credit scholarship programs

**No special interest group testimony

Several Interview participants shared their perceptions that the tax credit scholarship was less about education than it was a political win for conservative legislators and tax avoidance mechanism for corporate interests.

That was a political deal. The proponents were conservative. That is...to the liberals [tax credit scholarship] was a variation on school vouchers, it was a way to fund private education. And there are those who believe that the state should not be funding private education. The purpose of the state is to fund public education. (Interviewee 6)

That was done by ultra, ultra-Republican conservatives. They want to give a tax credit to anybody's eligible. Now, if you put it up for a vote pure, most the Democrats and the moderate Republicans will vote no. But to get it out for a vote is really, it's not easy on that bill. But the bottom line is it's a way to help the ultra, ultra-conservative group and let them choose where they want to go to school. (Interviewee 16)

One interviewee acknowledged that tax credit scholarship is an effective political bargaining tool, stating that for the upcoming legislative session: "If they're going to spend a lot more money on public schools, which we assume they will this year [2019], then the Conservatives want something to vote for." (Interviewee 13)

Given the context of policy adoption, the bevy of potential negative impacts outlined in testimony, circumvention of the State Constitution to put into law a highly unusable school choice program exemplifies how public choice leads to bad policy. Several interviewees shared that the scholarship has not benefited students for several reasons. First, administrative barriers embedded in the legislation make it almost impossible for private schools to access the program.

There are so many restrictions that the Department of Ed put on that it's really impossible

for most families to qualify for any kind of help. I always felt like those restrictions were put on it that would frustrate parents. So that nobody would access that fund.

(Interviewee 7)

Several Interviewees pointed out that the policy has not provided the benefits to low income students that were touted during debate because the policy was not designed to help students. This fact is exemplified in the two following quotes: “Tax credit wasn't designed; it wasn't designed for low income students it was designed more so for people to get the tax credit.” (Interviewee 11)

It benefits the wealthy more than it benefits the poor. Just because you're paying my tuition to go to a school doesn't mean I have the transportation to get to that school. That doesn't mean I have the ability to pay for my books, that I have to pay for the lunches that I need, to pay for to all the other expenses that pop up in many of our private schools. I don't think it benefits the people that it's intended to benefit, which is the kids.

(Interviewee 8)

Proponents of tax credit scholarships also recognize that the policy in and of itself is not sufficient in helping low income students: “In the first several years it started, and we were thinking that it be really helpful for some type of families, but those families can't afford transportation they can't afford the gas to get the kids to school.” (Interviewee 7)

Possibly more detrimental to the success of the program was that its philanthropic basis ceased to exist. Some opponents argued the policy would put a \$10 million hole annually in the budget, but several interviewees shared that the program has “gone nowhere” and had only amounted to a total of \$800,000 of donations in the first four years. In 2012, the state tax code was changed to remove some Kansas businesses from contributing income tax. “Well when

Brownback changed his tax policy no one wanted to be a C Corp anymore because they weren't getting the benefit of the Brownback tax cut. So, companies left and became S Corps and instead of C Corps.” (Interviewee 13)

When corporations learned of this loophole, many simply changed their tax status to qualify, no longer needing the tax deductions. This eliminated the supposed philanthropic incentive to donate money to this program.

In summary, the Kansas tax credit scholarship policy discourse exemplifies how public choice outweighs evidence-based decision making to support special interests’ policy desires. While private and religious schools appear to be the primary special interest group that benefits, this legislation was designed to increase the resource and power of corporations and wealthy donors who support the political careers of conservative state-elected officials.

Who Participates

Participation in tax credit scholarship policy discourse included the usual policy actors (i.e., KASB, KNEA, and the KPI) as well as special interest groups who stood to gain resources if the policy passed (Table G.1). Special interests who favored these proposals were private and religious schools, business advocacy and free-market policy entrepreneurs. The former desiring to become beneficiaries of these funds, while the latter motivated by a desire to pay less taxes. Special education professionals, parent and community advocacy groups, and other public education lobbyists opposed these proposals, openly sharing contempt for shifting of resources to unaccountable private entities.

In comparison to common core and constitutional amendment discourse, there was little interest from concerned citizens regarding the tax credit scholarship. Similarly, tax credit scholarship discourse dominated by men (62.3%) demonstrating their majority in professional

lobbying positions and as school leaders. This policy issue also shows how one influential individual's political motives, rather than research-based evidence and majority opinion, can severely alter the public education system. Specifically, one former Senator – the same person credited as taking away due process for teachers and lobbying for constitutional change – was also identified in testimony and by interviewees as a primary force influencing the creation of the tax credit scholarship program.

Table G.1 Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type

	HB2263		HB2400		SB22		HB2174		HB2374	
	Pro	Opp	Pro	Opp	Pro	Opp	Pro	Opp	Pro	Opp
Advocacy-Business			1		1				1	
Advocacy-Parent/Teacher/Community						3				3
Advocacy-Political										1
Advocacy-Religious			1		1		1		1	
Christian School					1		1			
Concerned Citizen						2				
Director of Special Education		3								
Labor Union		1		1		1				1
Other Government Body			1		1					
Policy Entrepreneur	1		2				1		1	1
Private School	1				1					
Special Education										
Cooperative Services		4		2		2				
State Elected Official	1						1			
Superintendents		1		2						
Teacher and Education Profession Organization		3		2		1				1
Think Tank							1			
Total	3	12	5	7	5	9	5	0	3	7

Out-of-State Interests

Three out-of-state participants, all who favored enacting the tax credit scholarships, participated in the policy discourse. An Oklahoma Senator and a free-market think tank also affiliated with the SPN, both from Tulsa, advocated for school choice through voucher programs to be adopted in Kansas. The Senator used scientific dialect to describe how Oklahoma's

voucher system was structured, while the policy entrepreneur shared ideological platitudes describing school choice as the only hope for low-income kids. A final participant came from the Arlington, Virginia-based *Institute for Justice*: the self-proclaimed school choice legal advocacy organization who offered advice on revisions that would comply with federal laws regarding the rights of students with disabilities.

Networks

Proponents of the program were brought together as a network through grassroots advocacy and an existing coalition of private and religious schools. Free-market think tanks joined these proponents in advocating for their shared policy preference. Opposing these scholarship policies were a network of special education organizations and schools who shared talking points related to how the bills violated federal statutes.

Proponents versus Opponents

This policy issue pits public schools against private and religious schools, while providing benefits to corporations. Specifically, proponents of the policy pointed to established public school advocates as their adversary. Acknowledging that it is established special interest groups who resist change, one policy actor shared: “And it's been fought tooth and nail by KASB and KNEA. Everybody crying you're taking money away from our schools, you are going to destroy our public education.” (Interviewee 14)

Similarly, another proponent of the tax credit scholarship program said:

There's a lot of maneuvering behind the scenes to try to kill the program. By the school board association and by the union. They want it stopped. So there's a lot of maneuvering behind the scenes to try to do amendments to try to tack something on. It's

a constant battle to try to protect this tiny little program and it's helping hundreds of kids.
(Interviewee 9)

In contrast, there are public school advocates who believe that enacting policies that siphon funds off to private schools is part of a larger neoliberal agenda to change how education is delivered and ultimately end or reduce the state's responsibility for education citizens.

Some think that school choice is a guise to achieve an ultimate goal of removing government (i.e., taxpayer) responsibility for what is currently the state's largest budget expense line item. I mean because public school people know that the game is to essentially to de-fund and destroy public education. (Interviewee 2)

Proponents of these bills tended to frame messages with ideological dialect about helping students who were not able to thrive in the public school setting, generalizations about Kansas' failing public schools, and the standard neoliberal talking point that competition will make all schools better. In contrast, policy opponents tended to rely on scientific dialect regarding student legal rights and the Kansas Constitution.

Implying that there are no other options for closing the achievement gap, proponents offered general arguments that parents should have the right to choose the school that their child attends. It was often implied that expanding state funding to private schools was the only way to provide choice, even though one interviewee pointed out that: "There is actually probably more students attending a school other than their assigned school in Kansas than most other states. We do have school choice but it's within the public-school system." (Interviewee 11)

Those who favor tax credit scholarships also took care to frame their dialogue in a manner suggesting that support of private education in no way diminished the importance of the public system.

We need all levels of K12 to improve and that includes private schools, public schools, public choice. So we can get all of the above. And I think that's part of the politics, “Oh you support private schools that means you don't support public schools” and that's just a bunch of crap. (Interviewee 3)

Opponents of tax scholarships delivered their message using legal reasoning, fiscal realities and potential effects, and general arguments about the fairness of the proposed policy that would exempt schools receiving these funds from any accountability measures. Legal reasons discuss how the scholarship program would lead to discrimination and subverts the Kansas Constitution by creating a loophole to fund religious schools.

It really allows public dollars indirectly to support schools that don't have to support all kids equally. And so you create a system where the public schools it is sort of the school of last resort. They have to take the kids that nobody else wants but other schools can sort of decide who they want to serve. In Kansas like most states the lowest performing schools are also the highest poverty schools. And there is no requirement that the children who receive these scholarships have to be the ones that are doing poorly. (Interviewee 12)

Fairness was a frequent theme in opponent testimony. One argument was against taking more funds from public schools at a time when the state Supreme Court has ruled that Kansas public schools are underfunded.

This program could reduce state revenues by up to \$10 million. That amount is two thirds of the money swept from the [Kansas Endowment for Youth] KEY fund. It's over one third of the money that is being cut to schools under the Governor's allotment plan. It's just shy of one fourth of the [Kansas Public Education Retirement System] KPERs

underpayment the Governor used to make it through FY 15. These choices do not even begin to address the revenue shortfall facing the state next year (Tallman, Testimony HB2174, February 18, 2015).

Another common observation among opponents was that participating schools are exempted from accountability measures, yet they are receiving public money. Their testimony pointed to the irony that many legislators frame their own rhetoric around accountability to tax payers and oversight of the education system when changing state policy.

Both proponents and opponents shared opinions regarding the origin of funds for the scholarship program. Proponents frequently shared dialect assuring that this money was not technically public funds but rather that money belongs to corporations who should decide how it is spent. Another went so far as to say that corporate donors are not receiving the praise they deserve for their contributions.

Contributions by the private sector toward K-12 and higher education often go unnoticed, even though billions of dollars have been donated through philanthropic endeavors of companies themselves and the businessmen and women who run them. Those who question business's contributions to education need look no further than the names inscribed on the hundreds of education buildings that dot our landscape. Many are our members (O'Neal, Testimony HB2400, March 18, 2013).

However, many opponents of the program felt that tax scholarship allowed corporations and wealthy donors to simply avoid taxes. Opponents suggested that the privilege of wealth should not equate to the right to decide what is best for the public. As contrasted in the statements shown in Table G.2, proponents tended to believe that money designated for the program rightfully belonged to the donor to decide how it should best be used.

Table G.2 Differing Perspectives of Philanthropy vs Tax Avoidance

Proponent	Opponent
<p>“I’m in my mind this is private people donating money to a scholarship. Now roundabout way you can argue well that’s tax free money and because taxes 50 percent of all taxes go to schools in it.” (Interviewee 13)</p> <p>“A lot of people say vouchers.... but it’s not a voucher because it is not state money in a sense, it is money from individuals. They said it was state money. But the only way that it was state money is...these were individuals or individual companies at this time that they had a certain amount of money that they gave away as part of their charitable contributions but now they were directing it toward the tax credit scholarship for low income students.” (Interviewee 10)</p>	<p>“We were told in 2014 that the tax credit scholarships are a combination of donor philanthropy and helping poor children escape failing schools, but donating money that is given back is not philanthropy; it’s tax avoidance.” (Deedy, Testimony HB2374, March 23, 2017)</p> <p>“First, donating money that is given back is not philanthropy; it’s merely tax avoidance. This isn’t even a tax deduction, it’s a 70% tax credit, so 70% of the dollars that go into this program are removed from the State General Fund.” (Throckmorton, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014)</p>

Determining the Policy Position

Neoliberal education policy discourse is exemplified in the political battle over tax credit scholarships, known colloquially as vouchers or simply public subsidy of private and religious schools. The bill’s language is an example of policy diffusion coming from the well-documented national network of neoliberal ideas in education reform, with disregard for education research and without demand from parents. As documented by several policy actors, the tax credit scholarship comes from the ALEC:

Our concerns regarding this bill are extensive and stem from the explicit preference among some elected officials to turn over a significant portion of the K-12 public school system to private entities. To begin, we are disturbed to see that this is an ALEC bill.¹ Sections of this bill are identical or nearly identical to the ALEC boilerplate bill. ALEC is not an education advocacy group, but is a group that promotes limited government and

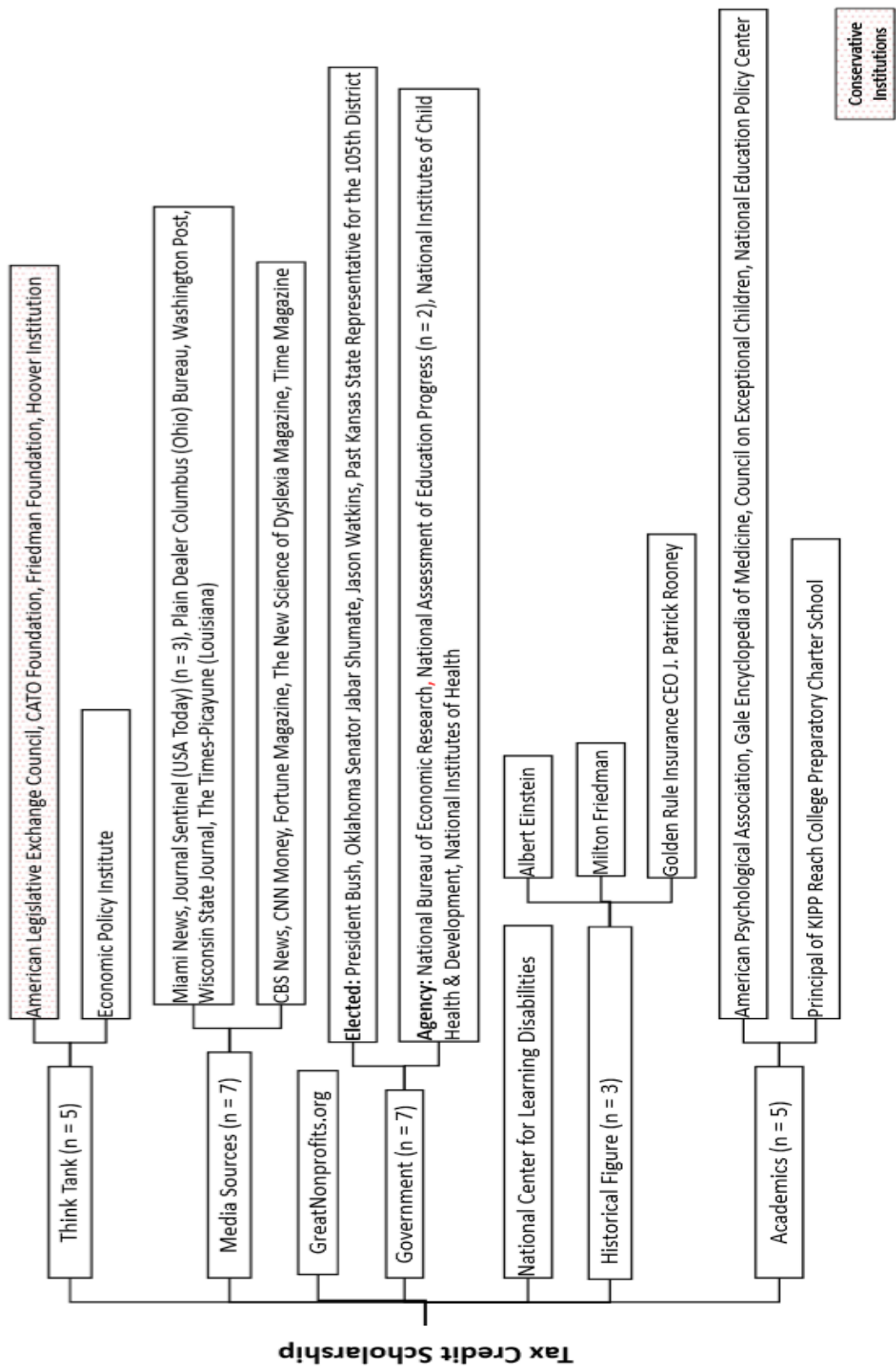
free markets. In alignment with these ALEC goals, this bill provides for the diversion of taxpayer funds to private schools (Throckmorton, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

We opposed the tax credit scholarship bill in 2014, saw it defeated in this committee but then bundled into HB 2506 and passed in the final hours of the 2014 session with the Gannon equity remedy. The underlying bill is an ALEC bill. Sections of Kansas' tax credit scholarship program are identical or nearly identical to the ALEC boilerplate bill (Deedy, Testimony HB2374, March 23, 2017).

Archaeology of Knowledge

Testimony from public education professionals was grounded in explanation and interpretation of the Kansas Constitution, as well as state and federal laws regarding rights of students who require special education services. Consequently, only 10% (6 of 59) testimonials cited scholarly research as justification for their policy position. As shown in Figure 2, government and popular media sources were most frequently cited knowledge authorities on the subject. However, conservative think tanks and academic scholarship were also frequently referenced.

Figure G.2 Tax Credit Scholarship Archaeology of Knowledge



Interviewees often implied that competing lobbyists supplied flawed research to argue their position. The tax credit scholarship deliberation provides an example of how lobbyists' frame their position using knowledge sources favored by their opponents. Specifically, in arguing against tax credit scholarships, the KASB cites data from a Cato Institute report showing Kansas public schools perform better than states with vouchers. Cato Institute is a privately-funded research source favored by the KPI, who is in opposition to KASB on this and most other education policy bills. State-level public hearings are the battlefield between philosophical principles, where opposing sides attempt to provide a data source that is trustworthy to rival lobbyist and the legislator.

The Language of Tax Credit Scholarships

The push toward more state-sponsored school choices program across the nation has resulted in a set of well-established messages regarding education reform. One of the most common statements used to support school choice comes from the KPI:

Do you believe one's ZIP code should determine the quality of education one receives?

Of course you don't, but that is an unfortunate reality in today's education system.

Found in the data and supported in study after study, students – particularly students in low-income families – find themselves stuck in low performing schools and unable to escape them simply because of their address (Dorsey, Testimony HB2374, March 23, 2017).

While lobbyists on both sides of the policy issue delivered testimonials containing scientific dialect (37.3%) (22 of 59) to frame their message, more often it was opponents who emphasized fact-based messages to state why tax credit scholarships are not aligned with established rights, laws, and rules governing the education system. These lobbyists most often

focused on citing evidence regarding a student's legal rights to free and public education, and how the bill circumvented accreditation standards that schools receiving state funds were required to meet. Many opponents began their testimony with a simple message and continued with a list of all the areas the policy conflicts with existing laws, exemplified by: "HB 2263 appears to circumvent federal regulations" (Cowley County, HB2263, February 18, 2013).

Policy opponents often reminded legislators that the Kansas Constitution explicitly states that funds for education cannot be managed by religious organizations. However, the bill was crafted so that the program could circumvent this obstacle.

One of the complications in Kansas and in many states is that we have constitutional language that says that no state education dollars shall be controlled by religious organizations. Most private schools in Kansas are religious. So instead we created kind of a roundabout approach, which again has been modeled in other states, where the mechanism is you know organizations can be created called scholarship granting organizations. (Interviewee 12)

Although the tax credit scholarship policy was adopted and is currently still in operation, one interviewee shared:

It's questionable whether it's constitutional. You're not giving it to a school but you're giving it to a student who goes to a private school. You're subsidizing private schools. So, the bottom line is it's probably questionable. But the truth of the matter is that there is not that many students involved. So, nobody's taken them to court yet. (Interviewee 16)

When policy proponents did use scientific dialect, it was simply to re-state to committee members eligibility and other provisions of the proposed bills. Other usage of scientific dialect was to explain rules and potential negative outcomes if the policy were to be implemented.

Ideological Dialect

Most testimony (64.4%) (38 of 59) was based upon ideological dialect. Proponents simply made the case that parents deserve to choose where their child attends school as well as contextual stories about a child who did not thrive in their public school.

Competition

A favored talking point amongst school choice proponents is that public schools are failing, and competition will make them better. Speaking in favor of expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program, the Kansas Chamber shared: “Members of our organization thrive on competition. It’s what makes them better. Public schools should embrace rather than eschew competition” (Schettler, Testimony HB2374, March 23, 2017).

Some policy actors recognize that private schools have more opportunities to try new things to improve education by nature of their exemption from all the rules that public schools must comply. However, they do not necessarily agree that this ability to innovate is about competition. For example, when asked about the policy, one proponent started by sharing, “We don't have much competition at all in public education” (Interviewee 14) while a public school advocate recognized that private schools benefit students primarily because they have more leeway in determining what works best in their schools.

The private school has flexibility to try something new that may not be consistent with the state board of education policy...I think they have the potential to be more creative and try and some things that we saw as a positive benefit. (Interviewee 1)

However, this interviewee illustrated how, in the long term, competition is detrimental to the ability of the public system to provide quality education.

[Tax credit scholarships] seem to be clear competition with the public schools and what happens, and I'll use Hays as an example, where you have a large Catholic population and you've got parochial grade and high school. And the public schools focus heavily on the mill levy and a bond issue to build a building that's been condemned-and they have no choice, but it can only be put in place by the passage of a bond issue and everybody gets to vote on that bond issue. And if you live there and your kids were in parochial school, you have a strong incentive to vote against that, personally, as you're going to pay more taxes and [your] kids aren't going to go to public school...It really puts public schools in an awkward situation. (Interviewee 1)

Discrimination

Claims of potential skimming and discrimination resulting from the policy were also frequently mentioned by policy opponents. Although these phenomena are backed by research evidence, policy actors rarely included citations but instead seemed to assume that legislators perhaps understand that discrimination amongst students with special needs exists and is the impetus for the many laws that have been put in place to remedy inequity in education. As one opponent simply relayed, “It creates an unequal system for students with disabilities” (Atchison Public Schools, Testimony HB2263, February 18, 2013).

Public education proponents framed their messages around a common education equity research argument: vouchers result in discrimination against students with special needs due to cherry-picking students for admission. This is best exemplified by the following quote:

Does not include ANY provision requiring a qualified school not to discriminate on the basis of ANY protected class. To be a qualified school, you just have to be a non-public school that notifies the State Board of its intent to participate in the program and complies with the program requirements. It fails to protect classes from discrimination that are singled out for such protection and allows for discrimination for traits and characteristics that don't see such protection, thereby institutionalizing discrimination (Krebs, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

Some opponents recounted the disproportionate negative effect the policy would have on the funding level of the public system while accommodating the legal rights to a free and appropriate education for children with disabilities who are more expensive to serve. While private and religious school lobbyists made no reference to the issue of potential discrimination of children with disabilities, one interviewee shared: “[Private schools] they're always complaining they don't have enough money and so then they can't afford to take care of the kids with huge disabilities.” (Interviewee 2)

Accountability

Several policy actors pointed out the hypocrisy of conservative legislators who incessantly call for increased accountability of public schools for student achievement and taxpayer money while championing a bill that explicitly removes private schools from all accountability requirements. “SB22 circumvents all mechanisms of oversight and accountability of taxpayer dollars for K12 education by transferring funds to an education system exempt from any such requirements” (Mainstream Coalition, Testimony SB22, February 21, 2014).

As noted by one Interviewee, the lack of accountability was not due to chance: “One of the [legislators] pushing that she wanted to make sure that KSDE didn’t put anything in the way of evaluation on those schools.” (Interviewee 16)

Another shared common taxpayer sentiment about the overarching belief that being publicly financed comes with an expectation of accountability.

I believe in private schools. I believe that America we should have options. But I believe the obligation of government is to fund public schools and anybody who wants to find other options I'm fine with that as long as they meet standards. Private schools and home schools have flown under the radar of being accountable with any kind of standards. (Interviewee 2)

Strategies

Efforts to create a voucher program best illustrate how language is used to reframe issues. The tax credit scholarship bill title shifted from emphasis on ‘special needs’ to ‘corporate’ to ‘low income students.’ As mentioned, most interviewees believed and some testimony asserted that the bill primarily was designed to benefit those that donate through the reduction of their tax burden. When the argument to frame this legislation as an effort to help disabled kids failed, the bill was re-named as a corporate tax credit scholarship after its true intention. Although it passed both the House and Senate with that name, further amendments to the program were made more palatable to the public, by reframing the policy message to help ‘level the playing field’ and ‘close the achievement gap’ for low income students.

Grassroots Advocacy

While the program’s enactment is credited to conservative legislators whose interests may have been guided by political donors, private and religious schools desire the best for their

students and stated their policy preference as intention to improve academic outcomes for the kids they serve. A strong proponent of the tax credit scholarship developed a grassroots campaign to work toward school choice policies in Kansas by building a local community advocacy effort and bringing in experts from different states to educate parents. These efforts led to investigating how other states enacted voucher programs and the formation of a network of other private schools and lobbyists to draft policy to create a tax scholarship program.

A lot of people they just send their children to school and they don't know how anything works how policy or anything like that goes, so I had town hall meetings I would bring guests in from other states that had passed laws, brought legislators in and let them speak at the town hall meetings and people could ask questions and from there we began to gain momentum. (Interviewee 10)

Policy Diffusion

As noted early, the bill to initially enact the tax credit scholarship came from an ALEC boilerplate template shared with their network of policy actors across the nation. Other efforts to import policy enacted in other states came in the testimony of an Oklahoma Senator who has experience enacting similar law, and from several testimonials that pointed out that other states have similar programs.

Public Choice

The context of tax credit scholarship policy adoption exemplifies how public choice works at the state level and influences education policy. While efforts to adopt and amend are championed by a few private and religious schools, there was no strong public demand for the program and there were many fiscal and legal arguments indicating the policy was contrary to Kansas' Constitutional limits. This policy was adopted without transparency, under the dark of

night. The process illustrates how legislators circumvent strong special interest groups to shift power and resources. A multitude of stories were shared regarding initial adoption of tax credit scholarship program. Several of these stories are shared below.

So [the legislature] did several things that you know I call them, “the midnight massacre.” At about midnight one night took away teacher due process. And then we had put it into law into the budget. I'm not sure this was the same night, but ten million dollars Corporations could get tax deductions opening the door to vouchers. (Interviewee 2)

What's been interesting from a policy standpoint on this is, the very existence of this and all of the amendments to it have happened in March in the middle of the night, usually in some subcommittee. Even though I've testified on it, it's never gone come to a vote in the light of day in front of the full group. (Interviewee 13)

“[This policy was] the result of legislative manipulation and backroom deals and not in a transparent manner that reflected the real will of both chambers” (Krebs, Testimony HB2374, March 3, 2017). This testimonial was supported by an interviewee who shared “But again, so in the second year in the middle of the night in the committee organization they changed it to from corporations to individuals could give the money.” (Interviewee 13)

Versus: Political Struggle to Gain or Maintain Power

On the surface, the issue of tax credit scholarship seems to be a fight between public and private schools for financial resources. ALEC and the policy entrepreneurs who deliver their message have succeeded at making the political struggle a fight between schools while

backgrounding the motives of corporate donors. While policy actors sometimes recognized the benefits reaped by the wealthy, most dialect reflected the balance of power between education institutions (Table G.3 and G.4).

Table G.3 Exemplars of Perceptions of Who Gains Resources

Opponent	Proponent
“Most of it boils down to Catholic schools. It's a way it's a way for them to subsidize their education.” (Interviewee 16)	“People view it as taking away from public education.” (Interviewee 5)

Education advocates on both sides of the aisle were also swept into defending their position around perceptions of how public resources should be distributed (Table G.4).

Table G.4 Differing Perspectives of Tax Credit Scholarship Impact on Education Finance

Opponent	Proponent
“One is the concern simply that it can take resources. In other words, if a child is going to a public school and goes to a private school the public school at least eventually loses dollars for that child...the issues in education funding is that if you lose a couple of kids and their money, it's very difficult to reduce the cost as well.” (Interviewee 12)	“When they stand up and say this is costing us money it really isn't. And in fact, we would argue it the opposite way. All of our private school families in the state pay taxes and we don't utilize the process. If we closed every private school in the State of Kansas and everyone went to the public schools, we'd cost the public schools 20 million dollars a year and they'd have to educate our people. So, they are getting a real benefit from all of our parents who are paying into the public school system and not taking anything out of it. They would be in serious trouble if there was no private schools in the State of Kansas. So, to argue that we're cost...this tax credit scholarship is costing them money is, I think, a faulty argument.” (Interviewee 13)

However, the influence of public choice and neoliberal ideology collided to benefit wealthy donors who were able to quietly gain power through greater tax relief to perpetuate wealth and ability to pursue their agenda shaping society to their preferences. One interviewee recognized motives of these policy entrepreneurs are not about genuinely concerned with improving academic achievement but is in fact a strategy to gain resources for their donor base.

The Libertarian Party is you know for anything that will lessen government, anything that will lower taxes. It would be a huge asset to those who support private schools to promote and have not just better, but *more* private education. (Interviewee 1)

Appendix H - District Realignment

Introduction

Two proposals – neither of which passed – were presented to consolidate school districts in different ways as means to reduce the education budget. The first (HB2203, 2015) proposed consolidation of administrative services seeking to allow two or more school districts to enter into an agreement for bulk purchasing, transportation, custodial and other non-classroom expenditures. The second proposal (HB2504, 2016) was titled “District Realignment” and was a resulting attempt from multiple legislative studies focused on school consolidation for potential cost savings. All interviewees and some testimonials recognized that these policies were carefully crafted to try to avoid the perception of mandated consolidation, but that the result would in effect be mandated consolidation.

Most all interviewees who commented on this issue recalled the evolution from the one-room school house to today’s system that is largely shaped by consolidation efforts of the 1960’s. During that preceding time period, one interviewee shared that “the arguments that were generally advanced, as I understand it, were really more around educational quality than saving money. The argument now tends to be we want to get more efficient.” (Interviewee 12)

Who Participates

A diverse array of special interest groups provided opinions on the issue of consolidation and district realignment, with most opposed to legislated, or perceived as forced, changes in the delivery of education services.

Consolidation of Administrative Services

House Bill 2203 (2015) provides an interesting look at motivations of non-education professionals for testifying in support of education policy. Only five testimonials were

presented, with the majority from special interest groups known to be concerned with lowering taxes (See Table H.1). A concerned citizen representing himself as “Kansans for Liberty” opposed the bill on the grounds that it did not go far enough in forcing schools to cut costs, while the Kansas Chamber supported the policy as a step toward efficiency. The KPI was neutral simply because they did not believe KSDE needed a full-time employee to track and analyze agreements since their “staff has performed multiple analyses of the nature proscribed in HB2203 in less than a day” (Trabert, Testimony HB2203, February 18, 2015). Interestingly, for a policy that would apply to schools, no school district representatives participated in this discourse.

Table H.1 HB2203 Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type

	Proponent	Opponent	Neutral
Advocacy-Business	1		
Concerned Citizen		1	
Policy Entrepreneur			1
Teacher and Education Profession			1
Organization		1	
Total	1	2	2

District Realignment

Participation in district realignment policy discourse on district realignment included the usual actors (i.e., KASB, KNEA, and the KPI) as well as local special interest groups (i.e., schools and rural communities) who stood to lose resources if the policy passed (Table H.2). Discourse surrounding consolidation and realignment was dominated by men (68.8%) demonstrating their majority in professional lobbying positions and as school leaders. There were no out-of-state interest groups participating in these policy debates.

Table H.2 District Realignment Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type

	Proponent	Opponent	Neutral
Advocacy-Business		1	
Advocacy-Farm		2	
Advocacy-Parent/Teacher/Community		3	
Concerned Citizen	1	3	
Consultant	1		
Labor Union		1	
Local Elected School Board Member		12	
Other Government Body	1		
Policy Entrepreneur			1
Special Education Cooperative Services		1	
State Elected Official	1		
Superintendents		13	
Teacher and Education Profession		2	
Organization			
Total	4	38	1

Proponents versus Opponents

Testimonials suggest that restructuring of the public education system is perceived as a rural versus urban issue. However,

[finance formula items] are designed to balance between urban schools and rural schools.

But it's not just [rural or] urban. There are people that believe that consolidation needs to happen within some of the major cities, including Wichita and Kansas City. (Interviewee 6)

Proponents of administrative consolidation and district realignment framed their message as a positive move to get more money into classrooms, rather than just a reduction in the education budget. One testimonial succinctly said, “This money could be better spent in the classrooms” (Howerter, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016). Others furthered this sentiment, as exemplified by the following quote:

A dollar spent on unnecessary or redundant second and third tier administration, e.g., is a dollar lost to the classroom. Anything that incentivizes reducing the administrative footprint and related costs, in favor of prioritizing funding to the classroom will earn the appreciation and support of Kansas families and businesses (O’Neal, Testimony HB2203, February 15, 2015).

Determining the Policy Position

Simply put, small and rural citizens and school representatives based their policy position on personal experiences and preferences. Those who supported either bill provided fiscal arguments in their testimony, while interviewees emphasized the benefits these policies would create for kids through increased access to education opportunities that can not be provided by small districts. Testimony was largely based upon personal experiences and fiscal arguments, and therefore, no research-based data or media sources were cited as justification for or against these proposals.

The Language of Consolidation and Realignment

Opponent testimonials that utilized scientific dialect (n = 17, 39.5%) in their statements were most often reciting efficiency studies that had been completed or informing legislators of the current voluntary programs that school districts had in place for cost-saving. Representatives of small school districts shared information on the various roles and responsibilities that one employee may take on that already represented cost savings. For example, “many Superintendents are also Principals, Transportation Administrators, Curriculum Directors, etc. and these roles will need staff to cover responsibilities” (Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer, Testimony HB2203, February 3, 2015). Proponents of the bill simply recounted how cost savings would be

achieved, providing facts along with their personal opinions. One exemplary of mixing fact with emotional reasoning is found in the following:

Labette County has a total student population of about 3,850 students. We have four districts and four superintendents in Labette County. Compare this to USD-259 in Wichita which has one superintendent for about 46,000 students. Here is one example of how screwed up the present situation is in Labette County. USD-505 is made up from Chetopa and St. Paul. They have a total of about 463 students. It is distance of over fifty-two miles from these two towns. You would have to pass by three other in county school districts to drive from one town to the other. You don't need to have a half of a MBA to understand there is something really wrong and wasteful with this situation. Parsons High School is located one block away from the district boundary for the Altamont school district. Yesterday, I walked the length of that distance in under two minutes, and I'm old and kind of fat. Every school day, buses are driven from Altamont to Parsons to pick up students that are a block away from Parsons High School. The distance from PHS to Labette County High School is about twelve miles. The very minimum total distance driven by these buses to pick up and return the students is forty-eight miles. This money could be better spent in the classrooms (Howerter, Testimony HB2504, no date).

Most testimony (64.4%) (38 of 59) was based upon ideological dialect without supporting data. Discourse in this category included proponents who spoke about missed opportunities to improve educational offerings and efficiencies to be gained, while opponents focused on messages of choice and local control.

Message Framing

Interviewees discussed that legislators and proponents frame their message around wanting to provide more opportunities. Several proponents shared their beliefs that consolidation and realignment should be considered for improving education opportunities. As one interviewee said, “it’s hard for [small schools] to provide the instruction that kids need that attend that school let alone be able to do the administrative function accurately.” (Interviewee 14)

Many believe that in reality these proposals are designed basically as a cost-savings measure, either through reduction of administrative personnel or through the elimination of an adjustment to the school finance formula for small districts (Table H.3).

Table H.3 Differing Perspectives of Financial Impact

Opponent	Proponent
“I think those are the issues being pushed by certain legislators that believe that there is a cost savings there.” (Interviewee 8)	<p>“We are leaving an awful lot of money on table and just changing how the services are delivered would free up a lot more money” (Interviewee 9)</p> <p>“[the state] basically has to pay a separate funding stream of about 200 million dollars a year that goes to the school districts that are 1600 [students] or less because they are small and stay small. Keeps them, if you will, on welfare to be able to keep their doors open.” (Interviewee 14)</p>

Rural Community Survival and Community Pride

Interviewees had differing perspectives on the effects that rural school consolidation would have on communities. Table H.4 shows that interviewees held differing opinions on the impact that these policies would have on small, rural towns.

Table H.4 Differing Perspectives of Potential Impact to Rural Communities

Neutral	Neutral
“Most reasonable people think we have way too many school districts. Most communities that have that have been forced to consolidate in some form have not experienced bad things unless they were already going to have bad things. I do understand how [consolidation]	“I do think, just in a general sense schools are often the only thing keeping small town Kansas alive and consolidation would really hurt, you know, the State of Kansas, I think. We already have rapid decline in small towns and consolidating school districts

can be hard on small communities.” (Interviewee 15).	would only exacerbate that problem.” (Interviewee 13)
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For a majority of opponents, these policies are contrary to the belief that schools contribute more than education to the communities that they serve. Seventy-seven percent (n = 37) of testimonials made some reference to the effect of consolidation on community. While some opponents noted that their community was chosen by parents due to the quality of life provided in a small town, Superintendents specifically lamented the detriment to the pride and sustainment of small and rural communities that would result. “Our small community is autonomous with our school district. To lose our school district could become the loss of our connectedness as a community as well” (Halling, Testimony HB2504, January 30, 2016). “When rural schools close, the lives of the children and their families will change along with the dynamics of the entire community” (Flowers, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Others reflected specifically on how local schools through sports and other activities are a primary driver in the policy debate (Table H.5).

Table H.5 School Sports and Community Pride as Education Policy Driver

Opponent	Proponent
“The pride that each community has for the schools is evident as you cannot walk down a street without seeing a Central Plains Oilers or Wilson Dragons shirt on someone. As you enter Claflin, one business ALWAYS has some school related event or accomplishment on their marquee. These are communities that truly care about their schools and our students!” (Clark, Testimony HB2504, no date)	“But why avoid it knowing that the controversy is over district boundaries basically and things like mascots.” (Interviewee 9)

Efficiency

Neoliberal policy-making often takes the guise of efficiency, exemplifying the business sectors’ continuous focus on improving productivity and cutting waste to improve the financial

bottom line. Over half of all testimony (n = 27, 56.3%) focused on efficiency in their statements either promoting or opposing district realignment and administrative consolidation. Some proponents claimed that the current configuration of schools and the discrepancy of student to Superintendent ratios were the root cause of inefficiency. For example,

There are so many duplicated positions with all the school districts for instance USD 259 has 1 superintendent for 50,000 students while other districts have a superintendent for less than 200 kids. That is not an efficient way to operate (Gabel, Testimony HB2203, no date).

Opponents did not disagree that efficiency was an important aspect for taxpayers and state lawmaker's budget allocation decisions but noted that did not negate the Constitutional commitment to local control. "Kansas Farm Bureau supports efficiencies when and where appropriate, but the decision to realign or consolidate school districts is best left to local school boards and their constituents" (Flickner, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Similarly, many Superintendents and opponents of these policies used their testimony to recount all the ongoing efforts public schools and special education cooperatives engage in independently toward efficiency efforts. "Kansas public school leaders have a long tradition of voluntarily consolidating and implementing cooperative agreements to achieve economies of scales, in an effort to maximize efficiency of local budgets" (Sultz, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016).

Choice

Often promoters of neoliberal education policies focus on an individual's right to choose what school to attend, specifically advocating for extending public-funded school choice into the private sector. Latching on to this line of reasoning, ten opponents (26.3%) of district

realignment framed their own message around their patrons' right to choose their school. Some focused on local control and decision-making as the choice of locally elected school boards, while some focused on an individual's choice to live in a rural community. "The families in my Wellington congregation have exercised their school choice in choosing multiple local building sites and districts which are the best match for their children's temperament and talents" (Miller, Testimony HB2504, January 29, 2016).

Most families who have chosen to live in a small community do so because of the quality of life and the desire to have their children in a small school system that is operated by a local board of education (Harshberger, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016). "This is a majority of the reason districts like Central Heights exist throughout Kansas, families choose to send their children to smaller districts where there are less incidents with drugs and violence" (Cardin, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016).

Parents live in Macksville by choice, not because they have to, but rather because they want to. Regardless if the decision is based on careers, family, or educational preferences; it is not by random chance. Just as one learning strategy is not effective for all learners, neither does a one county, one school, fit all Kansas students (Rinehart, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016).

Local Control

As one interviewee shared, "Kansas has always been a very local control type state." (Interviewee 2) This was a dominant and recurring theme in opponents' testimony, as supported also by the following two interviewee statements:

My opinion over the years is that you cannot hold this discussion in isolation from the larger look of who we are as a state. Our geography, our customs, our population, how

it's dispersed, where it's concentrated and where it's moving.... as well as the social importance of schools to communities. It's not just those two schools could go together and that could save 50,000 thousand dollars on super and that sort of thing. It really is always is a larger context of discussion as to whether or not the USD'S should consolidate, realign, merge, share. And yet in my experience with the great recession and how that hammered down federal as well as state funding in particular, if it were just a money issue that would have forced more realignment than what we really did see. Kansas as a state has left that up to locals saying "here's how we're going to fund you. But as far as your governance structure it's up to you. (Interviewee 4)

I'm a big believer in local control. I get very disappointed at schools that starve their kids to the point that they don't have the learning opportunities they deserve because they refuse to consolidate. But I don't think it is a state issue as much as it is a local issue. (Interviewee 8)

Framing this issue around a message of local choice parallels the private education movement for school choice. Public school leaders used the opportunity to explain how the current system of organization reflects local preferences in curriculum and extra-curricular.

Each district has policies and practices that are unique to their own district because that is what works for them and their students. We offer different electives in our high schools; we offer different extracurricular offerings from district to district. Neighboring districts students may have different needs. The decision to realign districts should be the choice of the local Boards of Education and the patrons of those districts (Travis, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016).

Almost half (n = 21, 43.8%) of all testimony provided some reference to concerns about the loss of local control, as exemplified by a parent opposed to realignment: “A small, rural school allows us to maintain a bit of local control in how our students are educated” (Tracy, Testimony HB2504, no date).

Concerned citizens noted how these policies took away their voice in education decision-making: “Now I am deeply concerned that my community is again facing the possibility that our local school district will be swallowed up by our bigger neighbors and we will lose local control of issues concerning our local schools” (Welicky, Testimony HB2504, January 27, 2016).

Strategies

The analysis of discourse surrounding district realignment and administrative consolidation did not reveal specific strategies. Testimony was dominated by school Superintendents of small schools that would be affected by these policies. From a public choice perspective, these individuals are engaging in rent seeking to ensure government resources continue to be spent to their own benefit. Regarding the testimony of the Kansas Association of School Boards, one interviewee said:

The KASB it thrives off the money it gets from every little tiny district and every district has to pay into their funds to keep their doors open. So their lobbyist, he gets up and complains this is consolidation, you can't do that and this is local control. You should let those local school boards of education decide if they want to consolidate or if they want to realign. You don't tell them, you are big bad legislators if you try to do your job. I'm being a little sarcastic but I've been through this for years. I've listened to his testimony and the people are saying things that are self-serving as hell. It has nothing to do with teaching kids it has to do with whether they can get the dues that they want to have their

offices on Arrowhead Drive in Topeka, Kansas and keep their doors open. (Interviewee 14)

In contrast, one Superintendent framed his testimony in response to perceptions of promotion of self-interest.

I feel it is imperative that you understand this is not a plea on my behalf to “save” my job as some have referred in recent editorials. I have thirty-seven years of experience in the Kansas Public Education System, and have been both an administrator at both large schools and small schools (1a-5a). Therefore, this decision will have little if any financial impact on me personally as my career comes to an end (Rinehart, Testimony HB2504, February 1, 2016).

Public Choice

House Bill 2504-*District Realignment* provides distinct examples of how public choice dictates policy. As shown in the following quote, fiscally conservative legislators were perceived to support higher costs of K-12 education because local voters expect their elected representatives to capture resources that benefit their districts’ economy.

The problem with that is that you have local legislators who, even if they agree, I mean some of the most, some of the people who most want to save money most defend not consolidating. But there's a certain irony in there. Anybody that believes that there's a logical consistency in political behavior ought to get into a different line of work. But this is one of those really apparent ones where the people who scream hardest about not spending money will defend it to the death. (Interviewee 15)

The large number of individuals opposed to the bill who associated themselves with rural school is an indicator of the collective lobbying power of the rural voting bloc. Kansas' urban population (1,986,125) is more than double the rural population (926,998)², but current geography and political district boundaries mean that a large enough number of state-elected officials representing rural communities have the advantage. These individuals have no incentive to support realignment, even if pitched as a cost-savings measure, because it is contrary to supporting what the constituents in their own districts want. Testimonial quotes shown in table H.6 provide the perspectives of the bill's sponsor along with an opponents observation of public choice behavior.

Table H.6 Perceptions of Policy Defined by Public Choice

Proponent	Opponent
"There are 77 Counties with 2/3/4/5 USDs, all small in student population count, that can be re-aligned under one USD and still never exceed a threshold of 10,000 students in any of the 77 counties." (Rep. Bradford, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016)	"The author of this bill is from the eighth most populous county in the state, and sees fit to tell the vast majority of counties how they ought to live. I couldn't help but notice that the Lansing School District-the home school district of Rep. Bradford-conveniently has a little over 10,000 students, and so would be safe from consolidation. In other words, neither the author of the bill, nor his constituents, would be directly affected by the bill he authored." (Koon, Testimony HB2504, February 3, 2016)

Versus: Political Struggle to Gain or Maintain Power

Generally, both testimonials and interviewees recognized that school Superintendents were the special interest group who either stood to gain or lose resources. Proponents often noted that reducing administration was simply a means to get more money into the classroom. As one interviewee shared,

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, State Fact Sheets: Kansas, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets.aspx> (accessed June 20, 2018)

What I've heard about it, "well how can we continue to employ the"-they point fingers at the 286 school superintendents they make more than anyone else. But the amount in eliminating school superintendents, if you eliminated all of them, seemed like it was \$20 million. \$20 million is a lot of money but in the context of a couple of billion, it's not.

(Interviewee 4)

One interviewee was more direct, in framing the issue as conservative special interest groups versus school Superintendents.

What you hear more often is based on the idea that the inefficiencies are just kind of at the operational level. And so, what you often hear is we don't, well, we're not trying to close any building but we've got too many superintendents we have too many administrators, we're not efficiently organized. Conservative legislators and more conservative groups like the Kansas Policy Institute have argued that. (Interviewee 12)

Appendix I - The Common Core Standards

Introduction

Efforts to move Kansas away from using the Common Core standards appeared in four consecutive years. Described collectively by many interviewees as a “red herring, bogus issue that was a rallying cry for conservatives,” policy proposals related to Common Core and curriculum standards were introduced six times, with half receiving a hearing. The third year, House Bill 2292: *Development and establishment of K-12 curriculum standards. Enacting local control of Kansas education act; relating to the student data privacy act* received a hearing. Of all policy issues and legislative committee hearings, HB2292 garnered the most participation by special interest groups. One hundred and two pieces of individual testimony were submitted for the hearing held on February 23, 2015. Education professionals across the state opposed the bill by explaining how standards are implemented, the financial implications of HB2292, and their first-hand observations of merit. However, most (67.6%) testimony favored the proposal to:

Prohibit Kansas curriculum standards from being formed by adoption of Common Core state standards or by adoption of a “federally provided or required” set of educational standards. The bill would require the State Board of Education to develop and establish new Kansas curriculum standards meeting the above-stated requirements on or before July 1, 2017. In addition, the bill would require these new standards to be submitted to the Legislature for review prior to implementation (State of Kansas, Supplemental Note on Substitute for Substitute House Bill No. 2292).

Testimony was dominated by ideological discourse (n = 68, 66.7%) filled with stories of personal experience and professional observation as evidence to support policy preferences. Public education, parent, and business oriented special interest groups defended the standards in

opposition to policy entrepreneurs, religious oriented special interest groups, and the Sedgwick County Republican Party. In lieu of evidence-based or fiscally-oriented debate, discourse was passionate and personal. Testimony from concerned citizens highlighted distrust of government along with lack of understanding of the policy issues. Explained by an interview (14) participant, “I think the biggest challenge people had was they felt like they were being told by a government agency what they had to teach you, what they had to learn.” The most impassioned statements exemplifying the public’s mistrust and misunderstanding follow this example:

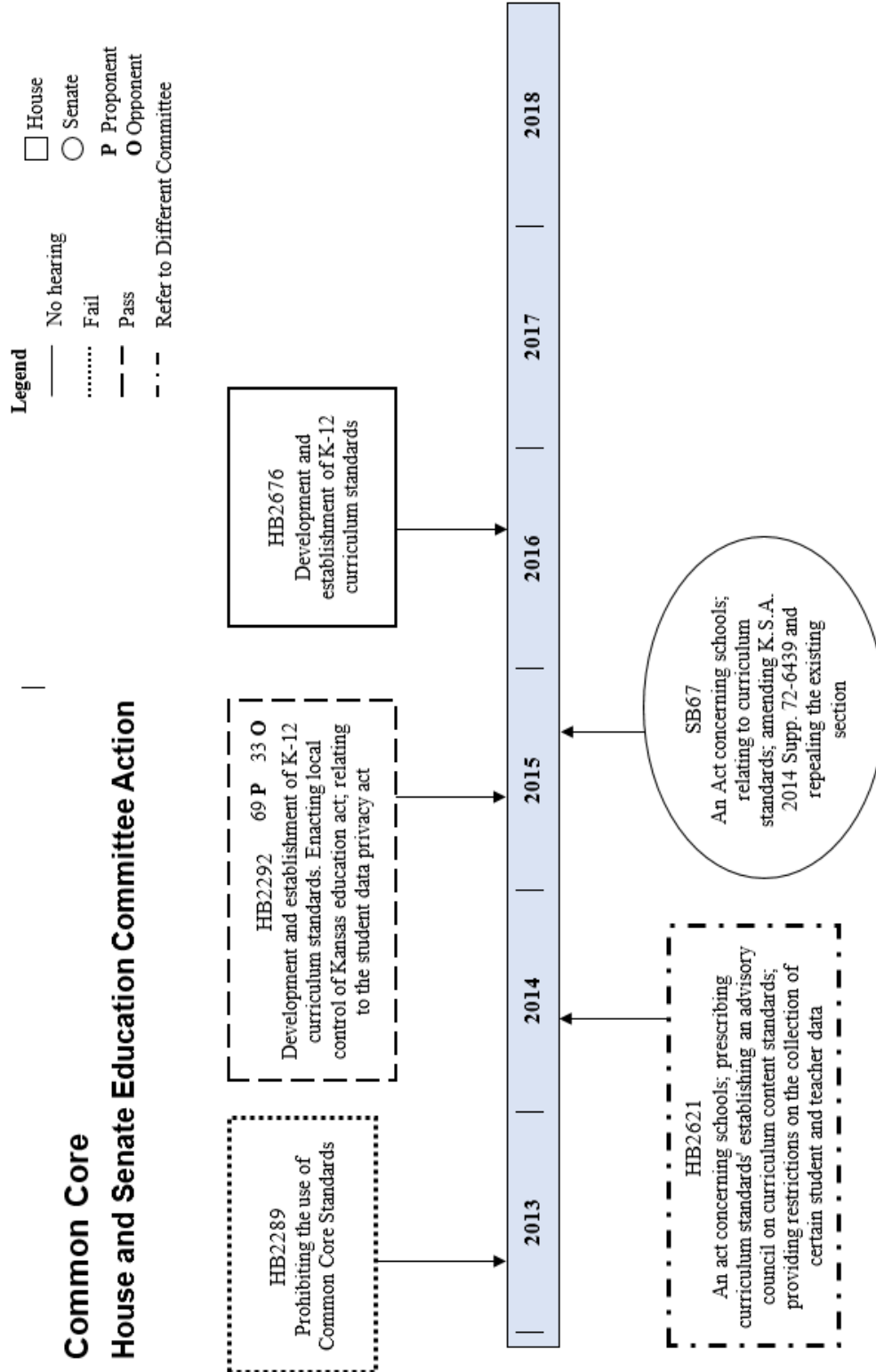
I have not read Common Core, but considering where it came from, the only possible reason for it is the total annihilation of the Constitutional Republic form of government, just the same as the ACA (Obama care) lies! What did God say Satan’s agenda was?

KILL, STEAL AND DESTROY! Common Core and ACA fit that perfectly, did Satan author both, I personally think so! (Stout, Testimony, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

A well-coordinated advocacy effort favoring HB2292 engaged parents and grandparents across the state by supplying talking points to insist remove federal involvement in state education issues. Although HB2292 failed to pass in 2015, the following year it was amended and passed out of committee. While the bill ultimately failed to become law, the State Board of Education phased out Common Core in Fall of 2017 through the seven-year cyclical standards update process. The new standards are known as Kansas College and Career Ready³.

³ <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2017/oct/16/common-core-standards-soon-be-history-kansas/>

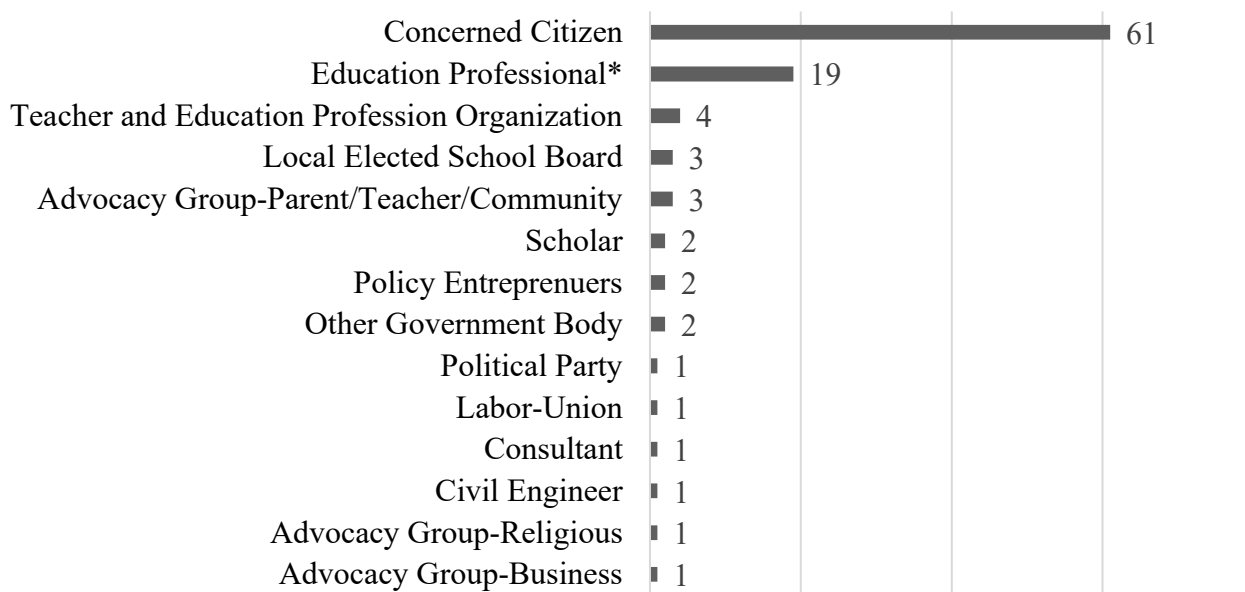
Figure I.1 Evolution of Common Core Policy Discourse



Who Participates

Just as Chautauqua's once drew citizens far and wide to engage in education, so did HB2292. Kansans from every corner of the state, representing urban cities and rural communities, came to Topeka on February 23, 2015, and lined the halls of the capital building in anticipation of having their say. By far the most prevalent special interest group, providing 65% of all testimony, were individuals with no organizational affiliation that the State labels 'concerned citizen.' Sixty-six individuals from 30 different cities gave testimony that day, with the majority insisting legislators give back local control of education and get the state and federal government out. Figure I.2 shows the number of participants by special interest group type.

Figure I.2 HB2292 Participants by Special Interest Group typeroup Type



*Includes Self-identified Administrators, Educators, Superintendents, and Teachers

In contrast to overall male domination found in the policy discourse, HB2292 had equal level of gender input. While this hearing had a high-level of participation, heavy duplication of text and talking points reveal a well-executed coordinated advocacy effort. Some individuals

who patterned these scripted talking points took time to customize their testimony, adding their own opinions or experiences as extra evidence of why Common Core was “atrocious.”

Illustrating this coordinated, yet customized advocacy are three letters from three men from Pittsburgh, Kansas, all with the last name Wood (Roger, Robert, and Richard). Submitting the exact same written testimony in support of HB 2292, their argument is framed as medical metaphor, connecting the Affordable Care Act to Common Core and describing the situation as a cancer that has metastasized and needs cured.

Out-of-State Interests vs. Kansas Educators

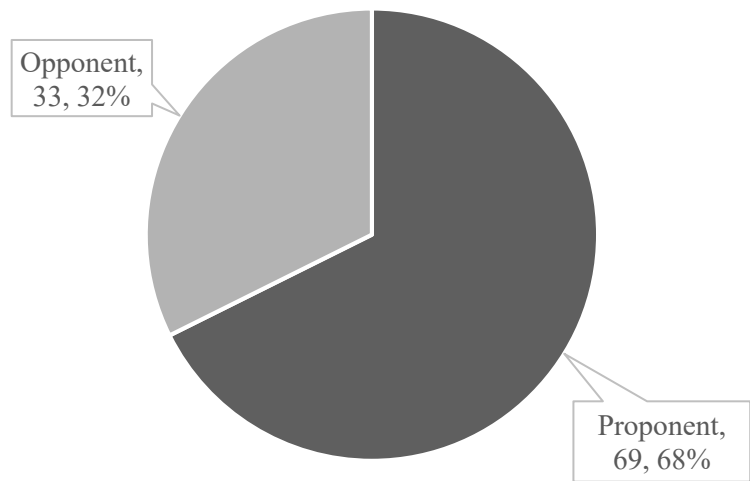
Three out-of-state participants, all proponents of HB2292, came from Alexandria, Virginia, Palo Alto, California and Springfield, Missouri to convince lawmakers to not support the implementation of Common Core standards. Reasons given by these policy actors for their support of HB2292 focus on federal government overreach. Testimonies all point to unconstitutional interference in state issues and general claims of powerful lobbying interests in Washington, D.C. taking over Kansas’ autonomy. One testimony, from Dr. Mary Byrne of the Missouri Coalition Against Common Core, sought to assure legislators that they would prevail in a decision to repeal the standards if challenged:

If the Kansas State Board of Education were to sue the state of Kansas, the predictable outcome is that the legislature would be recognized as the supreme law-making authority having authority to change activities in Kansas education by statute. Even the fear of such a lawsuit, exposes state board of education members as supporting Washington D.C.-based, non-government organizations rather than the people of their state.

Proponents Versus Opponents

Most testimonial regarding the Common Core standards come from people who wanted the standards repealed (Figure I.3). Most proponents were concerned citizens who gave ideological arguments against federal

Figure I.3 Common Core Testimony by Policy Position



overreach in education and utilized common talking points from a coordinated lobbying effort. These concerned citizens often claimed that Kansas had no input, conflicting with testimony from several education professionals who shared their own role in standards development.

A concerned citizen from Milford said:

Common Core was developed by a group of people who had generally never been in a classroom except as a student. The education professionals involved bailed out before the program was completed. Thus, it has little to do with education and more to do with government control, which we do not need any more of, rather much less (Beemer; Testimony, HB2292; February 23, 2015).

This is refuted by Proponents (educators) who share their own experiences on committees and other work to contribute to the standards. As Stacey Bell, President of Kansas Association of Mathematics Teachers, stated:

First, the College and Career Ready Standards, also known as the Common Core, or the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards, were created with input from Kansas teachers. Kansas teachers were consulted and heard not only in the development of the

Common Core Standards, but also in the recommendation of these standards to the Kansas State Board of Education (Bell, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Other coordinated talking points found in twenty-five testimonials focused on concerns of government access to student data, the \$800 million cost, and a “top-down, one-fits-all-size approach” to education. Several testimonials also concluded that “Kansas was bribed into accepting Common Core, under the lure of federal grant money never received by our state” (Lunsford, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

When concerned citizens deviated from coordinated talking points, they shared personal stories reflecting a general lack of understanding of the policy issue. One example is found in the story of a rural grandmother running a small family farm while raising her grandson. She believes he is failing math because the new way it is being taught doesn’t make sense to her. She pleads to legislators for the repeal of Common Core seeing that she does not have time to continually drive into town to talk to the teacher about math. Who, she shared, along with the principal, is not willing to help her. The grandmother is confident the passage of HB2292 would ensure her grandson passes math class while simultaneously ending his embarrassment over her ongoing conflict with school personnel.

Math and Morals

Many reasons were given for requests to repeal the use of Common Core, but the two most frequently mentioned were math and morals. Some concerned citizens opposed the perceived loss of religious guiding principles in the curriculum, citing examples of what they deemed unsavory book reading assignments. One of the most radical concerned citizens told legislators this:

I am here to expose what many are afraid to expose: the pornography. I apologize ahead of time, but I am not the author, the promoter, nor the distributor of this filth. We are all

adults here and we MUST expose and discuss this part of Common Core. If you feel you must leave the room, please do so now. I take no sick pleasure in this exercise, but if this vile material is being given to our children (usually without parental permission), YOU must know about it too, because YOU have the obligation to stop this by voting to pass HB 2292 without amendments (Schmidt, Testimony, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Though she declared her regret, she continued reading graphic, detailed excerpts from several books highlighting youth coming of age themes. Her stories told of adolescents' encounters with dishonest behavior and the physical effects of falling in love in a way that could rival the best romance novels. Despite appearance of a "right-wing conspiracy" dominating testimony, one interview participant said, "A lot of liberal parents and artsy parents don't like Common Core either. They think that there's too much science or they ignore the arts."

Concerned citizens also shared their frustration understanding their child's math homework. To these individuals, this was evidence that Common Core was not working. One parent started his testimony with: "My 4th grade son has been so frustrated because of the poor math methodology used" (Thomason, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Regarding the new math teaching methods, an interview participant employed as a private school administrator during the Kansas Common Core fury shared:

"This makes third grade math harder. But it's going to make college algebra easier.

What do you want? Your kid to have an easy time in third grade or your kid to do good in college algebra? And if your goal is for your kid to do good in college algebra, then yes third grade math is going to be a little bit more difficult then was when you're a kid.

It's gonna pay off in the long run. Kids nowadays understand math. I never understood

math. I memorized math and that's what mostly what we did. It's going to pay off in the long run. And I think that's panned out over the last five years.” (Interviewee 13)

Types of Special Interests

Table I.1 provides a breakdown of special interest groups participating in the Common Core discourse, excluding concerned citizens. Those opposed to HB2292 were primarily education professionals who had experience working with Common Core. Along with

Table I.1 Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type			
		Proponent	Opponent
Superintendents, several Principals and Teachers shared their own experiences, observations of improvements, and student	Advocacy-Business	-	1
	Advocacy-Parent/Teacher/Community	1	2
	Advocacy-Religious	1	-
	Labor Union	-	1
	Locally Elected School Board	-	3
	Other Government Body	-	2
	Policy Entrepreneur	2	-
	Political Party	1	-
	Scholar	1	1
	Superintendents	-	8
	Teacher and Education Profession Association	-	4
	Teachers/Educators	2	10
	Total	8	32

success stories resulting from the new standards.

A more-detailed breakdown of the different educated-related special interest groups shows that policy positions among similar types of groups do not always align. For example, while most educators opposed moving away from the Common Core standards, two self-described educators were in favor of HB2292. One was a retired teacher lamenting change and another was Jeffrey Clarke, Instructor of Art from Santana, who, while expressing concern for local control and states’ rights also declared:

I testify by the breadth of my experience that Common Core aka College and Career Ready Standards are not in the best interest of creative thinking and learning to learn maturation

and metacognition...Stand strong and defeat the data and testing nightmare of Common Core in Kansas!!!

Two advocacy groups supported Kansas educators in opposing HB2292 both claiming it was unconstitutional overreach of the state government into locally elected school boards' powers. In contrast, the Missouri Coalition against Common Core favored the bill with a similar constitutional argument: Kansas must not cede its control over its educating citizens and must "protect them from the privately supported workforce development agenda of Washington D.C.-based trade organizations" (Byrne, Testimony HB2292; February 23, 2015).

Scholar versus Scholar

HB2292's hearing was the only instance of university-based scholars directly participating in the policy discourse. A George Mason University Professor Emeritus of Information Technology and Engineering insisted Kansas maintain its power over education as granted in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution by rejecting Common Core as federal oversight; while a University of Kansas Science Teacher Educator supported the rigor of the standards based upon his experience as a member of the Kansas committee that helped draft the standards.

Determining the Policy Position

Largely, policy positions are based upon the individual lived experiences of the policy actor. Over 80% of testimony provided a personal story of how the individual came their specific beliefs on Common Core. Twenty-eight individuals – both proponents and opponents – drew on their expertise and experiences as an educator to justify their stance. Statements emphasized direct experience and served to demonstrate professional expertise, exemplified in the following testimony: "As a special ed. teacher, I have fought to teach kids in the way they

best learn since the 70s” (Fleming, HB2292, February 23, 2015). “Speaking from experience, one thing teachers do not need is more demand on their most coveted commodity – time” (Dorsey, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

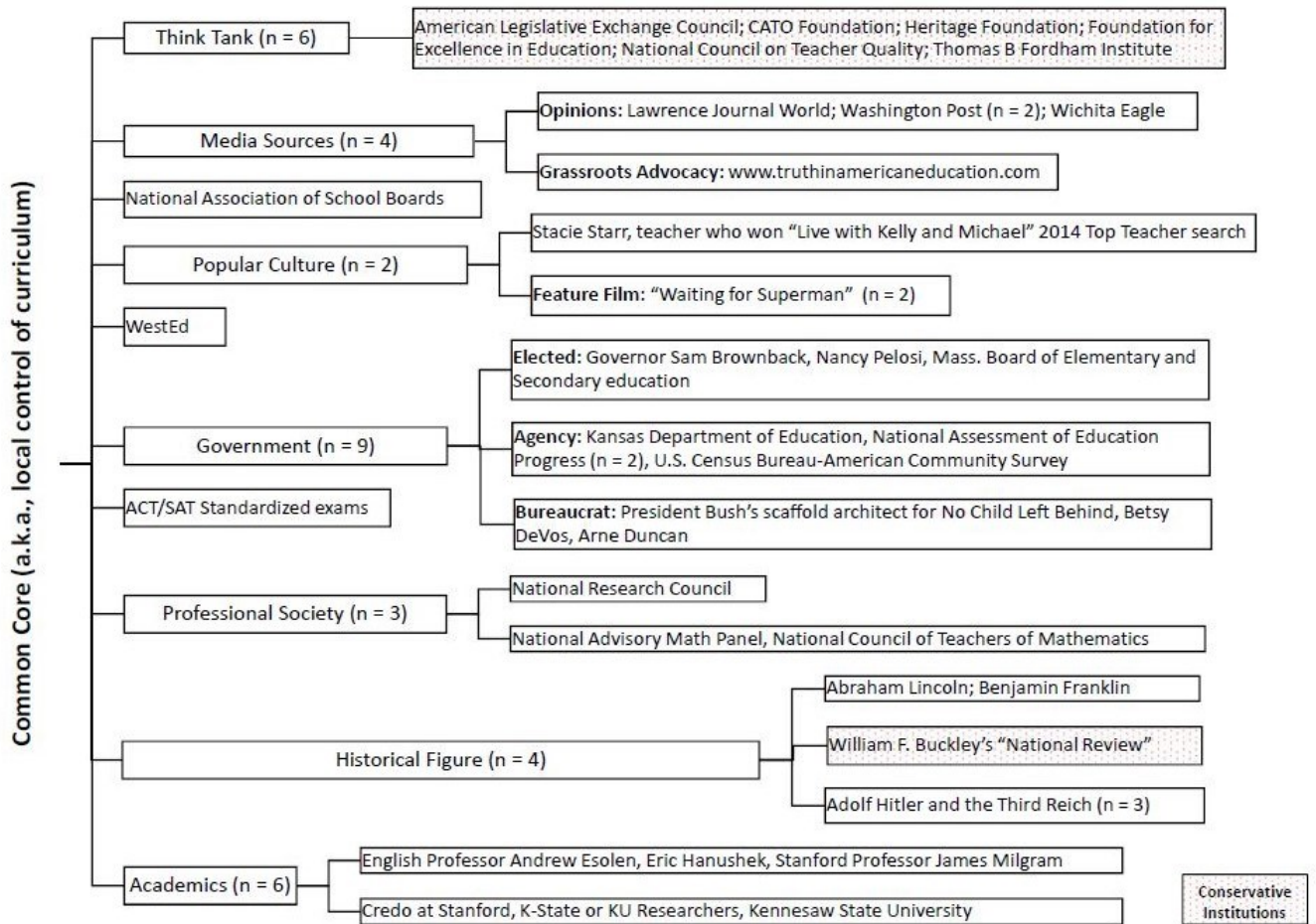
Thirteen testimonials also drew upon parental perspectives to justify their support of or opposition to HB2292. For example, some parents shared their experiences helping their child with assigned homework:

Also, since I am a parent who is very aware of what is happening in our schools, I made sure to do at home what I KNOW works in helping him learn at the pace that he is capable of learning. In talking to other parents in my son's class, however, they were not as fortunate. For them, HOMEWORK in Kindergarten was a near-nightly ritual. I find this appalling (Selensky, Testimony, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Archaeology of Knowledge

Constructing an archeology of knowledge illustrates origins of policy ideas through capturing information sources cited by policy actors. Testimony referenced think tanks, scholars, historical figures, popular culture, elected officials, and media as sources of information that shaped their perceptions and preferred policy position (Figure I.4).

Figure I.4 Common Core Archaeology of Knowledge



Although government tends to be the villain in Common Core discourse, references to government officials and agencies as sources of information to justify policy positions were most often cited. References to government sources were selected to appeal to a conservative elected body and used to support policy positions sometimes in a positive manner, and sometimes negative. For example, a Superintendent quoted Governor Sam Brownback as evidence that the concept of local control applies to locally elected school boards just as much as it does legislators. In contrast to placing an elected official in esteem was a Nancy Pelosi quote that preceded a bold statement implying that Kansas legislators had been duped by the federal government.

William F. Buckley⁴, the person credited with shaping the modern conservative movement, along with six conservative think tanks influenced proponents' policy positions. While there were six scholarly sources of knowledge referenced, only one (i.e., Milgram, Figure 4) included research-based evidence to support the policy position. The other academic references were given as general sources of information about Common Core in Kansas.

Media sources referenced opinion pieces coming from two Kansas newspapers – with perspectives favoring Common Core, as well as a Washington Post blog against Common Core cited by two different concerned citizens. Participants also referenced a 2010 feature film and a daytime cable television talk show to support their policy preferences. Highlighting distrust of government were three references to Adolph Hitler. In contrast, Abraham Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin were referenced to enlighten legislators about American Federalism.

The Language of Common Core

The magnitude of participation in HB2292 highlights the complexity of political discourse. Eighty-nine different descriptions of standards were found within testimony. While most referenced “Common Core/ready/state/academic standards”, other adjectives describing standards included “atrocious/heathen/faulty/unproven.” One lobbying group recognized this complexity in their review of the proposed bill:

Common Core State Standards is inaccurately defined in this bill. For example, Next Generation Science Standards had nothing to do with the process the developed the Common Core Standards. (f) "Common Core state standards" means the Common Core standards adopted by the Kansas state board of education on or after October 12, 2010, and any

⁴ <https://www.biography.com/people/william-f-buckley-jr-9230494>

subsequent amendments to the Common Core standards. "Common Core state standards" includes "Common Core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects," "Common Core state standards for mathematics," "Kansas college and career ready standards" and "next generation science standards (Kansas PTA, Testimony, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Policy discourse from special interest groups can generally be placed into two dichotomous categories, scientific or ideological, to understand how these groups use language to persuade lawmakers.

Scientific Dialect

Testimony can generally be characterized and understood as either stating the facts (i.e., scientific dialect) or stories to appeal to human emotion (i.e., ideological dialect). Scientific dialect surrounding HB2292 was framed as constitutional rights and restraints (n = 14, 13.7%) as well as fiscal facts about sunken costs and the expense of change (n = 19, 18.6%). Concerned citizens focused on rights granted by the U.S. Constitution to remind legislators: "This is why we must return to the 10th Amendment of the United States Constitution, which allows Kansans to educate our kids the best way WE know how" (Lightner-Reimer; HB2292; February 23, 2015).

In contrast, lobbyists opposed HB2292 tended to use the Kansas Constitution as the basis for arguing that the state legislature did not have authority to decide what curriculum schools teach. This is exemplified in a statement from Mainstream Coalition, which also illustrates perceptions of how elected officials practice public choice through holding the public hearing on HB2292:

HB2292 is an unconstitutional encroachment of the legislature into the constitutionally, legally defined responsibilities of the state board of education and constitutes poor educational policy apparently motivated by political concerns and not concern for the best education of our students (Mainstream Coalition, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Other scientifically framed messages focused on the fact that prohibiting Common Core would mean that many advanced students would be banned from competitive, globally recognized academic opportunities. Some also focused on financial implications, for example:

If your interest is to save the state and districts money by preventing implementation costs of Common Core Standards, it is too late. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of employee hours have already been spent on curriculum alignment, professional development and instructional resources. To ban the implementation of the standards would cost us far more than continuing with the implementation we have already begun (Hall, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Ideological Dialect

Ideological dialect (n = 68, 66.7%) is far more prevalent in the discourse surrounding Common Core and local control of curriculum and is used by most all participants including concerned citizens, lobbyists, and educators. Proponents of HB2292 often shared rhetoric around federal government control, designed to undermine their position of power. As one testimonial rhetorically questioned: “Ask yourself, what has the federal government ever done well, beyond spending other people’s money. That alone is enough to say no to this nonsense” (Beemer, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Others spoke from their positions as parents to sway lawmakers: “As you can imagine, ensuring a future filled with opportunity and building strong character in our children is our

primary goal as parents. We feel like Common Core has compromised our ability to do that” (Fox, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Educators and others opposed to this bill provided general statements designed to appeal to emotional decision-making. “Choosing excellence for all students is a process. I believe that translating the Common Core State Standards (what Kansas calls the College and Career Ready Standards) into the school curriculum will produce marvelous results educationally” (Baxter, HB2292, February 23, 2015). Similarly, educators shared stories from their own perspectives:

Yes, I was a frightened teacher 3 years ago when I was to switch to the Common Core. I knew I would have the work cut out for me...but after I started seeing the benefits they made in my students’ daily life – I am more than convinced they are the right curriculum for my classroom and for our nation’s future. Today I ask you to continue to realize the benefits of the Common Core State Standard Initiative and be firm in knowing that your decisions of keeping it alive and going in Kansas will reap major benefits for not only your future but for generations to come (Hedrick, 2015 Kansas Regional Teacher of the Year; Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Local Control

Echoing concerns of constitutional rights, discourse focused on ideas of local control was found in almost half ($n = 32$, 47.1%) of testimony. Pro-education policy actors tended to focus any discussion of local control on the Kansas Constitution’s designation of school management to the State Board of Education who has delegated these powers to locally elected school boards. Explained by an interviewee:

I believe that each district or school should know its student population and their weaknesses their strengths and to be able to educate children as far as what they know.

You know the kids are not on an assembly line and we are not trying to produce the same product. We do want the same results for them to graduate from high school and probably go on to higher ed, but it should not be a national. I don't know if it's the standards or whatever, but common core I believe that should be left up to the districts to decide. (Interviewee 10)

Another opponent of HB2292 explained how the policy would have the opposite effect on local control of curriculum than what proponents believe:

In other words, this bill, which is titled “the Local Control of Kansas Education Act,” actually weakens local control by dictating what school districts CANNOT do. That sets a precedent which means the state can also dictate what school districts must teach - the opposite of local control. Remember, no district is required to adopt, teach or purchase materials aligned with the common core. Local boards make that decision. This bill takes away choices (Tallman, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

While proponents of HB2292 also argued from a position based upon a desire for local control, their understanding of how this policy impacts the implementation of local control was lacking. Instead, they believed that by getting the state legislature to prohibit Common Core that decisions regarding education will be given back to the State. The complexity of local control discourse and differing individual perspectives of meaning is best illustrated by quotes that compare language of proponents and opponents (Table I.2).

Table I.2 Common Core and Local Control Discourse

Proponent of HB2292	Opponent of HB2292
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<p>“The program removes any and all local control. We need a KANSAS solution for KANSAS education that allows us to make decisions based on who we are, not on what the federal government thinks we should be. HB 2292, the Local Control of Kansas Education Act will: Take back control of our schools and return responsibility to the local school boards and parents.” (Jackson; Testimony HB2292; February 23, 2015)</p>	<p>“I would like to sum up my opposition to HB 2292 with a quote. “Local school board members, local administrators, local teachers, and local parents know what is best for children in their community. It is important they be given the flexibility they need to help every child succeed,” (Griffith; Testimony HB2292; February 23, 2015)</p>
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Analogies and Metaphors

“No one is at the wheel of the school bus in the State of Kansas” (Wood, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 201).

Proponents of HB2292 described the standards pejoratively as: baloney, blight, cancer, deceptive and dishonest, failed experiment fake, odious, Obama administration-backed educational nightmare, Orwellian education experiment, the common bane of the states, as well as “mediocre, experimental, and not based on any international benchmark” (Wurman, Testimony HB 2292, February 23, 2015). Collectively described, Common Core is: “system designed by bureaucrats” (Smith, Testimony HB2292, February 25, 2013) that is “a testing regime that is simply child abuse” (Wood, Testimony HB2292, February 25, 2013) resulting in “systems that are ever more Marxist, Fascist, Sorelian in context” (Lunsford, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Testimonials sometimes relied on real-world analogies to support their policy position. Quotes in Table I.3 illustrate a comparison to the business sector as an example.

Table I.3 Common Core Real-World Analogies

Proponent of HB2292	Opponent of HB2292
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<p>“This is akin to Walmart or McDonalds rolling out a new cash register system for their worldwide operations based on it being “highly recommended” without first testing it to ensure it actually worked in stores. There is not one person in this room much less one person outside this room who would think that would be a good thing to do, except perhaps the seller of that cash register system.” (Huesers, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)</p>	<p>“No business I know would take on a project without real numbers identifying the costs of a project. Neither should Kansas!” (Hendershot, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015)</p>
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“You don’t kill a mouse with a shotgun.” (Doll, Testimony HB2292; February 25, 2018).

Opponents to HB2292 primarily stuck to scientific dialect and common-sense arguments about the time, effort and expense that had already been invested in the standards. Rarely did these individuals use analogies to describe Common Core, but instead lamented the “my way or the highway” (Lysell, February 23, 2015) approach and “talking points” (Stessman, February 23, 2015) given by concerned citizens. The Mainstream Coalition reminded legislators that it would be “wise to remember to not cut off our noses to spite our faces.”

Strategies

Language use and message framing are powerful strategies in policymaking. Policy proposals began with an explicit reference to Common Core and immediately shifted to language about accountability and local control (See Figure 1). This strategy to evolve policy language may help avoid political backlash but is not unnoticed by special interest groups. As one interviewee shared,

What I think is frustrating for state boards is that you can spend a lot of money and take a lot of time and you end up with the same thing that's in the Common Core and you just figure out a way to call it something else.” (Interviewee 14)

Other discourse strategies evident in the debate on Common Core and local control of curricula include organized advocacy, tying the issue to national politics unpopular with the majority of voters, and basic flattery.

Organizing for advocacy involves providing talking points for members of special interest groups to use when lobbying their legislators. Twelve testimonials referred to Common Core as a “top-down” approach to education, with ten of these letters also stating it is a “top-down, one-size-fits-all” approach to education. These letters also had talking points stating the cost of \$800 million and concerns of the federal government having access to student data as other reasons to pass the bill.

Testimonials in favor of HB2292 also tied this policy to other politically contentious issues. Ten testimonials referenced Obama and/or the Affordable Care Act as a comparison. Several examples of testimony specifically compared Common Core to the Affordable Care Act, with one stating:

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) works the same way with patients being seen as a number and given treatment and tests based on a bureaucratic formula instead of the actual needs of the individual patient. The costs have skyrocketed, and the care of the individual patient is of little concern (Wood, Robert. Testimony, HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Flattery in discourse and presenting oneself as an ally was often a tactic used by both sides of the issue. An exemplary state provided by Teresa San Martin, commenced with:

I want to begin by commending each of you for your dual efforts of focusing on what continues to happen at the federal level, while trying to resolve the daily issues at home, in Kansas. Encouraging fellow Republicans to prioritize the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the 114th Congress is crucial, as it is the

cornerstone of federal education policy; the reauthorization will provide a long term vision and stability for education (San Martin, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

San Martin's "I'm on your side" message framing provides another example of how special interest groups seek to capitalize on human emotion. She asks legislators to follow her advice:

Let's give the system a chance to work in Washington, D.C. as well as in Kansas. Please be ever mindful and hopeful that we as the Republican majority can work together pushing for the reauthorization of ESEA, giving the power and flexibility back to the states. Once reauthorization occurs, we can rework our vision for Kansas (San Martin, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Versus: Political Struggle to Gain or Maintain Power

Political discourse reflects a constant struggle for political power and resources. The fight over Common Core standards and local control of curriculum in Kansas highlights varying competing interests shaping education. Educators want to maintain the power they have over teaching students; parents desire the power to determine what their child is taught; local school board members wish to maintain power to manage schools; and lobbyists want to maintain power for their clientele. Beyond these group interests, the political discourse around this issue also highlights the struggle between public education and religious values.

Public Education vs Religion

Ten (16.1%) concerned citizens focused their testimony on the role of religion, specifically Judeo-Christian values, in education. Given as the argument against Common Core by home school parents, this appeal to religious principles is designed to impact the thinking of the Republican-dominated state-elected body. References to religion as guiding morals

important to a child's education were broad, except for two parents who shared explicit concerns about sex education.

If you dig into the textbooks aligned with CC, you will discover much content that goes against the principle of the dignity and respect of human life from conception and at all stages. One really cannot be pro-life and pro-common core. Our country was founded on Judeo/Christian principles. The true purpose of education is for our children to grow to see the face of God, not to be locked into a non-individualized machine designed merely to feed the global economy (Jinkens, Testimony HB2292, February 23, 2015).

Appendix J - Constitutional Amendment

Introduction

No other education policy has more implication for social change than efforts to amend Article 6-Education of the Kansas Constitution. Steeped in historical context, perceptions about the social norms of governance framed discourse on consideration of an amendment to Article 6-Education of the Kansas Constitution. Semantics feeds ongoing disagreement over education finance, with opposing sides unable to agree on what is ‘suitable’ or ‘adequate.’ No longer is the battle over what these words mean, but the new course to remedy desired by proponents is to give sole authority for education finance to legislators and remove any role for the state supreme court.

During the case study timeframe two proposals were introduced to give the legislature sole power over the financing of education. The first, SCR1608-*Constitutional amendment concerning school finance*, was introduced in 2013 but received little interest with only two proponents, the KPI and an elected Representative, and only one school Superintendent who stood opposed.

Business-sector special interest groups and conservative legislators led a revived endeavor in 2018 to once again seek removal of any judicial oversight of education finance, arguing that the ‘endless cycle of litigation’ hurts schools. Three rural, Republican Representatives supporting an amendment for constitutional change submitted their rationale:

The point has been made that the current language of Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution will only continue this constant litigation, unless the legislature and the people of Kansas have the opportunity to vote on changing this current language. Having served on the 2017 Special Committee on a Comprehensive Response to the School Finance Decision,

where we discussed options to resolve this current situation. Some of those included cuts to other state programs and services, not meeting obligations that the state is currently responsible for, and discussion on a possible constitutional amendment change. The only item we can agree on is that we continue to spend taxpayer dollars with money that we necessarily do not have, however we spend it because we think we have it (Reps. Aurand, Johnson, and Waymaster, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

If either of these resolutions were to be adopted, as one opponent shared,

Kansas would go from the laudable standard set by the people in 1966—that every Kansas child should receive an excellent education—to a standard set to the drumbeat of electoral politics: that a suitable education is whatever the Legislature can stomach (Fisher, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

One in three testimonials opposed HCR5029-*Constitutional amendment to declare the power to appropriate funding for education is exclusively a legislative power and not subject to judicial review* (April 3, 2018) as a legislative ploy to avoid funding schools to court ordered levels and legislatively commissioned studies’ recommendations. “The Kansas Constitution exists to protect Kansans. This bill would rewrite the Constitution to protect the Kansas legislature” (Johnson, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Who Participates

Table J.1 provides a breakdown of special interest group participation in HCR5029. Business-oriented special interest groups desired the Constitution be amended, seeking policy change to obtain a greater share of government-allocated resources and/or lower taxes. Two farm-related interest groups, also members of the Coalition for Fair Funding, supported the amendment primarily as a means to reducing taxes. In contrast, the Kansas Farmers Union, also

a farm-related interest group, opposed the amendment recognizing that “As the population shifts and reapportionment occurs, which we are almost there again, rural Kansas loses representation to urban areas. Judicial review is the only backstop rural Kansas has to being squeezed even more” (Teske, Testimony HCR5029, no date).

Many opponents were parents whose letters were prompted by an advocacy campaign framed as an appeal to state-elected officials, saying if the ‘legislature would just do their job’ rather than attempt to change the rules the constant cycle of litigation would end. Many of these letters shared “The court’s rulings have been clear and consistent, and we would not have had so much litigation if the legislature had honored its own promises” (Mitchell et al, Testimony HCR5029, April 2, 2018). The majority of testimonials came from women (n = 23, 56.1%), largely because of the participation of these concerned citizens. Many of these opposed concerned citizens resided in Johnson County (n = 17, 56.7%), the same jurisdiction of one self-described county-elected commissioner, contractor, father, and proponent of amending the constitution.

In contrast to Education Committee hearings on issues that affect curriculum or organizational structure, school representatives did not contribute to the discourse on constitutional change. Similarly, there were no out-of-state interests represented in the issue. However, a former Senator and head of the state chamber of commerce, appears in a new role lobbying on behalf of the KPI.

Table J.1 HCR 5029 Policy Position by Special Interest Group Type

	Proponent	Opponent	Neutral
Advocacy-Business	4		
Advocacy-Farm	2	1	
Advocacy-Parent/Teacher/Community		4	
Concerned Citizen		15	
Educator		1	
Labor Union		2	
Local Elected School Board		1	
Other Government Body	1		1
Policy Entrepreneur	1	1	
Professional Association		1	
State Elected Official	1*		1**
Superintendents		1***	
Teacher and Education Profession Organization		3	
Total	9	30	2

*1 Testimonial signed by 3 legislators.

**Unknown, not documented in public record.

*** 1 Testimonial signed by 5 superintendents.

Networks

Traditional industry-affiliated associations and lobbying groups formed a coalition to lobby for the amendment creating the “Kansas Coalition for Fair Funding.” This network was helped by the efforts of the KPI, although it was made explicit that, “The Kansas Policy Institute is not part of us. It’s not part of our coalition. They are far more further to the right than us.” (Interviewee 6)

Parents from across Johnson County and several other towns joined a letter writing campaign to tell the legislature that “Amending the state constitution should not be the way to address the lack of funding of our public education” (Loggia, Testimony HCR5029, April 2, 2018).

Proponents versus Opponents

Dominant characteristics of proponents along with the details of their policy discourse give the appearance that this issue is a battle between business special interest groups, specifically, state government contractors and low-tax champions, and public education advocates. Most proponents framed a message on competition for public resources, as exemplified by the Kansas Contractors Association:

Our industry, like many others, has experienced significant cuts as ongoing litigation creates more and more of an imbalance in the state budget, diverting additional funds to one sector (K-12 education) while other essential sectors-including transportation safety-are harmed. (White, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Some opponents see the constitutional amendment as a threat to rural schools. SCR1608's only opponent described anticipated outcomes of legislators, of whom urban numbers are increasing as population trends move away from rural communities, have more influence in state policy.

A single mill in our district will generate \$11,670. In the suburban Kansas City districts, that number sky-rockets to \$2,900,000. As you can see, the disparity is tremendous but yet we are doing great things in USD 504. This would not be possible without the equalization plan for low-enrollment or at-risk enrollment (LaTurner, Testimony SCR1608, February 13, 2013).

Pro-public education advocates point to some politicians as the nemesis to their favored policy position, focusing on what they perceive as deliberative destruction of public education as means to lower taxes.

Over the past several years, Olathe Public Education Network has become more and more alarmed at the process a small faction of folks have taken to systematically undermine Kansas public schools. This faction of politicians gained control somehow of leadership positions in Topeka. The failed tax experiment from Brownback created a crisis that resulted in underfunding education and other essential services. These same politicians blame the judicial branch for forcing the legislative branch to actually fix this problem of funding. We see this attempt at revising the Kansas Constitution as the latest attempt to distract the public from the damage that has been done to our schools (McDonald, Testimony HCR5029, April 1, 2018).

It is natural that a private school would support the proposed amendment because they stand to potentially benefit. However, the divisive nature of constitutional change leaves groups with similar interests split. Maintaining fundamental governance norms is seen by some policy actors as more important than gaining public education funding (Table J.2).

Table J.2 Perceptions of Private School Policy Actors

Proponent	Opponent
“I believe it should be amended. We often say that the Kansas State Department of Education is the fourth branch of government here in the state. So, I believe amending the constitution and really allowing the state government to oversee public education and not allow public education to dictate state government.” (Interviewee 10)	“So, if we want a good state, we don’t just want good private schools, we want good public schools. So, I am definitely against the amendment. I think our constitution, the major goal of our constitution should be to support public schools.” (Interviewee 13)

Instead of a tension between public and private education, this policy issue pits public education against private businesses that desire a larger share of resources. One constitutional amendment proponent used sensational ideological dialect, heightening the potential for negative outcomes if the legislature were not to be given sole power to determine the level of state education funding.

The pesky thing about economics is it's full of cold, hard truths. Such as a \$2 billion-dollar tax hike, ONLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, pushing our state into an economic recession or worse and in the vein and mentality of "Public Education Vs. Everything Else" our roads and highways, mental health, developmental supports, higher education and incentives to locate business to Kansas will be left to wither on the vine damaging our future. Additionally, prison overcrowding will spiral upward, state employee pay will have to be frozen and a myriad of other services and benefits will be frozen or cut pushing certainly some of these responsibilities to the counties where that flawed option puts me as a County Commissioner in the untenable position of deciding between not taking care of people or raising taxes. These hard choices will be proposed, debated, thought through and ultimately decided while a pair of brand new Chevrolet Suburban's are parked in front of many of the new or massively updated and remolded Olathe School District buildings (Brown, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Determining the Policy Position

The current controversy is, first of all, obviously driven by lawsuits from bigger school districts in the state. The biggest school districts in the state, you have a budget or access to some money to hire lawyers. A lot of people agree that they have a case to make – that education is too important to be average. (Interviewee 1).

As described early, fundamental beliefs on historical governance and social norms drives those opposed to constitutional change. Concerned parents want their schools to be resourced for the best interests of kids, leaning heavily on the rationale that the Supreme Court and the legislature's own studies point to increased funding to reach desired statewide academic goals. Special groups often referenced their mission statements as basis for their appeal to legislators.

Professional lobbying groups often had official ‘platforms’ or ‘legislative agendas’ to guide their messaging.

Archaeology of Knowledge

Testimony rarely cited any evidence other than legislatively commissioned studies. Most frequently cited in testimonials was the legislature’s 2018 sponsored school finance study (n = 19) conducted by Dr. Lori L. Taylor, Professor and Head of Public Service and Administration Department at Texas A&M University. The report determined that Kansas schools were underfunded and recommended increased spending to meet state-defined academic achievement standards. Many policy actors opposing the amendment focused on the mandate to increase finding while reiterating that legislature keeps commissioning studies on school finance but will not enact recommendations to increase spending. Table J.3 shows differing perspectives of this study and the legislators’ response from two testimonials and two interviewees.

Table J.3 Perceptions of Legislatively Commissioned State Education Finance Research

Proponent	Opponent
<p>“Even the authors of the WestEd cost study say, “funding alone is not enough; if one fails to consider how well resources are used, then increasing how much resources are provided may have a limited effect on student outcomes.”” (O’Neal, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018)</p> <p>Then you have these outside consultants coming in like Augenblick and Myers, and the latest lady came out of Texas and said, “Oh you’ve got to have a billion dollars more, oh maybe its two billion maybe, made a mistake.” (Interviewee 14)</p>	<p>“I understand that Republicans in the Kansas Legislature are in a difficult position-they do not want to raise taxes, but the study they themselves requested found that additional funds for our schools are necessary.” (Johnson, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018)</p> <p>“The last study [the legislature] retained a consultant on came back and it was actually... there were those in the education community that were really fearful because it was a very, very conservative consulting firm. When the report came back it was like, “this is what the conservative group said, my god what would a liberal group say?” Well, there were some of the legislative leaders then rapidly trying to get rid of that report under some other pieces of paper.” (Interviewee 11)</p>

KPI cited their privately funded polling statistics in efforts to convince law makers to change the Constitution. Backgrounded by an infographic exclaiming “6 out of 10 Kansans are willing to AMEND the CONSTITUTION to TAKE BACK CONTROL of education funding FROM the COURTS.” Providing more clarification on their poll, their lobbyist shared:

Our November 2017 survey found 59 percent of voters support changing the constitution with only 20 percent in opposition. It’s not just a conservative issue; the majority of self-identified moderates and liberals oppose having the court set school funding levels. Only 23 percent of moderates want the court in charge, but 58 percent want to amend the constitution. Among liberals, 50 percent support amending the constitution while 37 percent prefer having the court set funding levels. (O’Neal, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

The Language of Constitutional Amendment

Testimonials often combined ideological and scientific dialect to frame their message. The most common themes covered perceptions of democratic and constitutional norms, with many lobbyists using facts and emotional appeal together. Scientific framing was used to explain statutes, historical events, or tax and spending. Opponents of amending the constitution capitalized on this hearing to convey to legislators that their power is limited by law, and suggest their job is to support rather than destruct current government systems. This sentiment is best articulated in the following quote:

We note that the oath of office for Kansas legislators is quite short and is almost entirely limited to promising to uphold our federal and state constitutions. The Senate oath states, “I do solemnly swear [or affirm] that I will support the Constitution of the United States

and the Constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Senator of the State of Kansas, So help me God.” (Deedy, HCR5029, April 2, 2018).

A major theme for proponents was to frame the resolution as a ‘separation of powers’ issue, while, in contrast, opponents of amending the constitution framed their message as a need for ‘checks and balances.’ Examples of conflicting perspectives are shown in Table J.4. The U.S. Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison* is cited as precedent for the Kansas courts’ role in education finance.

Marbury v. Madison establishes the right of judicial review. It essential says that a right without a remedy is not a right. You put something in the Constitution but say that the courts can’t actually deal with what is in the Constitution. You are actually subverting the whole democratic process and I think that is a fundamental policy argument.

(Interviewee 2)

Table J.4 Perceptions of Separation of Powers

Proponent	Opponent
<p>“We have a separation of powers issue going on, which drove the introductions of the constitutional amendment.” (Interviewee 6)</p> <p>“I’ve had the opportunity to talk to legislators who have told me they don’t feel like the Supreme Court has the right to tell them what is adequate.” (Interviewee 5)</p> <p>“We support this amendment as furtherance of the long standing principle of “separation of powers” between the three branches of government. The legislative branch is closest to the people and best suited for knowing and balancing</p>	<p>“I like it the way it is. I do think children need constitutional advocacy and, yes, parents can do that – but I do think the wording in the constitution reminds us, the people that the Constitution is there for them, they are the future of our state. Our country too.” (Interviewee 4)</p> <p>“The Court rulings are not political statements, but professional judgments from an equal branch of the Kansas government.” (Burns, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018)</p> <p>“Shielding the Legislature and/or the Executive Branch from the review of the Court ultimately denies a remedy to a citizen or citizens who believe that an act of Government has violated the Constitution.” (Denton, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018)</p>

the many needs of the public.” (Devine, Testimony HCR 5029, April 3, 2018)	
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Constant Litigation

A consistent message from proponents was to emphasize their belief that the true purpose of this proposal was to amend the constitution as the only method to ensure the state can no longer be sued if education does not receive the amount of funding deemed appropriate by the court. Special interest groups that lobbied in support of the Constitutional Amendment tended to share opinions that ending litigation rather than increasing education funding is the most beneficial policy outcome. Table J.5 provides opposing viewpoints on the need for the proposed amendment.

Table J.5 Perceptions of Ongoing School Finance Litigation

Proponent	Opponent
“People are crazy to think that if the legislature appropriates enough, whatever that amount would be – maybe \$80-90 million – that there’s not going to be another lawsuit. It’s going to happen. So, it’s got to end.” (Interviewee 3)	“It might be overstating saying that it’s garbage. But until there is realization that this is how the judicial system works, this is how [proponents] look at the case. It takes very cautious deliberation to change the constitution, and what has been presented so far is not cautious, it’s just reactionary. It’s basically saying, “we [legislators] got our hands slapped by the courts for something we did and so we’ve got to figure out a way to blame the system for it. Let’s get rid of the court system or let’s change our constitution.” (Interviewee 11)

Following the sentiment and focus of litigation as the key impetus for the proposed policy change, an interviewee described lawyers as ‘a cottage industry’ perpetuating resistance to line their own pockets.

“There’s been so much emphasis by attorneys, primarily. It’s a cottage industry here in Kansas. We have an attorney whose name is [Attorney 1] and his partner [Attorney 2] And those two gentlemen have made millions and millions of dollars off of these

lawsuits. But his propensity to sell his services to the school district, say, “look you give us three million dollars,” which is basically how much he asked for as a retainer to file suits in Gannon. And once they gave him the three million he said, “well, that's a drop in the bucket, I'll get you billions.” Well, he hasn't gotten billions yet, but he got millions and it's still coming in. So, he sells up his services as an investment in their ability to get more money. And so, the school districts coughed up the three million before he filed his first brief, and he's continued to do that now again, it's been going on almost eight years.” (Interviewee 14)

Opponents responded to advocates by stating that they also “recognize and are also tired of the constant litigation.” In response to the claims of endless litigation, a timeline of school finance lawsuits was submitted by the KASB, outlined below:

The so-called “endless cycle of litigation” is actually just four cases in 50 years, each of which had or has a strong basis in facts. The time in court has been increased by the state’s appeals and difficulty reaching remedies.

- In the 1970’s, the state passed the School District Equalization Act to address major disparities in property taxes in the Caldwell case without appealing to the Supreme Court.
- In 1992, the Legislature adopted a new finance system in response to significant disparities in property taxes before a trial was held. (That action was later upheld by the Kansas Supreme Court.)
- The Montoy case in the 2000s was based primarily on a cost study the Legislature commissioned specifically to determine constitutionally suitable funding and then failed to follow; and to address wide disparities in student achievement. The

Legislature approved funding increases based on a cost study conducted by the Kansas Legislative Post Audit Division and the case was dismissed.

- The current Gannon case has been based on the Legislature's failure to maintain funding levels accepted by the court to end the Montoy case, which the court found increased disparity in local property taxes and resulted in declining student achievement. (Tallman, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Neoliberal discourse often emphasizes the perceived superiority of the private sector in every manner. In this case, one rent seeking interest group predicates their plea for public resources on their ability to create jobs, as if these are higher merit and, therefore, more worthy of taxpayer dollars.

For generations, the transportation industry-our members-have helped to grow and protect the state economy. Studies prove that transportation is one of the most important economic drivers in our state. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration estimates that for each dollar spent on infrastructure, more than \$5.20 is gained in economic benefit. Additionally, had dollars not been diverted from the state's last transportation plan (T-Works), the industry would account for more than 175,000 good-paying jobs across the state. (White, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Scientific Dialect

Policy discourse providing scientific, rational statements appeared in 37% (n = 15) of testimony. Most were interpretations or explanations of the state constitution and previous state-specific actions leading up to this hearing, exemplified in the testimony of opponents:

- Judicial review is the idea, fundamental to the US system of government, and that the actions of the executive and legislative branches of government are subject to review

and possible invalidation by the judiciary. Judicial review allows the Supreme Court to take an active role in ensuring that the other branches of government abide by the constitution. (Hanna, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

- Recent history teaches us a lot about the importance of judicial oversight. The Montoy case was dismissed after the court was presented with legislation that would raise state base aid to \$4,492 by 2009-10. The legislature never kept that promise and it was no surprise that the Gannon case followed. In spite of good intentions, the legislature, hobbled by the politics of the 2012 tax cut, has also failed to fulfill many other promises: actuarial funding of KPERS, higher education, the highway plan, foster care and social services, arts, a 7.5% ending balance, 92% special education funding, etc. (Grebowiec, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).
- The job of the judiciary, since statehood, has been to interpret and uphold the constitution. This judicial duty is restricted in the proposed resolution. (Brady, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Proponents used a variety of fiscal and legal narratives in attempt to sway lawmakers.

Three of these appeals are provided to exemplify proponents' usage of scientific dialect:

- The statewide average mill levy in Kansas in the last reportable year was over 135.954 mills. Over the past 35 years, whenever the statewide average mill levy reached between 125 mills to 130 mills, the state enacted property tax relief. State and local tax revenues have slowly become more dependent on property taxes over the past two decades. In FY 1998, 28.1% of state and local tax revenue came from general property taxes. Also, in FY 1998, 28.0% of state and local tax revenue came from sales and use taxes. Finally, 26.9% of state and local tax

revenue came from income and privilege taxes in FY 1998. Smaller fees, such as motor fuel taxes and motor vehicle fees, made up the remainder of state and local tax revenue in FY 1998. Comparatively, in FY 2017, 34.18% of state and local tax revenue came from general property taxes. Sales and income taxes made up 31.17% and 19.43%, respectively. (Felts, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

- Kansas is a large geographic state with a small population. Because of this, our state has the fourth most highway miles of any state in addition to 25,000 bridges. Right now, the system lacks the funding to maintain the state's current roads and bridges (\$380 million annually), but also lacks the funding to expand and make necessary safety improvements. Without any additional investments from the state, the Kansas Department of Transportation – within the next few years – will not have the state funds to secure matching federal transportation dollars. (White, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).
- In 1994, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled in USD No. 229 v. State of Kansas that Art. 6, Sec. 6 of the education article in the state constitution did not give the court the power to determine funding levels. In addition, Art. 3, Sec. 3 of the state constitution, the Judicial Article, provides that the Court's appellate jurisdiction shall be "as provided by law", In Solomon v. State of Kansas, the court struck down the legislature's attempt to amend the procedure for selecting chief judges in various judicial districts. The legislature passed a bill allowing local judges to select their chief judge for the district, rather than having each chief judge be appointed by the Kansas Supreme Court. Justice Eric Rosen wrote, "[O]ne department of government usurps the powers of another department when

it exercises coercive influence on the other.” (emphasis added) “In order for the interference by one department with the operations of another department to be unconstitutional, the intrusion must be significant.” (emphasis added) K.S.A. 60-2406(d) provides that in school finance litigation under Art. 6 of the Kansas Constitution, courts “shall not have the authority to order a school district or any attendance center within a school district to be closed or enjoin the use of all statutes related to the distribution of funds for public education. (O’Neal, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Ideological Dialect

Parents most heavily relied on ideological dialect, by duplicating and customizing a template letter designed to mix concise facts with an emotional appeal. Ideological messaging focused on perceptions of the importance of 1) checks and balances (56.7%, n = 17), 2) terse references to legislators changing rules (23.0%, n = 7), and 3) six opponents (20.0%) directly responded to the proponent message framing around ending the constant cycle of litigation. An exemplary quote from each is provided:

- “This bill removes the “check and balance” system which provides a more holistic view of funding needs and accountability.” (Boles, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).
- “It looks to me as if you are saying, hey, no one agrees with me, then let’s make up our own rules and amend the constitution.” (Rome, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).
- “The courts' rulings have been clear and consistent, and we would not have had so much litigation if the legislature had honored its own promises.” (Mitchell, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Many lobbyists provided their personal interpretations of laws, leading to heavy utilization of ideological dialect to frame their policy position. Some of the most impassioned ideological dialect came from a proponent who described himself as construction industry businessman, and Johnson County Commissioner, and appearing before the legislature in his important role of “Father of 5 children and Citizen of my Sweet, [city] Kansas” (Testimony HCR5029, no date). He lamented that:

It’s time to let the people of Kansas decide if this dark chapter of school funding policy in Kansas history must be righted going forward. It is absolutely is “Public Education Vs. Everything Else”... and it is wrong. Kansans need the opportunity to vote to do the right thing by equalizing the priority of all Kansas government obligations. Anything less is a failure to our children... and their safe travel, access to services and to the businesses creating the jobs for which out very children are preparing themselves. What good would the best K-12 education in American be if all our children tool it down an unsafe and failing I-35 to a Texas school and job?

Strategies

Both sides of the issue implemented strategies to build networks of individuals and organized groups to lobby legislators. Proponents of constitutional change built a collective message around equity and fairness in funding to support their request – a common theme found in education policy. While opponents framed the protagonists’ “constant cycle of litigation” message as a legislative failure.

Message Framing

“Allowing lawyers to pit one priority against all others isn’t the Kansas way.” (White, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

In contrast to the tax credit scholarship discourse, the low-tax, pro-business special interests did not succeed at making the political struggle a fight between schools and other public services. Education advocates recognized that some policy actors framed the constitutional amendment as a simple struggle for public resources rather than a shift in governance norms with long-range implications. “Pitting school funding against other essential services is also a very unfair approach & we will stand strongly against that narrative” (McDonald, Testimony HCR5029, April 1, 2018).

Proponents framed discourse as a conflict amongst providers of public goods (i.e., schools versus transportation infrastructure), fighting for dwindling resources and advocating more ‘equitable’ distribution of resources. As shown in Figure J.2, visual discourse was utilized to convey both policy position and suggest a scientific approach. This narrative frames schools, transportation, and the construction industry as engaged in rent seeking behavior to gain a larger share of public funds, diminishing the proponents’ other perceived motive of lower taxes achieved through less state-provided education.

Figure J.2 Visualizing Resource Allocation Policy Preference



Proponents of the amendment often framed their message on fairness in distribution of taxpayer monies, as well as their industry’s contribution to future economic growth. Table J.6 reflects opposing beliefs and discourse about the amount of funding that education had received, which, similar to NAEP scores, are based upon the same data that is interpreted differently dependent on the individual who is utilizing it to support their policy position.

Table J.6 Perceptions of Distribution of Resources

Proponent	Opponent
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<p>“Our whole goal and objective was not to bash on education, but to talk about when you have 51% of the state budget going to K12 it is cutting into the infrastructure and other segments of the economy.” (Interviewee 6)</p>	<p>“With inflation over the last 10 years...we are not taking a larger share. One of the arguments is that we’re squeezing out everything else. No, we’re taking about the same share of the state general funds as we did in the early 90s.” (Interviewee 12)</p>
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Members of the Kansas Coalition for Fair Funding, a grassroots advocacy group that formed specifically to support constitutional change, also submitted individual testimony to express their perspectives on the need for constitutional change. Kansas Chamber said:

The consistent refrain I hear from business owners and managers is that the constant litigation has diminished the effectiveness of our educational institutions and their ability to prepare Kansas students for post-secondary careers and post-secondary education. (Cobb, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

The Kansas Contractors Association focused on the impact of overall state budget cuts and said:

Our industry, like many others, has experienced significant cuts as ongoing litigation creates more and more of an imbalance in the state budget, diverting additional funds to one sector (K-12 education) while other essential sectors-including transportation safety-are harmed. (White, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

While the KFB supported schools in 2016 when proposed budget cuts centered on district realignment that would have likely resulted in rural school closings, two years later this special interest group opposed public education citing property taxes saying, “Kansas Farm Bureau has grown increasingly frustrated with the constant pressure on property taxes over the past few decades” (Felts, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) combined all the allied opposed special interest group discourse into one statement, repeating a message of preference for lower taxes over education funding, stating:

Kansas Livestock Association is concerned, however, that the constant cycle of litigation jeopardizes other important priorities within the state, risks massive future tax increases, and interferes with the local school districts' ability to make decisions. KLA members oppose further reliance on property taxes to fund K-12 education. (Teagarden, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

The Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association of Kansas not only complained about taxes, but also perceptions that somehow, they were being taken advantage of by the government.

The recent tax increases caused lost sales not only for tobacco products, but the ancillary products as well. Once the consumer changes their buying habit, it is difficult to get them back as a customer. In the end, the retailer loses a customer, and Kansas loses tax dollars to other states. Fuel distributors and convenience retailers collect millions of tax dollars for the state (for free) and yet we continually are targeted to fill budget holes. (Palace, Testimony HCR5029, April 3, 2018).

Like other policy issues, messages framed on equity in education regardless of one's zip code was evident in perceptions on education funding adequacy. Only this time, this well-accepted social phenomenon was used as support for the status-quo so that public and rural schools remained supported: "it can't all be done in suburban schools and all Kansas students deserve a great education, regardless of zip code" (LaTurner, Testimony SCR1608, February 13, 2013). While tax credit scholarship proponents used this message to justify school choice,

constitutional amendment opponents saw court oversight of equitable distribution of resources, particularly to poorer, rural schools, as necessary given the state legislature's historical pattern of underfunding education.

Grassroots Advocacy

Most concerned citizens wrote some portion of their testimony exactly the same as others indicating an organized effort to engage parents. Letters each had similar introduction that then varied with personal perceptions. One individual customized the beginning of the letter, but forgot to edit entirely leaving in a prompt directing the letter writer to “add in your own words how lowering the age from 21 to 18 for conceal carry will affect you, your family, and your community” (Neal, Testimony HCR5029, no date).

Policy Diffusion

Unlike other neoliberal education policy issues, amending the constitution is not suggested based upon the premise that it is a solution that has worked well in other states. The only mention of the flow of policy ideas across state boundaries, is around the idea that the neoliberal calls for heightened accountability in academic achievement are often countered with lawsuits to obtain financial resources needed to meet accountability standards. As one interviewee shared,

A lot of emphasis been placed over the last, well, almost 20 years in Kansas. And across the nation about 37 states that have had school finance lawsuits-and they all claim that if you give us more money, we'll somehow have this achievement gap shrink and more kids will learn, and they'll be happier, they'll do better in college, and they'll have good jobs, and all that stuff. It isn't happening and it hasn't happened. (Interviewee 14)

Public Choice

State-elected officials relied on the concept that the collective voters’ right to elect someone different the next time overcomes the powerful influence of special interest groups who have financial resources to support their favored politician’s campaigns. In this case, some legislators were willing to make unpopular policy based on a premise that voters, can rectify by an after-the-fact vote (Table J.7). One interpretation of that belief is that these politicians are confident they will have enough support from special interest groups to overcome bad policy decisions. However, as the example shown in Table J.7 illustrates, the perceived ability of financial resources to overcome voter will was a concern expressed by both testimonials and interviews who opposed this resolution.

Table J.7 Differing Perceptions of Public Power

Proponent	Opponent
“Just as the people of this state have an opportunity to remind each legislator every 2 years or 4 years that our power is limited; the people of this state must have the opportunity to remind the Judiciary that their power is also limited and that the Kansas Constitution gives authority for appropriation and policy development to the legislature and legislature alone.” (Rep. Abrams, Testimony HCR4029, April 3, 2018)	“Some of these legislators are so well-funded it is hard to remove them.” (Interviewee 1)

Some research claims that education special interest groups use their collective voting and lobbying to earn a larger share of public resources. This case provides evidence that business special interest groups also engage in education policy debate toward the same end, by framing their plea from the taxpayer perspective.

The fact that neither of these proposals passed bolsters evidence that a mass voting bloc of citizens who expect continued rights and state provision of those rights can overcome both money and the growing and sophisticating network of conservative special interest groups.

“There’s a few legislators that think for themselves. They think the Constitution is sacred and they won’t vote for something like that just to get out of a court case.” (Interviewee 16)

In regard to public choice theory, this case makes a connection to how three branches of government serve as a buffer to pure public choice in political decision-making. In this scenario, if only one branch (i.e., legislators) were to have a stake in determining resource allocation, special interest groups would have an even larger incentive to lobby legislators and provide incentives such as campaign donations and support from important voter blocs. Groups with a larger share of resources for political engagement would be able to consistently prevail over established social norms and evidence-based policy-making.

Versus: Political Struggle to Gain or Maintain Power

Testimony and interviews described an attempt to shift political power so that legislators reap the largest gains through what amounts to removal of the third branch of government. Some explicitly described a legislative approach of what amounts to tyranny of the majority: “[Legislators] are willing to say, ‘I’m not getting my way and I have the majority. Therefore, I want to set how much money goes to schools whether or not it meets the constitution’ just so [legislator] has their power.” (Interviewee 2)

Business sector proponents want a larger share of dwindling public resources and reiterate the state’s responsibility to train the next generation business workforce more efficiently while simultaneously working to diminish their tax obligations. These groups assume that if legislators are given the power now to determine what is adequate funding, their members’ policy preferences will remain in favor.

Most opponents recognized the issue as a strategy by some legislators to not fund education to the full extent required, and continually diminish the reputation of public education.

Rural schools struggle to maintain their status in the era of efficiency and small budgets and recognize that population trends are tipping politics in favor of urban needs and interests.

Neoliberal ideology values formulas and statistics to drive policy decisions. No longer are the social implications of mascots, sports rivalries, and community of the school a viable path to policy preference.