

2016-01-01

College and Career Readiness: Texas House Bill 5 Reform Realities in a Far-West Texas School District

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COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS: TEXAS HOUSE BILL 5 REFORM REALITIES IN
A FAR-WEST TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Administration

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By

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2016

Dedication

“...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”
1 Corinthians 10:31

Like David of Biblical fame, I know the roar of Goliath, for he has taunted me throughout my life. Although my modern Goliath doesn't carry weapons, he reveals himself to me through poverty, low community expectations, and professional challenges. I have faced my adversary head on, armed with determination, compassion, and an education.

Even when the odds are stacked against me, I have this spirit that will not allow me to give up. This spirit is sustained through the unlimited support from my family, friends, and colleagues.

I dedicate this accomplishment to my family. Mom and Dad, words will never express the life impact both of you have had on my life. Your commitment towards each other and Christ provide me with true examples of love, forgiveness, and grace.

“Honor thy father and thy mother”
Exodus 20:12

This accomplishment would not be possible without the continual support of my sisters and brothers-in-law who helped pave the journey for my success.

Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated to my nieces: Amanda, Amerika, Alexandra, Mia, and Victoria.

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A FAR-WEST TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

December 2016

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my committee members who were generous with their expertise and time. A special thanks to Dr. Angus S. Mungal, dissertation chair, for your countless hours of encouragement and patience throughout this journey. Thank you Dr. Arturo Pacheco, Dr. Rodolfo Rincones, and Dr. Char Ullman for agreeing to serve on my committee.

A special recognition to Dr. Penne L. Restad, committee member, who took an active interest in my success as an undergraduate student at The University of Texas at Austin. Thank you for creating a supportive and empowering academic environment. You helped *validate* my development as an undergraduate student to navigate the postsecondary environment. Life changing.

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.”

Proverbs 19:20

I want to also acknowledge Mrs. Julie Conyers for developing my leadership skills through student activities while in high school. It’s those skills I learned that helped shape my current path. To my high school best friend, Adam Ochoa. Thank you for challenging me to stay in the field of education.

Thank you Mike and Gigi Gracey for the vision of support and health found at Show Off’z Fitness and Nutrition Gym.

Finally, I want thank Mrs. Alicia Estes and Superintendent Steven Snell for allowing me to work in the capacity that helped shape my commitment towards college and career readiness.

Abstract

Efforts by the 83rd Texas Legislature (2013), along with decades of state legislative measures to address access and equity for Texas school children, helped create House Bill 5 (HB 5). This policy stipulates that public schools need to more accurately reflect a college and career readiness culture through the expansion of curriculum options for students, the reduction of standardized testing, and the enhancement of school accountability (Texas Education Agency, 2014a). These type of outputs provide the structure and guidance that schools need to streamline a successful student pathway aimed at preparing them for a college and career choice. If students are to make the best possible decision following high school graduation, they need to be exposed to certain pre-college elements. Several sections within HB 5 contain those elements aimed at helping students and family make the best decision.

With any educational reform, individual dispositions, knowledge, and skill, along with organizational norms, networks, and relationships between different schools, their districts, and state agencies, affect policy implementation (Malen, 2005). Therefore, this research explores the individual nature of those educational agents (administrators, counselors, and teachers) involved with the implementation of HB 5. Engaging in this research would require the assessment of how well systems attain their goals and other societal effects. This study will use Easton's Political Systems Theory (1965, 1966, 1979) to analyze the decisions of those persons who implement this policy. Specifically, this research will highlight the realities of principals, counselors, and teachers using case study as the primary method for conducting this qualitative study. This research identifies the exchanges between the environment (high school) and the political system within Easton's definition.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Latino¹ educational challenges facing the K-12 pipeline are complex and multifaceted. Issues like growing poverty and low direct-to-college enrollment highlight some of these challenges. With a growing K-12 Latino student population, both nationally and within the state of Texas, this young and vital demographic group will play an important role in helping shape the future economy. Hence, the American school system can no longer ignore this vital demographic. As public schools work to balance federal and state accountability standards, they also share the responsibilities of having a more college and career ready student. Although managing these priorities can seem intimidating, policy talk and action have taken place at the state and local levels. Efforts by the 83rd Texas Legislature (2013), along with decades of state legislative measures to address access and equity for Texas school children, helped create House Bill 5² (HB 5) to meet these demands and challenges.

HB 5 stipulates that public schools need to more accurately reflect a college and career readiness culture through the expansion of curriculum options for students, the reduction of standardized testing, and the enhancement of school accountability (Texas Education Agency, 2014a). These type of outputs provide the structure and guidance that schools need to streamline a successful student pathway aimed at preparing them for a college and career choice. If students are to make the best possible decision following high school graduation, they need to be exposed to certain pre-college elements. Several sections within the law contain those elements aimed at

¹ The term “Latino” and Hispanic will be used interchangeably. Both refer to persons residing in the United States whose ancestries are from Latin American countries in the Western Hemisphere or of Spanish origin.

² Although Texas House Bill 5 was passed and signed into law by the Governor of Texas in 2013, this college and career readiness law is commonly referred to as HB 5 within all stages of Texas government and public school systems. For the purposes of this study, HB 5 will be used as the common name for the law.

helping students and family make the right decision. In guiding schools to have more college and career ready students by graduation, HB 5 also addresses certain education gap issues within Texas by outlying specific goals that educational actors must accomplish (Texas Legislature, 2013).

With any educational reform, individual dispositions, knowledge, and skill, along with organizational norms, networks, and relationships between different schools, their districts, and state agencies, affect policy implementation (Malen, 2005). Therefore, this research explores the individual nature of those educational agents (administrators, counselors, and teachers) involved with the implementation of HB 5. The produced effects and consequences of this policy implementation is focused on a school district in far-west Texas. In fact, the close proximity to Mexico is another highlight to this study since a bi-national, bi-cultural and bi-lingual environment present a different challenge compared to the rest of Texas.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Empirical studies show that low education levels are associated with lower income levels; therefore, failure to complete high school or college negatively impacts average earnings (Carson & McChesney, 2015; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Reardon, 2013; Tannock, 2006; Fullerton, 2001). These earnings can in turn decrease tax revenues collected by the states and federal government, impacting how the government can serve its population. The consequences of a broken K-16 education pipeline will have severe economic and social implications if the rise of poverty among Latinos is not addressed by initiatives to encourage direct-to-college or high-wage technical skill education. Echoing Horace Mann's common school movement, "As the children now are, so will the sovereigns soon be...the whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge" (Westbrook, 1996). Within America's public schools, educators are

working to channel the steady streams of federal and state accountability while navigating the changing tide of student demographics to cultivate a more college and career ready student. Despite having faced social, economic, and political barriers embedded in their historical presence within the United States, Latinos in the Americas have always placed a high value upon education as a means of economic, political, social and upward mobility (MacDonald, 2012). The influence of federal and state policies, with the interwoven Latino experience, provide a lens that can help produce a better understanding of the educational challenges found in a borderland community in far-west Texas.

1.1.1 Defining Policy

Public policies extend their reach of power within every aspect of public life. Anderson (2003) believes that public policies "offer advantages and disadvantages, cause pleasure, irritation, and pain and collectively have important consequences for our well-being and happiness" (p.1). Anderson's (2003) defines policy is "a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern" (p.2). Regarding education, policies guide everything from student code of conduct to teacher evaluations to school accountability. Studying education policy can enhance our knowledge of the value that it adds to the current educational environment.

Texas legislators identified problems regarding college and career readiness initiatives via community dialog, public testimonies, private lobby and expert feedback to help craft what is known as HB 5. Engaging in policy analysis regarding HB 5 would require the assessment of how well systems attain their goals and other societal effects. According to Fowler (2000), policy evaluation requires the review of projects that have been provided for a defined period of time. Beginning August 2016, Texas school districts will enter year three of HB 5 implementation.

With this short application time, this research will assess how well those plans are being implemented. This study will use the framework of Easton's Political Systems Theory (1965, 1966, 1979) to analyze the decisions of those persons who implement this policy who reflect the values, cultures, authority, and governance within the *system*. Specifically, the research will highlight the decision-making realities of principals, counselors, and teachers using case study as the primary method for conducting this qualitative study. This research hopes to identify the exchanges between the environment (high school) and the political system within Easton's definition.

1.1.2 Federal Education Policy and the Latino Experience

Avenues of correcting access and equity within K-16 education have taken place at the federal, state and local levels to produce transformational education policy. Although education is a state and local responsibility, the federal government's role in education has been very influential in addressing K-16 education challenges through policies and initiatives. This study will examine relevant policies such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the 1965 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), and *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001. Although the focus of these education policies concentrated more with the struggles of African Americans, the Latino perspective in the early history of this country, was rarely taken into account. The emergence of federal higher education policies impacting African Americans occurred earlier in American history following the Civil War where Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were created and supported by reconstruction efforts and federal funds. The Latino educational experience does not include massive federal government investments that result in the creation of historically Latino colleges and universities. It was not until a 1978 directive by

the U.S. Office of Management and Budget created the term "Hispanic" as a census identifier.³ However, the presence of Latinos in the U.S. can be traced to the European Spaniards during the 16th century (MacDonald, 2012; Menchaca, 2001; Donato, 1999; Léon & McNeill, 1993). For this study, I define the creation of the border by the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* in 1848 as the start of the American educational experience for Latinos.

1.1.3 Texas Education Policy

As states began to deal with new federal laws and reforms concerning education, Texas had several decades of experience with the accountability movement since its first criterion-referenced exam in the 1970's (Sherman & Jones, 2005). Although Texas had been reevaluating assessments through more challenging questions and longer reading passages for decades to improve post-secondary scores, that data was not reflecting reality. By 2006, ACT scores predicted that half of all college freshmen would struggle with the reading demands of college courses (ACT, 2005). While only 35 % of Texas graduates met new college readiness standards for both English language arts and mathematics, half of entering college students would require some form of academic remediation (Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2008).

Realizing that Texas students needed more than just statewide curriculum assessments to be college ready, HB 5 was created in 2013 to underscore some of the pre-college factors that entering college students required to be successful. HB 5 provides students with more flexibility regarding graduation pathways centered along a career or technology track, reduces the number of End of Course exams from fifteen to five, and creates accountability measures based on local community feedback (Texas Association of School Boards, 2013). HB 5 took into consideration

³. The securing of reliable data on Latinos before 1980 is problematic and thus many studies that exist pre-1980 are based on estimated counts of Hispanic surnames and may include an undercounting of Latinos who possess Anglo surnames.

the concerns of the many stakeholders to promote what they believe is a way to increase graduation rates among all student populations.

1.1.4 Latino Population Impact

According to the 2015 American Community Survey, Latinos represented 17.6% of the general population, compared to 61.5% Whites, 12.3% African-American, 5.3% Asian, and 2.3% other. As for bachelor's degree attainment for adults age 25 years and older, 15% were Latino, compared to 54% Asian, 36% of Whites or 22% African American (U.S. Census, 2015).

Regarding Texas demographic make-up for 2015, Latinos represented 38.9% of the adult population, compared to 42.9% Whites, 11.7% African American, 4.5% Asian and 1.6% other. Texas Latinos, however, represented 30% of all bachelor's degree awarded by public colleges and universities in 2015 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2016).

As for national K-12 demographics, one out of every four children are Latino (25.9%) compared to their White peers at 49.3% (U.S. Census, 2015). Texas Latino public school enrollment was reported at 52% compared to White student enrollment at 29% (Texas Education Agency, 2016). Nonetheless, growing disparities among their White counterparts, Texas Latinos tend to have lower levels of education, have lower wages and depend more on state services (Petersen & Assanie, 2005). If changes are not made to the socioeconomic conditions of Texas Latinos, "this implies that Texas future population could be less educated, less competitive, poorer and more in need of state services such as health care and welfare" (Petersen & Assanie, 2005, p.40). For Texas to compete at both the national and international level with this growing demographic, increased educational attainment and training is needed to reduce these socioeconomic differences. HB 5 is a policy that helps create a more defined college and career readiness pipeline for Texas students.

1.2 Purpose of Study

Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) find that change in an area appears to influence other areas of students' lives when it comes to college and career decision-making. The idea of college is a new culture to most students and navigating the system without prior knowledge would be difficult (Conley, 2010). Yet, HB 5 manifests certain factors that students are exposed to reflecting a possible change in how they make college and career decisions. Thus, this study explores the realities of a school district implementing the reforms found within HB 5. This highlights what Tyack and Cuban (1995) refer to when discussing policy implementation:

Reformers are often impatient about the time lag in educational reform because they operate on a schedule driven by election deadlines, career opportunities, the timing of foundation grants, the shifting attention of the public, or the desire of media people for the dramatic photo opportunity or sound bit. People with problems look for educational solutions; people with solutions look for problems; but implementation does not follow smoothly from the paring of problems and solutions (p.55).

As Latino students make up 52 % of all school-age children in Texas and 25% in the United States (NCES, 2014; Murphey, Guzman & Torres, 2014), their pre-college and career experience will impact the workforce, tax base and educational system of Texas and the United States.

Failure to address the college enrollment gap of Latinos will not only increase as this population is projected to make up one-third of the United States population by 2050 (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014) but a less educated and low-skilled population will only place more strain on state and federal supported services. Currently, over a third of all Texas Latino children live in areas of concentrated poverty with low-quality education services (Murphey et al., 2014).

1.2.1 Borderland Education

Conducting this research in a far-west Texas borderland community reflects the need to construct a realistic portrait of college culture in a somewhat isolated part of the state. Examining state policy away from the political power center and influence of the state capital, I investigated those school actors involved with HB 5. This research helps bring to light the realities of implementing new legislation and its application within the context of this environment. The borderland community can further provide a different perspective on the challenges and successes of a college ready mandate in a mainly property-poor region. Flores and Clark (2002) notes, "the border region should be viewed as an energetic, constantly changing area where new possibilities are always on the horizon" (p.9).

The locale of this research presents a number of unique issues. The confines of a school system whereby students navigate two cultures, two languages, and two worlds provide a different educational dimension to education policy. Ramirez (2013) states, U.S.-Mexico borderland regions are characterized by "strong social and economic cross-border connections and cooperation." Success or failure of HB 5 must be constructed within the feelings, beliefs, actions, and values about the environment that it's being implemented in (Geertz, 1973). In fact, educator dispositions, attitudes and motivation play important roles in the success of students and is particularly true of borderland areas (Cline & Necochea, 2006).

1.3 Research Questions

This study is designed to explore the following primary research question:

- How do administrators, counselors, and teachers implement HB 5 in a far-west Texas school district?

The research sub-questions in this study include:

- What are the school realities involved within HB 5?
- How are schools addressing the main objectives recommended by HB 5?
- How is HB 5 accomplished within schools?
- How do the educational actors involved disseminate HB 5 information to students and families?

1.4 Significance of Study

This study explores the realities of HB 5 through the perspectives of educational agents who have direct impact on the pre-college implementation of education policy aimed at increasing student college and career decision making (McNeil, 2005; Bernstein, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The research gathered could better inform the political system if the reforms are on track to be institutional trends and therefore adopted as part of regular school operating procedures or if it falls to a this-too-shall-pass syndrome. It also sets out to understand how policies that are issued at a state level play out at a local level and how, if any, actors navigate the field in order to meet implementation recommendations.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This review of literature helps contextualize HB 5 at the local level, through the historical and educational lens of the growing Latino population within Texas and its predominance within the school district of study. The first part of this review provides historical overview of federal education policy and the interwoven Latino experience since the late 19th century until present. The second part explores Texas education reform impacting access and equity in public schools. Finally, part three deals with policy and factors in implementation.

2.1 Historical Overview of Education since 1848

2.1.1 Broken Promises

What is now known as the American Southwest, was acquired by the United States in a negotiated treaty referred to as the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* in 1848. The territorial acquisition of what was half of the Mexican territory, resulting from the Mexican-American War, was humiliating for the Mexican people, and the treaty considered one of the harshest between countries over the past two centuries (Gomez-Quinones, 1994). Some scholars have concluded that the loss of Texas and war with the United States “contributed to more to Mexico's impoverishment, its apparent sterility, its xenophobia, its lack of self-esteem, and its general demoralization than any other event of the nineteenth century” (Meyer & Sherman, 1995, p.334). This troubled legacy still plagues Mexicans on both sides of the border (Gonzales, 2009). However, the treaty also provided several rights to Mexicans who elected to remain in the United States (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; Alonzo, 1998; Butts, 1978; Pitt, 1966). According to Article IX, Mexican residents were guaranteed “all the rights of citizens of the United States...free enjoyment of their liberty and property.” In detail, those rights included citizenship, preservation

of former land grants, and Spanish language rights to Mexicans living in modern-day Arizona (Gadsden Purchase), Colorado, California, New Mexico (Gadsden Purchase), and Texas. As greater numbers of Anglo settlers migrated to the West during the 1840s and early 1850s, Mexicans living in the new territory experienced an erosion of their rights resulting in diminished educational access (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; Butts, 1978).

The emerging Anglo public education culture produced English-only language laws and denounced the Catholic religion and culture from curriculum in primary and secondary public schools (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003). As Latinos faced more hostility within their social and academic environments, they managed to find educational refuge within private schools of the Catholic Church. During the 1850s and 1870s, private Catholic institutions of higher education enrolled more than four hundred Hispanic-surname students. The culture of Catholic schools was more accepting of Hispanic bilingualism and Catholic traditions compared to the emerging Anglo public school vision (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; San Miguel, Jr., & Valencia, 1998). Although no specific racial codes prohibited Latinos from White universities and colleges, their numbers remained minuscule except in Catholic colleges (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998).

2.1.2 Separate but Equal

By the late 19th and mid-20th century, most Latinos were limited to an eighth-grade education level due to segregation, racism, and the laborious agricultural industry that most families were involved in (MacDonald, 2012; Donato, 1997; Gonzalez, 1996, Gonzalez, 1990). During this time, the separate but equal doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), reinforced segregation as long as equal facilities were provided. Three years later, the case of *Cumming v. Board of Education* (1899), later applied separate but equal policy to public schools but the

practice of segregating Mexican Americans was done outside of the legal structure (MacDonald, 2012). Since the majority of Latinos were located along the Southwestern United States, racist practices were well documented:

Deprived of land and property rights, never gaining full political rights, despised for their language and lack of advanced skills, the Mexican-Americans found themselves at the bottom of the economic, political, and social ladder...Mexican-Americans rapidly became a minority of second-class citizens, not to say outcasts, in what had been their homeland. (Butts, 1978, p.249)

The color issue has always been well-rooted since Anglo settlers began migrating towards the northern Mexican territory of Texas before 1836. The color issue was predictable since three-quarters of the Anglos in Texas were southerners who were committed to slavery (Gonzales, 2009; Gomez-Quinones, 1994). Butts also noted that the practice of *separate but equal* policy like “separate schools, separate classes, poorer buildings and facilities, fewer well-trained teachers, and smaller budgets” were customary along the Southwest and particularly evident in Texas and southern California.

By the 1930's, 85% of Mexican American students attended segregated schools, where language was also used to justify the separation (Butts, 1978; Gonzalez, 1990; Donato, 1997). As Latino children attended public schools, they did so with strong parental reservations. Parents were hesitant to send their children to public schools because their traditional beliefs, religion, and culture were being undermined by the education system that reflected Anglo-European conformity (Butts, 1978; Gonzalez, 1996; Gonzalez, 1990; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; Nieto, 2004).

2.1.3 Latino Visibility: 1950's

The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case helped end separate but equal in public schools because the court found this practice violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Although this case focused on a Black and White social element, the *Brown* decision helped guide the Latino struggle for educational equality. This decision helped frame a discourse to challenge both physical segregation and language policies faced by Latinos and it helped set race as an explicit and social construct (Nieto, 2004; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2004; Wong & Nicotera, 2004). However, few people acknowledge the importance of several Mexican American cases before 1954, which involved the struggle to end separate but equal. Cases like: *Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvatierra* (1930) in Texas; *Roberto Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* (1931) in California; *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946) in Orange County, California and *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* (1948) served as legal precedent for the *Brown* decision (Nieto, 2004; MacDonald, 2012).

For example, in *Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvatierra* (1930), this was the first class action lawsuit against segregated “Mexican Schools” in Texas. *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), Gonzalo Mendez challenged the school district to allow his children and other Mexican children to attend the same school he had attended as a child. The school had segregated based on children’s surnames and ethnicity. The case never made it to the United States Supreme Court because the school district decided to reintegrate the school. Finally, in *Delgado v. Bastrop* (1948), the courts found that segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the court insisted that separate classes for non-English-speaking students were to be held on the same campus as classes for English-speaking students (MacDonald, 2012). The rationale to separate students based on language was no longer valid.

Although Latinos living in Texas suffered more discrimination and segregation than in other states (Castellanos and Jones, 2003; MacDonald, 2012), some Latinos were successful. Hispanos (settlers in New Mexico and Colorado who claimed pure Spanish ancestry) were able to maintain more equitable education levels and protect bilingual traditions because they had more economic and political strength (Donato, 1999; Getz, 1997). As members of the Latino community still struggled with educational inequality, some Latino youth gradually found their way into positions of leadership either professionally, in higher education or within the military.

2.1.4 1960s Federal Involvement

While access to K-12 public schools was improving through legal challenges, Latino youth faced different obstacles with higher education. In the 1950's, only six % of first-year college students in the Southwest were Latinos, while African American students comprised around .08 to 1.5 % (Carter, 1970; Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005). Although the %age rate of college enrollment was low for African Americans, they had established a successful network of undergraduate and graduate institutions well before the Civil War. This was a result of federal government involvement impacting higher education through policies and laws like; the *Northwest Ordinance* of 1785, which provided land to support public schools and the *Morrill Land Grant Acts* of 1862 and 1890, which helped support college education to states to either create or supplement state-funded colleges for Whites and Blacks (Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Gladieux, King & Corrigan, 2005; MacDonald, Botti & Clark, 2007). Graduates of these Black universities and colleges would form the front line of the educational civil rights movement and would become “the purveyors of social capital, a social capital that graduates could apply to change the political, economic, and ethical realities in which they lived” (Drewery & Doermann, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2007).

Although the United States Constitution, does not specify direct responsibility for education by the national government, federal influence on American universities has been pervasive. The sponsorship of land-grant colleges in the nineteenth century to the underwriting of student loans and university-based research and development in the twentieth century has provided the federal government with “the responsibility of setting, interpreting, and enforcing, among other things, civil rights legislation that affects colleges and universities” (Gladieux et al., 2005). MacDonald et al., (2007) agrees:

With the energies of the civil rights movement and in an attempt to redress historical inequities and systemic discrimination within American society, numerous legislative acts were passed including the *1964 Civil Rights Act*, the *1965 Voting Rights Act*, the *1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, and the *1965 Higher Education Act*.
(p.39)

Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the federal government’s role within education when signing the *Higher Education Act* of 1965 (HEA). Johnson stated:

I want to make it clear once and for all, here and now, so that all that can see can witness and all who can hear can hear, that the Federal Government--as long as I am President--intends to be a partner and not a boss in meeting our responsibilities to all the people. The Federal Government has neither the wish nor the power to dictate education. (Para.22)

This law provides greater understanding and reason for the Great Society programs under the Lyndon B. Johnson administration during the 1960's. As part of the changes, the HEA was set up to provide access to college for those with low economic circumstances by providing them with grants and need-based aid. To a greater extent, this Act helped ensure that income, gender, race, religion, and geography were not barriers to college attendance or a student's ability to attend the

most appropriate college (Macdonald et al., 2007; Hersh & Merrow, 2005). While the laws enacted did not specify a particular minority group, the leading share of funding went to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (MacDonald et al., 2007; Brown, Rosen, Hill & Olivas, 1980). As civil rights organizations continued to increase their influence over litigation and legislation, Latino activist believed their community needs were still not addressed (Bowen et al., 2005; Kaplowitz, 2003; MacDonald et al., 2007).

2.1.5 Philanthropy and Latino Support

As the federal government used laws to enact change, philanthropic organizations used their financial power to implement change (MacDonald et al., 2007) adds “throughout the history of American higher education, philanthropy has had the potential to wield transformative power on both individual institutions and across postsecondary education as a whole” (p.483).

Therefore, education serves both a public and private interest whereby the needs of the people are met (Levin, 1999). Levin (1999) further discusses the interwoven fabric of education and philanthropy in the follow:

Education addresses public interests by preparing the young to assume adult roles in which they can undertake civic responsibilities, embrace a common set of values, participate in a democratic polity with a given set of rules, and embrace the economic, political, and social life which constitute the foundation for the nation. All of this is necessary for an effectively, functioning democracy, economy, and society...Embedded in the same education experience are outcomes that can contribute to the overall society as well as those which can provide private gains to the individual. (p.3)

Of particular interest to the Latino movement within education, the Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations played pivotal roles in helping bring awareness to less-visible minority

groups during the civil rights and education campaign. The Ford Foundation had traditionally provided grants that helped combat the educational inequalities experienced by African Americans as early as 1945 but now would extend that support to include "Spanish-speaking Americans" (MacDonald et al., 2007). In 1968, the Ford Foundation provided funding to help strengthen the creation of the Mexican American Legal Defense Education Fund (MALDEF) which "enabled Latinos to sue school districts or governmental agencies in court for their educational rights" (Macdonald et al., 2007). While the Ford Foundation was helping Latinos challenge for educational equality through legal means, the Rockefeller Foundation was focusing on creating and supporting programs that benefited Latinos access and success in higher education. As inequality within education was being challenged through the courts and opportunities for advancement within higher education were being supported by private foundations, civil unrest remained.

2.1.6 1970s Federal Response and Language Rights

In response to citizen and civic leader concerns over unrest, the Johnson administration established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967. What followed, were a series of reports from the Commission on Civil Rights that captured the Mexican American education experience throughout the southwest. Federal legislators, press and policy makers now had documented evidence of the injustices suffered by Mexican American students: "Mexican American school districts in Texas have been found to be handicapped...Texas is financing massive deficits in human resources and achievement" (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972). Latinos also faced another barrier for educational access—language discrimination. MacDonald et al., (2007) states:

Mexican-American students caught speaking Spanish faced fines (a penny for every Spanish word), had to stand on a "black square," or were made to write, "I must not speak Spanish." School personnel rationalized these actions as pedagogical measures (p.482). The issue of punishment against Spanish speakers in public schools has been dated as early as 1892 and has been an ongoing problem ever since (Donato, Menchaca, & Valencia, 1991; Contreras & Valverde, 1994; Hernandez, 2000; Castellanos & Jones, 2003).

Ultimately, federal laws such as the *Bilingual Education Act* of 1968 and subsequent lawsuits such as *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1978), helped establish support and recognition for bilingual education in the United States and end the neglect of limited educational opportunities for Mexican American children (MacDonald et al., 2007; Davies, 2002; Nieto, 2004). School districts were now provided with federal funds to help establish educational programs for limited English proficient speaking students and helped provide sanctions against the mistreatment of Latinos in the school system (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

2.1.7 1980's Challenges

The strides made by Latinos during the 1960s and 1970s for K-12 educational equality, language rights, and higher education access, would be stifled by a shift in the national dialogue of the 80s. Latinos now faced a movement where a limited government in higher education and bilingual education were challenged along with pushback against affirmative action programs used in college admissions (MacDonald, 2004; MacDonald et al., 2007; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003; Chapa 2002; Olivas, 1986). Furthermore, several national reports on education (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983; *The Crisis in Higher Education*, 1983) helped expand this political ideology of limiting federal involvement in education and thus impacting Latino growth at the post-

secondary level. Since increasing federal student-aid was part of the *Higher Education Act* of 1965, analysts were tracking the results of this federal financial investment. By 1982, Hearn states that Lee Hansen report demonstrated the federal government's investment in student financial aid and noted:

The evidence assembled here suggests that the expansion of federal financial aid programs and their targeting toward youth from lower income and lower status families did not alter to any appreciable degree the composition of...postsecondary education students or the college enrollment expectations of high school seniors over the 1970s (Hearn, 2001, p.440).

During the same time, the National Center for Education Statistics compiled a report focusing on the condition of Latinos within education. *The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans* (Brown, Rosen, Hill & Olivas, 1980), confirmed the findings listed by Hansen and complemented by *A Nation at Risk* report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). *The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans* goes on to explain the progress/regress of Latinos at the collegiate level. The report showed that allocated monies to strengthen developing institutions that served 20 % or more Latino students only received 6.4 % of the allocated funds, Latinos participating in TRIO programs remained at 20 % and only one-fifth of Latinos participated in Graduate and Professional Opportunities Program fellowships (Brown et al., 1980; Santiago, 2006; MacDonald et al., 2007). By 1984, the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education tried to submit a bill to help close the funding inadequacies and imbalance of federal funds affecting colleges serving large populations of Latinos but the bill was never approved (MacDonald et al., 2007).

2.1.8 1990s Educational Access

The *Higher Education Act* (1965) was reauthorized in 1992 and 1998 and by this time, Latino advocacy groups began lobbying Congress to recognize the granting of greater access to equal opportunities within higher education. Latino interest groups were making their voices heard and raised the following points in addressing the challenges faced by the Latino community:

The national contribution that an educated Latino community would increase U.S. productivity; the consequences of not educating a relatively young and often poorly schooled immigrant population; and the systemic failure of U.S. public high schools, which displayed increasingly troubling dropout and low college graduation rates.

(MacDonald et al., 2007, p.493)

The federal government began to recognize the needs of Latinos and started to include Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) within the federal grant provisions of Title III and V of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (MacDonald et al., 2007; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003). The Department of Education defines an HSI as “a post-secondary institution with at least 25% Hispanic full-time equivalent enrollment and high enrollment of low-income (needy) students” (MacDonald & Garcia, 2003, p.37). This federal definition and inclusion within the *Higher Education Act of 1992 and 1998* allow for more federal grants monies to be available for these post-secondary institutions to build capacity and a quality education (Santiago, 2006; MacDonald & Garcia, 2003).

During the early part of the 1990s, the President George H.W. Bush administration urged Congress to pass his national education reform known as *America 2000: Excellence in Education Act of 1991*. This new initiative sought to change the approach to education and introduced the

idea of voluntary national testing. President William J. Clinton's administration tried to introduce a system of national tests and standards, but Congress too denied that. Clintons' national education reform called *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, was later signed into law in 1994 but had limited federal reach (Haertel & Herman, 2005). *Goals 2000* only encouraged states to develop their standards and tests compared to setting federally recognized standards that Clinton wanted (Ravitch, 2010).

2.1.9 Current Federal Education Reforms

Once elected, George W. Bush brought his Texas education plan of testing and accountability and helped amend the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 1965 through the creation of *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB). Ravitch (2010) explains, Bush's No Child Left Behind program melded smoothly with a central feature of the Clinton administration's Goals 2000 program: namely, leaving it to the states to set their standards and pick their tests (p. 21). Education under Republicans and Democrats has shifted over time toward greater accountability driven policies, often following public opinion as much as leading it, the party lines on schooling rarely conflicting sharply in any one period (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p.45). NCLB transformed national public education by increasing accountability based on high-stakes testing, providing parents with school choice, and the implementation of data-driven decision making (Ravitch, 2010; Bernstein, 2004). NCLB was, in theory, to provide a level playing field for schools serving disadvantaged students and challenged states to set higher educational standards. Although it exposed the achievement gaps between minority and poor students, the strict requirements under NCLB also hindered school innovations and reform by requiring 100 % of students to be proficient in reading and math by 2014.

The Barak H. Obama administration of 2008 also faced challenges reauthorizing ESEA, now referred to as NCLB. However, the Obama administration did introduce the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* which centered around four education areas: improving teacher and principal effectiveness, providing information to parents and educators to make improved decisions, implementing college- and career-ready standards, and improve student learning and achievement through interventions and support (United States Department of Education, 2010, p.3). Implementing college- and career-ready standards helped create a federal funding program for States called *Race to the Top*. This federal grant program provides:

Funding to consortia of States to develop assessments that are valid, support and inform instruction, provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure student achievement against standards designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace (United States Department of Education, 2010).

The Obama administration further outlined the vision of the federal government in education by introducing *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 2010, and specifically the Race To The Top (RTTT) initiative. According to U.S. Department of Education (2010), the re-envisioned federal education priorities include:

- 1) College- and Career-Ready Students;
- 2) Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School;
- 3) Equity and Opportunity for All Students;
- 4) Raise the Bar and Reward Excellence, and
- 5) Promote Innovation and Continuous Improvement (3-6).

Although *A Blueprint for Reform* was presented to Congress in 2010 as an effort to jumpstart the reauthorization of ESEA, Congress failed to act leaving public schools to meet the challenging NCLB standards. As more and more states and local school districts requested flexibility from the federal government in implementing NCLB, President Obama provided schools with flexibility within certain parts of NCLB. This type of flexibility enabled states and school districts to move forward with certain reforms while discouraging some from setting low standards. If states applied for flexibility, they would in exchange “lead efforts to raise standards, so they focus on student college and career readiness, help teachers and principals focus on teaching and learning, and improve all schools, especially the lowest-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps” (ESE, 2014).

In December of 2015, seven years after President Obama took office, he signed into law; the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This new law is designed to:

1. Ensure states set high standards so that children graduate high school ready for college and career.
2. Maintain accountability by guaranteeing that when students fall behind, states target resources towards what works to help them and their schools improve, with a particular focus on the lowest-performing 5 % of schools, high schools with high dropout rates, and schools where subgroups of students are struggling.
3. Empower state and local decision -makers to develop their active systems for school improvement based on evidence, rather than imposing cookie-cutter federal solutions like *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) did.
4. Preserve annual assessments and reduce the often onerous burden of unnecessary and ineffective testing on students and teachers, making sure that standardized tests do not

crowd out teaching and learning, without sacrificing clear, annual information parents and educators need to make sure our children are learning.

5. Provide more children access to high-quality preschool, giving them the chance to get a strong start to their education.
6. Establish new resources to test promising practices and replicate proven strategies that will drive opportunity and better outcomes for America's students (The White House, 2015).

President Obama critiqued NCLB stating:

The goals of *No Child Left Behind* were the right goals: Making a promise to educate every child with an excellent teacher --that's the right thing to do, that's the right goal.

Higher standards are right. Accountability is right... but what has not worked is denying teachers, schools, and states what they need to meet these goals. That's why we need to fix No Child Left Behind. (The White House, 2015)

Federal policies have taken on greater influence on state education policies. With the tying of funding to policies, state lawmakers were required to accept and adopt federal policies in order to receive federal funding for programs.

2.2 Texas Education Reform

As NCLB tried to ensure that all students demonstrate some measurable indication of academic achievement, schools that had never shown any evidence that they could educate the majority of children they served now had expectations (Maeroff, 1988; Noguera, 2004). As states adopted new academic standards and assessments to ensure that high school diplomas were credible, Texas public schools had established a long history with student measurement and school effectiveness. As we look into the ever increasing role of accountability in public schools

and how it affects student success, we must look at the lessons of the past when dealing with Texas public education.

2.2.1 Texas Education Reform: 1970's

In a 1972 report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, a study on Texas Mexican American public school children found them to be severely isolated by district and schools within districts. Chicanos were also underrepresented on school professional staffs and boards of education and a disproportionately large number of Chicanos lacked reading skills commensurate with age and grade level (Uranga, 1972). Texas financial practices were found to restrict equal access to education and thus were taken to court (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972). The push for educational reform in Texas started with a 1973 federal court decision that ruled that Texas public finance legislation discriminated against poor school districts (Haney, 2000). By 1979, Texas passed a statewide testing measure to accommodate the diverse needs of its population and to maintain equitable funding for its public schools. This policy, which instituted statewide testing to measure essential skill competencies in mathematics, reading, and writing, was called Senate Bill (SB) 350.

The 66th Texas Legislature provided the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) with the responsibilities to: "periodic review of the state's educational needs; adoption or promotion of plans for meeting those needs; and evaluation of the educational programs' achievement" (Sherman & Jones, 2005). The Texas Education Agency would be tasked with adopting and administering a criterion-referenced assessment to measure basic competencies. The first test called the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS), was designed to provide administrators and teachers with information they could use to raise student achievement (Sherman & Jones, 2005; Alford, 2001). This type of criterion-referenced test measured instructional TABS objectives,

which were evaluated by educator committees and assessed minimum essential skills (Sherman & Jones, 2005; Cruse & Twing, 2000).

2.2.2 Texas Education Reform: 1980's

During the 1980s, Texas created the Select Committee on Education to examine the state's education system. This committee, chaired by business executive H. Ross Perot, produced educational recommendations resulting in the most sweeping changes to Texas education in nearly 30 years (Haney, 2000; Alford, 2001). By 1983-84, House Bill 72 and House Bill 246, created the "no-pass, no-play" measure for student-athletes, set a maximum absence rule per semester, and required students to pass an exit-level exam for graduation (Haney, 2000; Alford, 2001). Teachers were also required to pass proficiency tests, and the committee also recommended the creation of a statewide curriculum titled, Essential Elements of Instruction. By 1986, the Texas legislature assigned TEA with developing an assessment to measure elements within the curriculum as identified by Texas State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum. This 1986 assessment, now called the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) (Sherman & Jones, 2005; Alford, 2001; Haney, 2000), would assess students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Eleventh-grade students would need to take an exit-level exam to graduate. The class of 1987 was the first class required to pass an exit-level test to graduate from a Texas public high school and thus represented Texas education shift from low-stakes testing to high-stakes accountability testing (TEA, 2011; Sherman & Jones, 2005; Cruse & Twing, 2000).

The last piece of legislation impacting Texas education during the 1980s was the passage of the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) in 1989 (Alford, 2001; TEA, 2011, 2015). This system was used to rate: school districts, individual schools, staff, and student production to provide rewards or sanctions (Causey-Bush, 2005, TEA, 2015). AEIS has since evolved to

measure several performance indicators like passing rates and scores to student dropout rates, attendance and college readiness indicators (TEA, 2015; Causey-Bush 2005). The transformation of Texas education during the 1980s was highlighted by high-stakes testing, accountability systems and the public release of results.

2.2.3 Texas Education Reform: 1990's

As the state tried to increase the level of rigor being tested, Texas Education Agency introduced a more comprehensive standards-based test in 1991 known as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). This assessment did not test for the mastery of minimum skills that TEAMS was created for but measured statewide curriculum that included problem-solving skills and higher-order thinking to answer questions (Sherman & Jones, 2005; Alford, 2001). TAAS represented the most high-stakes component of any Texas assessment test (Cruse & Twing, 2000). By 1997, the State Board of Education developed a new statewide curriculum known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). This curriculum replaced the Essential Elements of Instruction framework that helped guide how teachers were supposed to instruct. TEKS focused on what students had to learn by introducing higher-order reasoning and critical thinking skills (Alford, 2001). Also, this new curriculum incorporated Blooms Taxonomy's higher levels of application and analysis (Sherman & Jones, 2005). As a way to measure this more rigorous and comprehensive curricula, the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999 created Senate Bill 103 which implemented a new statewide testing program in the school year 2002-03 known as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

2.2.4 Texas Education Reform: 2000s

Students taking the new TAKS tests faced more multiple-choice and open-ended questions than the true/false questions under TAAS. The level of inquiry within the exam

required the use of more critical thinking skills to solve more difficult questions, and students had to read more extended reading passages. The goal of TAKS was to more accurately measure teacher instruction and student learning (Causey-Bush, 2005). This new alignment between assessment, accountability and state curriculum within Texas was helping shape the expectations of a transition between high school and college or the skilled workforce. By 2005, Governor Rick Perry issued Executive Order RP53, which called for an increase in college-readiness programs in Texas public schools and authorized "the development of a series of voluntary end-of-course (EOC) assessments in science, mathematics, and other subjects currently assessed by the eleventh-grade TAKS (TEA, 2011). By 2008, Texas became the first state to adopt college and- career-readiness standards. The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) were adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the commissioner of education, and have been incorporated into the content standards, the TEKS, by the State Board of Education (THECB, 2009). The creation of CCRS helped identify what students should know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level college courses in a particular content area (THECB, 2009; TEA, 2011). With this new vertical alignment of standards developed by nationally recognized college-readiness experts and public school teachers, these standards would help reduce the need for remedial education of recent high school graduates and ultimately increase the number of Texans graduating from college (THECB, 2009; TEA, 2011). Table 1.1 highlights Texas education reform laws. For an expanded version, see Appendix A.

Table 1.1-Texas Education Reform Guide

Legislative Session	Year	Legislative Bill Name	Description	Test Name
66 th	1979	Senate Bill 350	Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) created to test student basic competency, pupil funding is increased	TABS
68 th	1983	House Bill 246	State uniform curriculum and essential elements (EE's) established for K-12 grades	
68 th	1984	House Bill 72	Education reform includes: exit testing for diploma, no pass-no play, equalization of funding, district performance reports, teacher testing (TECAT), replaced student assessment known as TABS with Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), development of a system to monitor student accountability (Academic Excellence Indicator System)	TEAMS
76 th	1999	Senate Bill 103	New statewide testing program known as Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is developed which replaces TAAS	TAAS TAKS
77 TH	2001	Senate Bill 218	Establishes nation's first public school fiscal accountability system	
79 th	2005	Executive Order RP53	Executive order to increase college readiness standards and develop end-of-course(EOC) assessments to replace TAKS	
80 th	2007	Senate Bill 1031	College Career Readiness Standards adopted and incorporated into TEKS, EOC replace TAKS student assessment instrument	EOC
Adopted from "A Historical Summary of Major Texas Education Reforms" (2004) by Intercultural Development Research Association. San Antonio, TX.				

2.2.5 Current Texas Education Reforms

Seeking to raise the bar of rigor and accountability in the classroom, the 80th Texas Legislature in 2007 passed Senate Bill 1031, eliminating TAKS testing and requiring the

administration of 15 new end-of-course assessments needed for high school graduation (TEA, 2010; 2011). By 2009, House Bill 3 (HB 3) was passed requiring new assessments for students in grades 3-8 and required the end-of-course assessments to measure college readiness using content standards developed by K-12 and higher education agencies (TEA, 2011). According to Texas legislation HB 3 §39.024(a), college readiness is the "the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program" (TEA, 2010; 2011).

With the creation of new assessments, TEA developed the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, which replaced TAKS (TEA, 2009; 2010). Although STAAR is based on TEKS standards, the system is designed to measure student performance on grade level as well as academic growth. The STAAR program by definition and design will prepare students each year of their education to be on track for postsecondary success, including attending a college or university (TEA, 2009). Although policymakers wanted to continue to strengthen academic standards of Texas public school students and increase rigor in the classroom, criticism was growing regarding the possible 15 end-of-course exams that an entering ninth grade student might take to satisfy graduation requirements. Also, end-of-course test scores counting as 15 % of a student's final grade in that subject was seen as government overstepping educational purpose and by-passing local control. The growing criticism of over testing reflects Ravitch (2010) concerns:

Our schools will not improve if we value only what tests measure. The tests we have now provide useful information about students' progress in reading and mathematics, but

they cannot measure what matters most in education. Not everything that matters can be quantified (p. 226).

By examining the interwoven Latino experience of education at both the federal and state level, allows for a deeper understanding of the implications of Texas HB 5 at the local level. With changing student demographics, Texas will need to seriously examine the effects of its college and career readiness education policy on its high school population. The following section examines policy and the framework for understanding policy conflicts.

2.2.6 Texas HB 5: Graduation Plan

Beginning 2014-15, entering ninth grade students would start on a new high school graduation plan (22 credits) and have the option to select an *endorsement* (26 credits) as part of their graduation plan (TEA, 2014b). Endorsements consist of related courses that are grouped together by interest or skill set and provides the student with in-depth knowledge of a subject area. The endorsement is earned by completing the curriculum requirements, including a 4th credit math and science course, and two additional electives (TEA, 2014b). The five endorsements students can elect upon ninth grade are Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Service; Arts and Humanities and Multi-Disciplinary. Any selected endorsement provides the student with 26 credits for graduation and allows students to earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance (TEA, 2014b). The Distinguished Level of Achievement is required for a student to be admitted to a Texas public university under the Top 10 % automatic admission law (TEA, 2014b). Figure 1.1 provides a visual representation of how HB 5 merges both college and career readiness within Texas public school graduation plans.

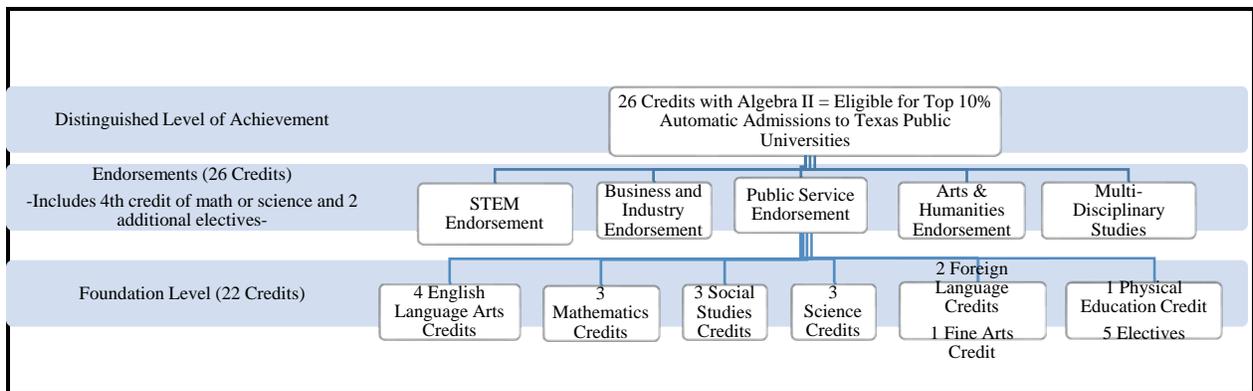


Figure 1.1 - Texas Education Agency-HB 5

What prior education policies did not accomplish, that HB 5 does, is that it allows students to select graduation plans that make them college ready but it also provides avenues using career and technology education options to fit the needs of the individual student to be career ready. Michael L. Williams, former Texas Commissioner of Education, stated that:

“Whenever the state revises its graduation plans and assessment requirements, many high school students get caught in that transition. The Texas Education Agency is working to make that transition a smooth one for those already in the pipeline, while also balancing fairness to those students who have successfully completed components of the current system.” (TEA, 2013)

As students, parents and educators become more familiar with this new law, a dilemma remains. Will this new policy die on contact with the reality of the schools or will practitioners "adapt innovations to local circumstance, or comply in minimal ways, or sabotage unwanted reforms?" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p.61). Conley (2010) expressed "the real underlying issues is whether a decision of this nature should be left solely or primarily to students in the first place and whether the adults know enough about student potential and capabilities to make such choices for them" (p 2).

2.3 Understanding Policy

Anderson (2011) designates policy as “the behavior of some actor or set of actors, such as an official, a governmental agency, or a legislature, in an area of activity...Policy may also be viewed as whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (p.6). Policies often confer some type of advantage or disadvantage, cause pleasure or irritation, and impact our well-being (Straus & Lemieux, 2016; Bell & Stevenson, 2015; Anderson, 2011). Hence, an affirmative action admissions policy advantages minority candidates while at the same time might disadvantage non-minorities. A policy such as legalized drinking at age 21 might cause some type of pleasure but for those under the age of 21 who wish to drink, irritation might be a common emotion. Even a common action while getting into a car and putting on a seat-belt is a policy aimed at our well-being. From admissions to legal-age drinking to safety policy, these examples show that throughout our lives, we are impacted by various policies, directly and indirectly. These policies are developed by governmental bodies and officials. What Easton (1965) refers to as “authorities” in a political system who derive policies from the dominant political ideologies of that time (Bell & Stevenson, 2015).

Policies are designed to accomplish certain goals or produce some type of result. Straus & Lemieux (2016) agree: “public policy goals signify a nation’s core identity, determine who will benefit from public decisions, and predict what those benefits will look like” (p.50).

Anderson (2011) provides a list of characteristics that help describe policy:

- 1) goals of a policy may be somewhat loosely stated and imprecise in content, thus providing a general direction rather than precise targets for its implementation;
- 2) policies consist of courses or patterns of action followed over time by government officials rather than their separate, discrete decisions;

- 3) public policies emerge in response to policy demands, or those claims for action or inaction on some public issue made by other actors-private citizens, group representatives, or legislators and other public officials;
- 4) Policies involve what governments actually do, not merely what they intend to do or what officials say they are going to do;
- 5) public policy may be either positive or negative;
- 6) public policy is based on law and is authoritative.

Understanding the characteristics of policy allows us to “understand how and why goods, benefits, punishments, and other values are distributed the way they are” (Straus & Lemieux, 2016).

2.3.1 Education Policy

One type of policy that has significant positive impact and influence in individual lives and communities is education policy (Dye, 2013; Mitra, 2011; Baker & LeTendre, 2005). In fact, education policy has been argued to be worthy of investment from local, state and the federal governments since it provides immense social and economic benefits to the individual and society as a whole (Dye, 2014; Mitra, 2011; Grossman, 2008). Bell & Stevenson (2015) note: “education is perceived to be pivotal to economic success in a global economy in which knowledge is considered the key to competitive advantage” (p.146). Research demonstrates how those who graduate from school have access not just to better paying jobs but have stable families and are more active and productive citizens (Taylor, Fry, & Oates, 2014; Fry, R. & Parker, 2012). Mitra (2011) notes that those who are educated are also less likely to commit serious crimes, less likely to place high demands on the public health care system, and less likely to be enrolled in welfare assistance programs. Since education policies constitute such a large

part of the environment, we have to be informed of the policy making process to understand how it's formed, budgeted, implemented and evaluated (Anderson, 1990; 2011).

2.3.2 Policy Study

Understanding education policy should enhance our knowledge of the political making process and heighten our understanding of government. Through policy study, we are able to observe the many models, theories, approaches, concepts for analyzing policymaking and its related component, decision-making (Anderson, 2011; Anderson, 1990; Easton, 1957). To help facilitate communication, theories and concepts are needed to guide the study of public policy (Dye, 2013; Anderson, 2011). This helps address any possible changes or recommendations that come from direct research of such policies. Zhang (2009) agrees “if an amendment or adjustment is wanted to be done to one of them [policy], external forces must be turned to for help” (p.99). Thus, using a theoretical approach to help clarify and organize our thinking on certain political phenomena can help explain the political activity of policy's and impact on the environment.

2.3.3 Policy Implementation

Nationally, school reforms have been part of the political system for over 45 years (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010; Elmore, 1995; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; No Child Left Behind, 2002; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). However, attempts at successful school reforms fail to become part of the school culture since classroom practices were seldom changed and student achievement remained stagnant or declined (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010; Cuban, 1996; Elmore, 1995). Nevertheless, some school reforms did manage to accomplish an increase in student achievement and improve teaching practices due to collaboration in the school change process (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Successful school change comes by not restructuring a school but rather enculturing it. Fullan (2007) defines

school culture as the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates. In fact, to change a school culture requires educators to question their beliefs about teaching and learning for students who struggle to learn and engage in a collaborative change process that results in new values, beliefs, norms, and preferred behaviors (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010; Fullan, 2007; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000, 2006).

A school reform, like HB 5, helps address the practices of teachers and other professionals by: increasing the curriculum options for students via endorsement selection, requiring students to pass 5 end-of-course exams for graduation, and having schools create accountability measures based on local community feedback. However, it's important to note that school reforms by way of policy change evolve from the actual implementation of the policy. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) define implementation as “the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions” (p.20). When referring to outcomes of the political systems theory, passing policies does not guarantee success on the ground if policies are not implemented well (Cerna, 2013). The process of policy-making and implementation should be considered to take place in a network structure and no longer as a bilateral relationship between the government and other institutions (Gornitzka, Kyvik & Stensaker, 2005). Since implementation is characterized by complexity, it is not possible to come up with any single or simple model for meeting the challenges of implementation (Cerna, 2013; Suggett, 2010; Wanna, Butcher, & Freyen, 2010). Yet, several studies have proposed certain conditions for effective education implementation.

2.3.4 Implementation Research

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) proposed the following conditions for education implementation:

1. The program is based on a sound theory relating to changes in target group behavior;
2. Policy decisions have to contain unambiguous policy directives and structure the implementation process in a way that increases the chances of good performance of target groups;
3. The leaders and implementing agencies require significant managerial and political skills and commitment to the goals;
4. The program also needs to be supported by organized constituency groups and few key legislators throughout the process, and;
5. The priority objectives are not undermined over time by conflicting public policies or changes in socio-economic conditions.

Depending on the condition of the major policy change, one of the last three conditions can be removed if the policy requires five to ten years to implement. Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) found that education policy is often difficult to measure. However, they did create a framework that consists of three parts:

1. Individual and their beliefs and experiences,
2. The importance of the situation or context, and
3. The role of external representation in the sense-making process.

Stetler, Legro, Wallace, Bowman, Guihan, Hagedorn, Kimmel, Sharp & Smith (2006) present a different methodological concept when evaluating a policy called formative evaluation. They describe it as a rigorous assessment process designed to identify potential and actual influences

on the progress and effectiveness of implementation efforts. This approach incorporates a method of judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming or happening and where formative evaluation focuses on the process (Bhola, 1990). Formative evaluation is also useful in analyzing learning materials, student learning and achievements, and teacher effectiveness. Guyot (1978) describes formative evaluation as primarily a building process which accumulates a series of components of new materials, skills, and problems into an ultimate meaningful whole. On the other hand, a summative evaluation is a “systematic process of collecting data on the impacts, outputs, products, or outcomes hypothesized in a study” (Isaacs & Michael, 1981). Summative evaluation has also been described as a method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities (Scriven, 1967). The following instruments are used to collect the data from summative evaluations: questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, and testing (Scriven, 1967; Guyot, 1978).

2.4 Summary

Both policymaking and implementation consist of multiple layers which add to the complexity of research and practice on policies like HB 5 (Cerna, 2013; Gornitzka, Kogan, & Amaral, 2005). However, research on HB 5 implementation at the local level (school district) will reveal the impact of state policymaking at this level of implementation. Cerna (2013) agrees:

While policy-makers can plan to pass new policies, the dynamics of policy change are rather complex, and thus a successful policy change and implementation often does not take place. That is why it is essential to understand better the conditions and factors behind these interactive processes. (p. 25)

I next layout the methodology for this research.

Chapter III

Methodology

The realities education professionals face while implementing HB 5 helps broaden the understanding of what this policy means within the context of its influence on improving the college and career decision making of students. A qualitative approach towards this study is more appropriate than a quantitative approach because it interprets the experiences of subjects through their perceptions and worldviews. Creswell (2009) helps provide clarity regarding the use of a qualitative approach by defining this procedure as of way of understanding the meaning that participants hold about the problem or issue. Creswell goes on to state that this type of inquiry helps explore a social or human problem by analyzing words or text and reports taken from respondents (1998). Cerna (2013) agrees “challenges remain as the situational context as well as beliefs and priorities of implementing agents differ across policy areas and systems” (p.25). Therefore, to understand the realities of implementing HB 5 requires the interpretation by which educational professionals define their environment leading to understanding their behavior (Slavin, 2007).

I separate this methodology section into five parts: Introduction, Political Systems, Background & Participants, Data and Summary. The first section provides an introduction to the research methodology. The second section explains the qualitative approach for interview analysis and policy implementation analysis (Creswell, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The third section describes the gathering and organization of the data (Creswell, 2009). The final sections describe the process for data analysis followed by a brief summary of the methodology.

3.1 Introduction to the Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine the realities of HB 5 implementation in a far-west Texas school district. Specifically, the focus is on the personal experiences of teachers, counselors and administrators as they are tasked with implementing this new educational reform. Berman (1995) describes reform as the process of improving the performance of existing systems and of assuring their efficient and equitable response to future changes. To understand HB 5 implementation requires a systematic and planned approach to investigating the human experience of the educational actors involved in the implementation. This investigative approach to studying human behavior and the interaction of educational actors requires careful listening of these actors in their natural settings. Therefore, making meaning of the gathered information from these educational actors and immersing themselves in the world inhabited by those they wish to study is called qualitative research (Esterberg, 2002; Lichtman, 2013; Slavin, 2007). This approach is important in describing and understanding human behavior. Thus, it is important to consider that most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered (Stakes, 1995).

The construct of meaning that individuals experience is best approached using an interactive process between the researcher and the participants. Slavin (2007) recognizes that the school setting is important when observing because "the setting is best understood in the context of the history of the institutions and communities of which they are a part...to divorce the act, word or gesture from its context is to lose sight of its significance" (p.122). Jovanovic (2011) believes that "there are plausible academic as well as social indicators that qualitative research has become an indispensable part of the methodological repertoire of the social sciences" (p.1).

3.2 Research Design

Broad reforms are possible when there is sufficient political will and when changes to a sector are designed and implemented by capable planners and managers (Reich, 1995). The challenges of implementing any type of reform include: 1) it represents a selection of values that express a particular view of society; 2) reform has distinct distributional consequences in the allocation of benefits and cost; 3) reform promotes competition among groups that seek to influence consequences; 4) enactment or non-enactment of reform is often associated with regular political events or political crises; and 5) reform can have significant consequences for a regime's political stability (Reich, 1995). Effective methods, such as qualitative research on HB 5 implementation, can be an effective method to analyze relevant conditions and shape factors in favor of such reform (Sabatier, 2005; Reich, 1995; Cerna, 2013; Hecllo, 1974). However, to search for meaning and understanding of this type of reform, the primary instrument of data collection and analysis for this research will be a qualitative case study using Easton's Political Systems Theory.

3.2.1 Political Systems Theory

Easton's (1965, 1966, 1979) political systems model provides a framework for analyzing conflicts between a system and its environment. This conflict is for control of essential or core variables. Bell & Stevenson (2015) imply that conflict within policy "is not seen as neat and tidy but rather as a messy process in which, at any point in the policy cycle, participants negotiate over future trajectories, outcomes and implementation" (p.147). In this study, the struggle is within the role of being an educational agent who implements Texas new college and career readiness law and the personal conflicts the agent has with the law. Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of using the political systems model (Easton, 1965, 1966, 1979) to highlight HB 5.

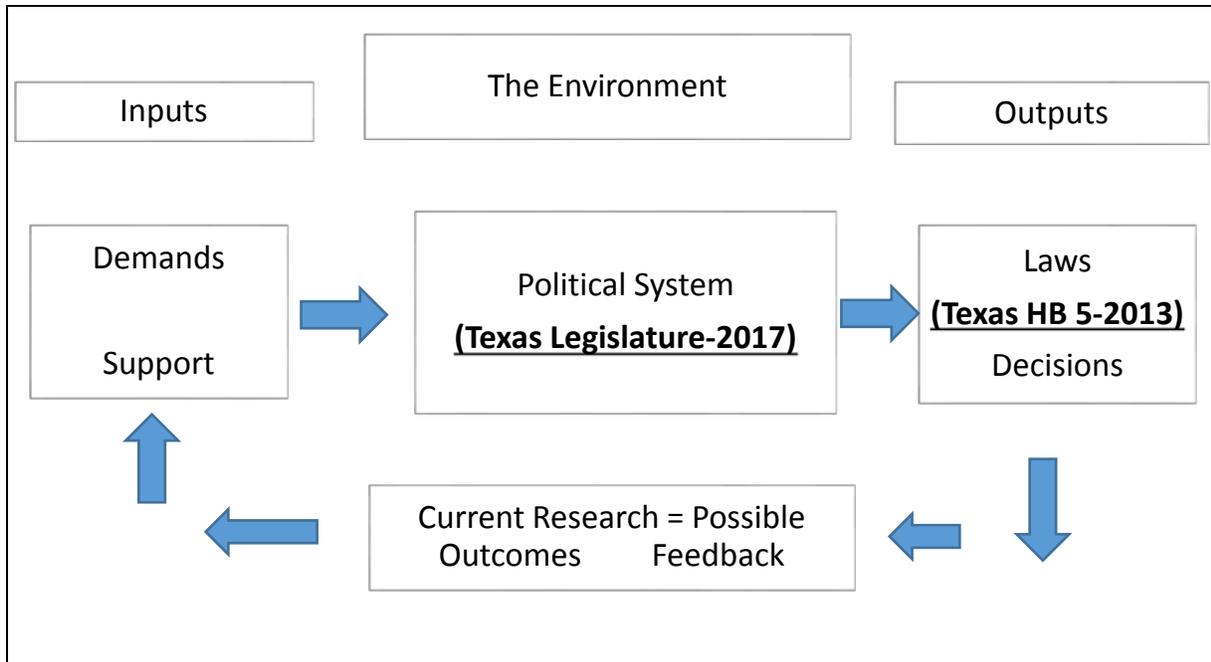


Figure 2.1-Political Systems Theory- HB 5

The argument might be that educational reforms, like HB 5, can be analyzed and understood as conflicts between competing systems with differing interests for the power to control (Anderson, 2011; Prestine, 1991). I argue that the struggle doesn't need to be within two separate systems but the struggle can be within one system and the individuals who are part of it. As we agree that HB 5 is an authoritative policy coming from the Texas Legislature, a political system, this research looks to provide feedback (internal variables) as part of the larger environment used to either provide stability or change to HB 5. Prestine (1991) agrees:

The system may be able to manipulate its environment, or environmental circumstances will dictate modification of the system, or both. It is the internal variables which will interpret the environmental demands, determine the system's responses to such stresses, and ultimately, be responsible for the success or failure of the system's responses. (p.242)

The importance of this political system to continue over time depends on feedback. In fact, feedback helps complete the political system through which information about the outputs and

the environment is communicated to the system which may result in changes or modifications of the system. This type of feedback will be expressed through the experiences of administrators, counselors and HB 5 college preparation teachers in the study. Their responses (external forces) may exert a great deal of influence on the political system itself in the form of demands and supports (Prestine, 2011). Thus, Eason provides a lens in which to understand the process of administrators, counselors and teachers navigating the implementation cycle of HB 5.

3.2.2 Inputs: Texas HB 5

There are two types of inputs in a political system: demands and supports. Basically, these inputs provide the system with the material and information to keep going (Easton, 1957, 1965, 1966). The demands for HB 5 policy had been expressed through the testimonies of parents wanting to reduce the number of end-of-course exams, business leaders expressing support for better prepared students with soft and technical skills, and the legislatures hunger for accountability within public education. Both the environment and the system itself produced these demands through previous educational laws (see Appendix A). The environment (external) forces are defined as that part of the social and physical environment that lies outside the boundaries of a political system and yet within the same society (Anderson, 2011; Prestine, 1991). The following are examples of external forces working on the system: business sectors in Texas (gas, oil, and energy industry) were having difficulty finding qualified and skilled labor; changing demographics within the state of Texas; increased child poverty rates, and low post-secondary success for students. The system itself (internal) produced demands by overreaching the influence of mandating high school students to take 15 end-of-course exams with scores counting 15% of a student's final grade point average under previous legislative policies. These

demands later became political issues since the Texas legislature was prepared to deal with the significance of the items discussed through the policy making process.

Although demands make up one part of inputs required for the political system, supports make up the other part. As Easton (1957) notes “no political system can continue to operate unless its members are willing to support the existence of a group that seeks to settle differences or promote decisions through peaceful action in common” (p. 391). In other words, are there members of a political community that are sufficiently oriented toward each other to want to contribute their collective energies toward pacific settlement of their varying demands (Easton, 1957). The support for HB5 was very evident in the broad political willingness, consensus and support of rules to support the inputs (Prestine, 1991) where the (output) Texas House of Representatives voted 144 (Yeas), 1 (Nays), and 1 present, not voting in favor of HB 5 and the Texas Senate passed HB 5 with 31 (Yeas) and 0 (Nays).

3.2.3 Outputs: Texas HB 5

Easton’s model describes outputs as a political decision or policy. In this case, Texas’ college and career readiness policy, HB 5, is that political decision. With growing outcry from parents, trustees, and various business groups, the Texas legislature reduced the number of required state assessments and provided more flexibility in graduation plans allowed for the creation of House Bill 5 (Milder & Milder, 2013). Easton (1957) would agree: “this output, consisting of political decisions, constitute a body of specific inducements for the members of a system to support the system” (p. 395) Leading the passage of HB 5 during the 83rd Texas Legislature (2013) was Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, Jimmie Don Aycock and Senate Education Committee Chairman, Dan Patrick who both matched and balanced the outputs of decisions against input of the demands.

Both members set up legislative hearings involving the testimonies of several thousand citizens regarding the negative impact that increased assessment education policies had on current students which were contrary to the efforts of the active testing lobby and the Texas Association of Business who wanted to maintain the current policy (Milder & Milder, 2013). State Representative Aycock said, "we've listened to a lot of people in the process..., and I believe were in a good place...I think we've met the right (balance) of rigor and flexibility" (Cesar, 2013, p.23) when discussing the process of finalizing the law. This supports Easton's idea that the system does not need to meet all the demands of its members.

HB 5 currently focuses on three areas of education: coursework, assessment, and accountability. HB 5 provides students with more flexibility regarding graduation pathways centered along a career or technology track (coursework), reduces the number of end-of-course exams from 15 to 5 (assessment), eliminates the 15 % grading requirement connected to end-of-course exams (assessment), and creates accountability measures based on local community feedback (accountability) (TASB, 2013). HB 5 helped loosen the state's grip on Texas public education and allowed educators more flexibility and local control (Milder & Milder, 2013). With the goal of having more Texans be college-ready, HB 5 created a diploma that: allows high school graduates to be eligible for automatic admission to Texas public four-year universities, agrees to allow school districts to partner with community colleges and industry to develop rigorous courses that address workforce needs and to provide technical training to count towards graduation requirements (TASB, 2013). HB 5 also allows for the increase and access in vocational and career courses that offer a chance to earn a trade certification before graduation (Cesar, 2013). These outputs could be concluded as the system having meet the demands of the most influential members to require satisfaction of the new policy (Easton, 1957).

3.2.4 Case Study

Within qualitative research, the researcher has the responsibility to gather data using observations and/or interviews within a framework that allows participants to respond freely about their worldviews and experiences related to the study (Patton, 2002). Greater numbers of good case studies would strengthen social sciences (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In conducting this qualitative study, the research approach best utilized for this type of investigation involves case study. The case study method is pertinent when your research address either a descriptive question or an explanatory question (Shavelson & Townes, 2002) and requires an evaluation of a program through data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Stake (1995) also describes a case study as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Yin (2014) describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. Smith (1978) provides a further definition of what a ‘case’ is by defining it in terms of a bounded system, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. You can “fence in” what you are going to study (Anderson, 2011). For the purposes of this study, what will be “fenced in” will be the implementation of HB 5 by administrators, counselors, and HB 5 college prep course teachers in a far-west Texas school district. I view case study as that qualitative instrument to help guide and anchor the data collection and analysis of this type of policy implementation. As Schwandt noted, “to find meaning in action, or to say one understands what a particular action means, requires that one interpret in a particular way what the actors are doing” (p.191).

3.3 Research Data

3.3.1 Collection and Analysis

The process of data collection and analyses involved making sense out of the information received from the interviews (Cresswell, 2009; Litchman, 2013). Patton (2002) and Litchman (2013) agree that to prepare data for analysis requires the organization of the data to be organized into key concepts using a coding system. The organization of the data begins with the smooth transcription of the interviews along with notes and comments. This will lead to the creation of categories and themes based on the collection of direct quotations from participants but will also include a deep analysis of data. This will follow Bazeley (2009) and Coffey & Atkinson's (1996) view that qualitative data analysis requires more than just looking at themes supported from raw data but that a deeper analysis should be used to include interpretation, the naming of categories, pattern analysis and finding the narrative.

Merriam's (2002) guidelines allows for categories to be structured in a systematic process based on the purpose of the study, participant meaning and researcher's knowledge. The methodology in this study were carefully reviewed for the collection and analysis of data. The resulting data was organized into categories and concepts using Litchman's (2013) six-step process: (1) initial coding, (2) revisiting initial coding, (3) developing an initial list of categories or central ideas, (4) modifying initial list based on additional rereading, (5) revisiting categories and subcategories, and (6) moving from categories to concepts. The type of coding during the study was used for consistency across the report. Examples of the kind of coding used in the research included: Administration Support, (high administration support, moderate administration support, low administration support), Local control, Funding Challenges, Financial Consequences.

This study was completed within a 12-month period, and participant disclosure of any information was kept confidential. Data collected remained confidential at all times including recruitment, duration of the study, analysis, and dissemination of results and for publication. The use of pseudonyms was used to protect participant identification and school sites.

3.4 Selection Background

The research focused on a school district in far-west Texas due to the close proximity to Mexico. This study will highlight the possible influence of state implementation of HB 5 in a bi-national, bi-cultural and bi-lingual environment. Due to the growing Latino presence in the state, looking at how a predominate Latino school district can implement this policy can provide an insight as to the challenges and success of this college and career readiness policy. This far-west Texas region is located along southwestern Texas and South-Central New Mexico on the US/Mexico border. This region is a blend of urban, suburban, rural and undeveloped sectors, encompassing an estimated population of 2.5 million. The total El Paso population is comprised of 830,735 people of which 80.3% are Latino (U.S. Census, 2012). This public education in this region has a total enrollment of 177,905 students and 11,423 graduates for 2011-2012 academic year (TEA, 2012). This region is comprised of 12 independent school districts and seven charter school districts. There are 55 private schools, with a combined total enrollment of 9,783 students.

3.4.1 Selection Process

The process of selecting the research site and participants can help explain the defining of the limits placed on this study. After receiving institutional review board approval from the university to conduct this research, I proceeded to get school district approval. After submitting my application to the appropriate division of the school district I selected, I was approved for research. This approval was justified since my study conforms to the district's standards

regarding informed consent and FERPA regulations. I was instructed to provide the approved district letter upon my first communication with school principals and district staff as it provides them with assurance that the study meets the district's research policy. However, district approval does not ensure research participation from the faculty given that research subjects have the right to not participate and withdraw from the research at any point. An informed consent form was also submitted to all applicants where they agree to participate in the study. The form described to participants the study and explanation of confidentiality and rights.

3.4.2 Selected Sites⁴

This research was conducted in a major urban school district in far-west Texas. TEA (2015) defines a major urban school district as one that has 25,000 - 49,999 students per snapshot report. Having worked and had involvement with HB 5 implementation in two out of the largest three districts in the area, I wanted to study a district that I had not worked in. Thus, teachers, counselors, and principals involved with the implementation of HB 5 were interviewed within District Horizon, which serves between 25,000-49,999 students within 45+ campuses. The ethnic make-up of the student body is 96% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% African American. Approximately 81% of the students in this district are economically disadvantaged. District Horizon employs nearly 6,400 staff with average teaching experience of 11.3 years. The ethnic make-up of staff is as follows: 81% Hispanic, 15.8% White, 1.8% African-American, and 1.3% other.

⁴ Pseudonyms have been assigned to each site and district

Table 1.2 provides a comparison of the eight college and career readiness indicators among similar school districts⁵ within the region.

Table 1.2: Far-west Texas Regional District College Readiness Indicator 2014-15 Data Comparison⁶

District	Student Pop.	STAAR Post-Secondary Readiness	4 Year Grad Rate	College-Ready Graduates	AP/IB Results	Average SAT Score	Grads in Texas IHE	Eco Dis
Horizon ISD	25,000 - 49,999	40%	86.9%	48%	28.8%	1191	63.3%	80.9%
Sunny ISD	25,000 - 49,999	41%	89.8%	50%	32.1%	1291	62.7%	71.2%
Rocky ISD	50,000 +	38%	81.2%	51%	48.9%	1443	62.1%	67.9%

To further explain Table 1.2, Horizon ISD total student population identified as being economically disadvantaged is at 80.9 %. Although 63.3 % of seniors at Horizon ISD who graduated in school year 2012-13 enrolled in institutions of higher learning in Texas, only 48% were classified as college-ready by either qualifying scores on the TAKS or SAT/ACT. These college readiness indicators are important to schools and districts as they are part of the overall measurement used for accountability ratings. The selection of District Horizon matched the required criteria of having the lowest college readiness ratings and the highest economic disadvantaged rating per TEA reports.

⁵ Pseudonyms have been assigned to each site and district

⁶ Data was retrieved from Texas Education Agency/Texas Academic Performance Report (2014-15) from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/>

The three high schools selected within District Horizon have been identified by the following college readiness measures⁷: STAAR % at Postsecondary Readiness Standard (Two or More Subjects); 4-Year Graduation Rate (Gr 9-12); College-Ready Graduates (English Language Arts and Math Subjects); Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Results (AP/IB); Average SAT Score; Graduates Enrolled in TX Institution of Higher Education (IHE); Economic Disadvantaged. Table 1.3 shows the breakdown of %age using Texas Academic Performance Report for 2014-15 School Year (TEA, 2016).

Table 1.3: High School College Readiness Measures for District Horizon⁸

High School	Student Pop.	STAAR Post-Secondary Readiness	4 Year Graduation Rate	College-Ready Graduates	AP/IB Results	Average SAT Score	Grads in Texas IHE	Eco Dis
Prospect HS	1,300	41%	94.5%	48%	32.1%	1121	60.2%	76.1%
Skyline H.S.	1,800	58%	92.7%	55%	32.5%	1179	66.6%	84.4%
Vista H.S.	1,400	50%	86.7%	46%	34.0%	1135	55.7%	87.9%
Horizon ISD	25,000-49,999	40%	86.9%	48%	28.8%	1191	63.3%	80.9%

The results from Table 1.3 highlight the comparison between the three high schools and the district they reside in. They represent similar ratings across all eight college readiness indicators yet vary in college readiness graduates. The educational stakeholders within these low college enrolling schools can provide greater insight as to the realities that this college and career readiness policy hope to accomplish.

⁷ See Appendix B for definition of college readiness measures according to Texas Education Agency Glossary for the 2012-14 Texas Academic Performance Report

⁸ Data was retrieved from Texas Education Agency/Texas Academic Performance Report (2015-16) from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/>

3.4.3 Participant Selection

Out of the seven comprehensive high schools in the district, only four matched the selected criteria for the study yet only three agreed to the research. This represented a 75% participation rate from selected high schools in the study. Approval from the principal at each high school consented to their counselors and HB 5 college preparation teachers taking part in the research as well. I was put in contact with counselors through a list of names provided by the principal at each school. After communicating via email and in person, times and dates for interviews were agreed upon with permission from the principal. As for counselor participation rates, out of 12 possible counselors to interview within all three high schools, this research collected responses from 5 counselors. This represents a 41% participation rate. Only 2 out of the 3 high schools participated in the HB 5 college preparation course. Each high school who participates can have up to one teacher instruct the HB 5 English course and one teacher teach the HB math course. Out of 4 possible teachers, this research interviewed 3 teachers. This represents a 75% participation rate of possible teachers available for the study. The following sections provide a more detailed review of site and participant selection.

The realities of HB 5⁹ experienced by principals, counselors, and teachers were selected because of their required state-mandated involvement in HB 5. These individuals also have a kind of influence that can be described as that of having a collective responsibility for students' college readiness preparation. Within this idea of collective responsibility are the multiple components of what each educational agent (principal, counselor, teacher) plays a distinct and interconnected role in shaping college readiness for students (Yamamura, Martinez & Saenz,

⁹ HB 5 expressly states the roles that each educational actor (i.e. principal, counselor, teacher) play regarding the implementation of the various sections in the law. Of particular interest are sections §28.014, §28.02121, §28.025, §28.002 and how they correspond to increasing college readiness and access to students.

2010). Fowler (2000) explains, “School administrators play a major role in implementing new policies...they will be expected to develop a plan to carry it out, motivate teachers and others to cooperate, marshal the necessary resources, and provide feedback about the process” (p.21).

Although the perception of the role of a high school principal has evolved from that of being seen as a bureaucratic executive to a humanistic facilitator and instructional leader, HB 5 adds a different component to their role. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) states:

School leaders today must serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence. They must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and family service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses and other community residents around the common goal of raising student performance. And they must have the leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to pursue these strategies. (p.2)

Like the changing role of the principal, high school counseling has seen a shift in their responsibilities. Counselors took on a more administrative role in the 1970's and then a change in providing mental health services on top of being an administrator (McDounough, 2005; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). With the increase in the number of educational policies designed to increase student college readiness and acceptance, the role of the high school counselor now includes that of being a college admission and completion expert (Krei & Rosenbaum, 2001; Rasinski, Ingels, Rock, Pollack & Wu, 1993). Although counselors remain an important source of college information, half of students surveyed in a study had not yet talked with a counselor about college by the end of their ninth grade year (Conley, 2005). In fact, most students gained their information about college from their parents and teachers (Conley, 2005). The role of

collective responsibility for student college readiness seemed to supersede teachers' professional responsibility (Yamamura et al., 2010).

If the high school principal decides to provide students with the opportunity take the HB 5 College Preparation Course (TEC 28.014), teachers must be certified to teach high school English and/or math. These courses are designed for students at the 12th grade level whose performance on: A) an end-of-course assessment instrument required under Section 39.023(c) does not meet college readiness standards; or B) coursework, a college entrance examination, or an assessment instrument designated under Section 51.3062 (c) indicates that the student is not ready to perform entry-level college coursework; and 2) to prepare students for success in entry-level college courses. Of the three high schools selected, only 2 high schools offered the course and therefore the teachers who instruct these courses are referred to as "HB 5 teachers". These teachers were required to attend a one-day training sponsored by the local regional education center.

Recruited individuals were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews have a flexible and fluid structure, unlike a structured interview, which contains a structured sequence of questions to be asked in the same way of all interviewees (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Lia, 2004). The organization of a semi-structured interview is designed around an aide memoir or interview guide. The goal of semi-structured interviews is to allow for the interview to be shaped by the interviewee's understandings as well as researcher's interest. One of the goals of this study was to understand how the participants implement HB 5 and this type of interview links the experience of interviewee with the purposed research question. Semi-structured interviews allow for a freer exchange between the interviewer and interviewee (Esterberg, 2002). Weiss (1994) states that conducting interviews helps integrate

multiple perspectives from each of the respondents and how each one dealt with his/her individual daily choices.

Specifically, three high school principals, five counselors at each of the three schools and three HB 5 college preparation course teachers were interviewed. Romney, Batchelder, and Weller (1986) found that small samples could be, “quite sufficient in providing complete and accurate information within a particular cultural context, as long as the participants possess a certain degree of expertise about the domain in inquiry” (p.326). Johnson (1998) reminds us that it is “critical to remember the connection between theory, design, and data analysis from the beginning, because how the data is collected, both in terms of measurement and sampling, is directly related to how they can be analyzed” (p.153). Table 1.4 provides an account of selected high school and participant information for the study¹⁰.

Table 1.4: Selected High School sites and Participant Information

High School Name	Student Population	HB 5 Teacher Interviews	Counselor Interviews	Principal Interviews
Prospect H.S.	1,300	0 participants	2 participants	1 participant
Skyline H.S.	1,200	1 participant	1 participant	1 participant
Vista H.S.	1,400	2 participants	2 participants	1 participant

Interviews were done in private and audiotaped not exceeding sixty minutes. The interviews explored participant's interpretation and experience regarding the realities of HB 5. The audiotapes and notes gathered during the interview process were kept in a locked metal cabinet and will be destroyed after successful transcription of the original audiotapes. There is no known risk for the subjects interviewed since all precaution of confidentiality will be observed. Those selected for interviews were all healthy, informed, and consenting adults.

¹⁰ Data was retrieved from Texas Education Agency/Texas Academic Performance Report (2013-14) from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/>

Staff members interviewed were not identified during the data collection and self-identified in a demographic questionnaire. Table 1.5 shows the questionnaire.

Table 1.5: Participants Demographics Questionnaire

Demographic Data	Circle the best response:				
Age	<25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>56
Gender	Female		Male		
Experience in Education Profession	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	>20 years
Current Role within HB 5	Teacher	Counselor		Administrator	
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino		Not Hispanic or Latino		
Race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Mix
Highest Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree		Doctorate Degree	

The questionnaire will help provide background information, level of education and teaching experience and what role they play in the implementation of HB 5. Participants were asked to provide their age, gender, ethnicity, and race as a way to better examine the reality and background experience of each participant.

3.4.4 Demographic Description of Participants

This section provides an overview of participants within the study. Pseudonyms were used to preserve confidentiality of participants. I interviewed 11 participants that are all involved in various levels of HB 5 implementation. High school names and school districts identified in the study were changed. During the interviews, participants interpreted their experience of HB 5 in multiple ways which formed their reality of the HB 5 experience. All participants involved in the study were required by state law to implement some kind of decision making and action regarding HB 5. During the interviews, the participants discussed their experiences

implementing HB 5 in their present role within the high school. They told their story and how it made sense to them (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

All participants in the study were involved with HB 5 policies as either a principal, counselor, or HB 5 college preparation math or English teacher. The participants in the study included three principals, five counselors, and two HB 5 English teachers and one math teacher. The gender breakdown included five female participants and six male participants. Regarding the specific gender breakdown of each profession, two males were principals; two were counselors, and two were teachers. As for female participants, one was a principal; three were counselors, and one was an HB 5 teacher. The age range of participants included one individual being between 26-35 years old, five individuals between the age of 36-45, three individuals between the age 46-55 and three age 56 and older. The principal's age range was youngest, followed by the counselors and the HB 5 teachers were the oldest. As for years of experience within the education environment, two individuals had between 5-9 years of experience, two individuals had between 10-14 years of experience, two individuals had between 15-19 years of experience and five had 20 years of experience or more. The counselors interviewed had the most years of experience within education, followed by the teachers and the least number of years in education were the principals (see Table 1.6).

Table 1.6 Participants Demographic Information: Age, Gender, Education Experience (N = 11)

Demographic Data					
Age	<25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>56
Principal		1	3		
Counselor			2	2	1
Teachers				1	2
Total:		1	5	3	3
Gender					
	Female		Male		
Principal	1		2		
Counselor	3		2		
Teachers	1		2		
Total:	5		6		
Experience in Education Profession					
	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years		>20 years
	1		1		1
Counselor		2	1		2
Teachers	1				2
Total:	2	2	3		5
Current Role within HB 5					
	Teacher	Counselor	Administrator		
Total:	3	5	3		

The racial background of the participants included eight self-identified white individuals, two Black or African Americans, and one American Indian or Alaska Native. No individual identified as either Asian or Native Hawaiian/other/mixed race. Of those identified as white, the ethnic make-up of the group included seven Hispanic or Latino participants and four were Not Hispanic or Latino. The principals interviewed included two Hispanic or Latino individuals and one Black or African American. The counselors included three who identified as Hispanic or Latino and two who identified as Not Hispanic or Latino. No counseling individual identified as Black or African America, American Indian, Asian or Native Hawaiian/other/mixed race. The teacher group represented a more diverse body which comprised of one Hispanic or Latino, one

Black or African America, and one American Indian. Regarding Highest Level of Education, one individual had a bachelor's degree; nine had a master's degree, and one had a terminal degree.

The administrator education background included two masters and a terminal degree. All counselors had a master's degree. Two teachers had a master's degree while one only had a bachelor's degree (see Table 1.7).

Table 1.7 Participants Demographic Information: Race, Ethnicity, Education Level (*N* = 11)

Race		White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or
Principal		2	1			
Counselor		5				
Teacher		1	1	1		
	Total:	8	2	1		

Ethnicity		Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino
Principal		2	1
Counselor		3	2
Teachers		2	1
	Total:	7	4

Highest Level of Education		Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Terminal Degree
Principal			2	1
Counselor			5	
Teachers		1	2	
	Total:	1	9	1

The prior work history of all participants reveals that more than half started employment outside of education. Six of the eleven participants had jobs in business, criminal justice, media/journalism, social work and military before starting their careers within education. All principals involved in the study did not have outside job experience. They all began their careers within education either during their bachelor's degree and/or immediately following graduation leading towards teacher certification. Of the counselors involved, four out of the five began in a

career outside of education. Lastly, two out of the three teachers started in a profession outside of education before their current role (see summary in Table 1.8).

Table 1.8 Summary of Participants (*N* = 11)

Name¹¹	Current Role	Location¹²	Years in Edu	Prior Work Experience	
Charlie	Principal	Skyline HS	15-19 years	Edu Only	
Fred	Principal	Prospect HS	5-9 years	Edu Only	
Iris	Principal	Vista HS	15-19 years	Edu Only	
Maria	Counselor	Skyline HS	10-14 years	Media/ Journalism	
Patrick	Counselor	Prospect HS	> 20 years	Business	
Rebekah	Counselor	Prospect HS	> 20 years	Criminal Justice	
Oscar	Counselor	Vista HS	15-19 years	Business	
Andrea	Counselor	Vista HS	10-14 years	Edu Only	
Claudia	HB 5 Teacher	Skyline HS	> 20 years	Edu Only	
Moises	HB 5 Teacher	Vista HS	5-9 years	Business	
Adam	HB 5 Teacher	Vista HS	> 20 years	Social Work/ Military	
Name¹³	Age	Sex	Race	Ethnicity	Highest Level of Education
Charlie	36-45	Male	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Fred	26-35	Male	Black	Not Latino	Terminal Degree
Iris	36-45	Female	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Maria	36-45	Female	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Patrick	> 56	Male	White	Not Latino	Master's Degree
Rebekah	46-55	Female	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Oscar	46-55	Male	White	Not Latino	Master's Degree
Andrea	36-45	Female	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Claudia	46-55	Female	White	Hispanic or Latino	Master's Degree
Moises	> 56	Male	White	American Indian	Master's Degree
Adam	> 56	Male	Black	Not Latino	Bachelor's Degree

¹¹ Pseudonyms are used for the purpose of confidentiality.

¹² To maintain the anonymity of high schools, the names of the schools were changed.

¹³ Pseudonyms are used for the purpose of confidentiality.

3.5 Summary

The methodologies reaffirmed the purpose of this research, which was to examine the realities of a far-west Texas school district in implementing the reforms of HB 5. Specifically, the focus was centered on the personal experiences of teachers, counselors and administrators and look for commonalities in their perceptions of the law. This outlined the research problem, purpose, research sites, and participant selection. Methods for conducting this study were proposed to ensure quality selection of data is analyzed and presented accordingly.

Chapter IV

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the realities of Texas House Bill 5 (HB 5) through the perspectives of educational agents in a far-west Texas school district. The focus of this study was aimed at exploring the implementation of teachers, counselors and administrators who have direct impact on Texas' new college and career readiness education policy HB 5. This study used semi-structured interviews to explore the following primary research question:

- How do administrators, counselors, and teachers implement HB 5 in a far-west Texas school district?

The research sub-questions in this study include:

- What are the school realities involved within HB 5?
- How are schools addressing the main objectives recommended by HB 5?
- How is HB 5 accomplished within schools?
- How do the educational actors involved disseminate HB 5 information to students and families?

To address the sub-questions, a tiered questioning approach was used. For a list on how those research questions fit within this study, please see Appendix C.

Participant Interview Findings

4.1.1 School Realities

The 11 participants shared many commonalities in their implementation of HB 5 yet represented different experiences at the same time. To gain understanding of each participant's experience, the following sub-question was addressed: What are the realities involved within HB 5?

This section describes the background of the participants as well as how the participants interpret HB5. Through their responses, I collected their perspective on the purpose and the benefits of HB5. I also sought to capture their frustration and problems with the implementation as well as what they perceived as the weaknesses within HB5.

4.1.2 Educational Background

Principals. All three principals interviewed had only worked in an educational setting either during college, as tutors, or following degree completion as first year teachers. All three principals sensed a connection towards helping people which made choosing the education career route easy. Both Iris and Charlie shared a similar experience regarding their entry into education. Both were asked to help tutor students while in college. For Iris, it was feeling a positive connection and response from the college students she was helping which made her fall in love with teaching. It made her think: “You know what, I’m gonna look at the, the public school system,” and that’s how she got started within education. All three grew up in low income school districts with a predominate Hispanic population. This familiarity with low income schools and living within a large minority population helped all three principals connect with their current schools and communities. They understood the impact of poverty on students as it relates to educational achievement while working on implementing HB 5 policies. Yet, one principal, Fred, was quick to point out that poverty can mean two different things depending where students live. Fred explains:

So I was an elementary principal at Lovely ISD at a first through fifth grade campus.

Very interesting setting, ‘cause it was a different kinda poverty. It wasn’t more of the urban poverty, the “hood” poverty...but more of the “country” poverty. They just, they just lack experiences.

Fred referenced this experience when connecting the exposure and benefits of students living in an urban area with access to large industry compared to almost no access for rural students. All three principals are in what would be described as urban poor high schools yet are no strangers to turning around low performing schools. Charlie was asked to apply to be a principal at a school who had had 7 principals in 8 years:

So they had, kinda like, a revolving door. So, I said, why would I wanna apply to be number 8? And the, the superintendent encouraged me that it would be a great opportunity. Being young at the time, I said “Okay, I’ll do it. I’ll apply for it.” And I never thought I would get it, so I did get it. I got that school. And...and I actually stayed there for 5 or 6 years and that school moved from being one of the lowest to one of the highest-performing schools.

Counselors. Four out of the five counselor’s interviewed had prior work experience outside of education yet they currently average over 10 years of education experience. The experiences they brought to the counseling profession ranged from business to criminal justice to media and journalism. Many participants credit a larger purpose for them moving from the private sector to education due to personal fulfillment. Oscar, a counselor at Vista High School, had a successful career in the business world but found it was not fulfilling or rewarding. He became self-aware of a deeper desire to impact the greater good and found that calling to be education. For Maria, counselor at Skyline High School, she credits her teacher from high school in helping her discover a career in journalism. Maria recounts:

I hate to say this, because now I’m in education, but we were only given a few selected careers, I guess in high school. And, so, my journalism teacher, back when I was in high

school, was able to show me there's careers in journalism, in communication...so, I was super passionate about it in high school that I decided to pursue that career in college.

Maria credits her experiences in the private sector as influencing her to work in education. While working for several newspapers, she would get a lot of stories dealing with education and she was very interested in helping kids. She wanted to teach and got her alternative certification. As a teacher, she noticed low community expectations in the high school she taught. Maria states:

I felt, like, okay, well, these kids aren't prepared. They're not prepared for college, I mean, I only have 'em, you know in my classroom for maybe 45 minutes, they need more. What can I help 'em...? So we started doing a lot of college prep, a lot of scholarship applications, essays...which just kind of brought me here! As a counselor, I said, okay, well, I can only serve my kids, well how can I serve a greater population?

HB 5 Teachers. All three teachers who taught the HB 5 college preparation course had studied subjects in college ranging from accounting to engineering to studio art. For both HB 5 math college preparation teachers, Moises and Claudia, they found themselves liking education through either there substituting experience or tutoring they did while in college. For Claudia, the fact that there were no jobs in engineering for her in the local city caused her to readjust her career focus. She describes her discovery of wanting to be in education in the following way:

As a college tutor, I saw that I liked helping other people. And that's why I was like, okay, well I guess I'll become a high school teacher. But, really when I was into that then I thought that really eventually I wanna become a professor. Which is why I went back to school and did my Master's in math, so I can do that.

For HB 5 English teacher, Adam, his journey towards the education profession was influenced by media. Adam recounts his experience:

I was delivering newspapers in New York City, you know, it was one of my many jobs as a teenager and I went to see a film called “To Sir With Love” with Sydney Poitier. And that was kind of my inspiration. My father had, had passed away when I was ten. So I saw this, you know, black guy...um, teacher, engineer, wearing a suit and I just looked at that character and said, that’s what I’m gonna be.

Although Adam had taken many different career routes before ending up teaching English at Vista High School, his experience from working for the Salvation Army to camp director to a social worker at New York City, helped instill in him a desire to connect with kids.

4.1.3 Purpose and Benefit of HB 5

Principals. All three administrators believed the purpose of Texas HB 5 was to address Texas workforce needs and to provide students with opportunities to assess their desires and jump start their career or college pathway while in high school. For Iris, Texas HB 5 was a direct response from the influence of the business community seeking to address skill gap needs of their workforce. She explains:

I see it as a response from education to the workforce or business saying, we’re producing kids that don’t even understand the workforce. For example, I’ve been working with the owner of the McDonald’s across the street. And we, we sat down and had discussions and he says, “You know, we’re getting involved as business owners because we’re getting ya’lls kids, whether it’s universities telling us this, we’re getting them fresh outta high school and they’re lacking these skills, that’s why we’re getting involved.” And I see and he said, “we’re working with legislatures, letting them know that this, the workforce is gonna hurt in the future if we don’t correct this in the lower levels.”

To address the soft skills gap that is needed by employers, Charlie agreed that students needed to be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in written communication: “They need to be able to communicate both when they speak and also when they write. And I think HB 5 is forcing a lot of students to be good at that.” Taking into account her experience with business owners and wanting to expand the role of HB 5 in the classroom arena, Iris started implementing new teaching requirements. She started to ask teachers to have students work on projects or incorporate more project-based learning strategies where students learn more hands-on versus just theoretical through books. In fact, she believed that teachers and students need to be retrained and start thinking outside the box and step into the 21st century.

According to all three principals, they believe Texas HB 5 primarily benefits students but also realize that workforce and higher education institutions benefit also. Iris states:

HB 5 exposes kids, at a young age, at really looking at career pathways because they have to choose an endorsement, and so, I think it’s a good thing. But we really, we’ve gotta long stretch to go in, in preparing our teachers with project-based learning, ‘cause really that’s what you’re looking at. That’s what the business owners want...students with common sense and critical thinkers.

For Charlie, the biggest thing that HB 5 provided students, is it affords them options that really did not formally exist prior to HB 5. Charlie shares:

I think that’s basically the biggest thing, it gives the kids opportunities, it gives them choices. It gives them choices to go to the army, it gives the choices to create their own business, because it really might prepare kids that might not go to college to actually do well in life. And ...even technical, uh, or vocational schools, they, they might consider

because one of the things that all these kids need regardless of what they do, they need good soft skills.

For Fred, HB 5 serves a dual purpose. He believes it benefits all kids either professionally or academically because “it gives them specialized pathways and tracks for what they want to focus on and what they do not want to focus on.” All principals agreed that for those students who want to go to college and graduate early, HB 5 allows students to figure it out sooner and it adds more structure to the high school program.

Counselors. All five counselors believed the purpose of HB 5 was to provide students with a more formalized process of visualizing what they will be doing after they leave high school. Oscar explains:

I think students have such a vague idea as to what, you know, the world after high school looks like, even though they might have siblings or, or friends that are high school graduates and out on their own...for them to envision what they will actually be doing is, is kind of tricky or vague for, for many students.

Andrea feels that HB 5 has provided counselors with more authority to help provide students with support and direction regarding post-secondary guidance. Andrea explained:

I think it's brought more of an awareness 'cause now it's not more, well, it's the counselor kinda trying to guide you in this direction. Now it's law, it's mandated, this what you need for graduation, it is our district policy and you will pick a pathway.

Maria made an interesting point to suggest that now students will be able to research careers in the safety of the high school compared to having no real guidance once they graduate. She also noted that students trust teachers when it comes to college and career guidance. Within HB 5,

students have options to select certain pathways which might lead to possible careers and makes courses more relevant to students.

As for the benefits of HB 5, most counselors stated that the main benefits were for all students and in particular, the non-traditional student. These students, according to Patrick, are those who are non-college bound. They struggle in high school and they know that they are not going to go to college but it gives them a preview or a taste or exposure to what a career may entail. Rebekah explained:

If they're not motivated at, you know, then and they don't have an educated parent that's going to motivate them or even a parent that struggles so much they just can't get their child to see the realization that education is important, then if they are able to do a trade, then that's perfect! Um, House Bill 5, I think, is now allowing the kids to be more marketable as they go through college, because the universities are now looking at what these kids take in high school. And so, if there's a kid that's coming up with the endorsement that this House Bill 5 allows, then they want those kids and I think that they're gonna offer them scholarships and more opportunities. We hope, we hope.

HB 5 Teachers. All teachers believed that HB 5 provides a twofold purpose: 1) helps students find a career and 2) prepares students for college. Adam summed up how teachers described HB 5:

The purpose of House Bill 5, I think is a bridge. One of the things that I see in high school, college is, over the years, there's been kind of a growing gap in the terms of years, I mean when you got a 4-year degree, it took you 5 years to get a 4-year degree. Um, now, we're up to, I think, 6-7 years, you know, to get that 4-year degree.

Adam believed that the increase in number of years for degree attainment results from low college readiness expectations:

There's a lot of things that feed into that but I think a lot it has to do with kids graduating high school and not being college-ready. Um, because we're so centered on, on standardized tests and a lot of the fundamentals and basics that they should know, that foundation is not as strong as it used to be. So, I see the program as basically, a bridge, you know, to compensate for that gap that's been created over the years.

This sense of not preparing students for college was echoed by both Claudia and Moises since they both stated that HB 5 helped students avoid taking remedial classes in college. The strong college readiness focus on HB 5 along with helping students decide on a particular career pathway highlights the benefits of the law. Claudia explains, "So I think it benefits the students, but I think it should benefit also the universities because those numbers need to decrease." What Claudia is referring to is that she is seeing more students take advantage of the HB 5 college prep classes in order to avoid taking remedial courses in college.

4.1.4 Resistance to HB 5

Principals. A common frustration two principals associated with HB 5 implementation was in the limited number of pathways schools could offer and staffing challenges. Fred expressed his desire to have more options regarding pathways to help students but was frustrated with the staffing challenges. He stated that every campus cannot offer every endorsement and every pathway based on the current ways schools are funded and staffed. Regarding staffing challenges, principals realized that HB 5 was creating an environment where teachers would need to have more training and certifications in order to meet the required course sequence to sustain four years of those pathways. For Iris, she realized this challenge when she took

ownership of looking at workforce needs, the demands associated with those needs and how she could implement certain pathways to meet those needs. Iris shares her revelation:

We're gonna have to retrain teachers, um, we're gonna have to look at certifications and what makes it difficult is that CTE certifications are very specific. So that kinda makes it hard, they're not as, um, flexible, as you would like for example when teaching science. Now, they push composite, so it makes you flexible to be able to teach every science, same thing for social studies and math...be we need to push to kinda do that with CTE because it's not like that.

Qualifying teachers for Career Technical Education (CTE) certifications is simply procedural; however, dealing with current CTE teachers and the new demands of teaching in the 21st century is another issue. Iris states:

So when you have a teacher who's been doing home economics for 20 years and we're, like, we know we need to revamp, we need to change, you know, it's, we gotta go with the 21st century, she can't teach anything else. So we're in, like, that's the situation right now that we're stuck in. And so, we're looking at where can we get her certified in another areas so that she, it can fit more towards these courses, not...you know, home economics from 20 years ago.

Moving teachers towards having more certifications and or requiring them to attain different trainings to help expand HB 5 pathways can also lead to unintended consequences. For Iris, it meant more teachers might be retiring. She finds some teachers are like, "You know what, I really do not wanna go through that anymore, so I think it's time for me to ...retire."

Charlie, however, provided a different perspective noting that he did not really see any frustration or backlash against HB 5. Charlie clearly stated his opinion on the matter:

I think we're learning from this and I think one of the things is that, we get to the point that, we need to approach these, uh, endorsements, all these pathways, or would it be a little bit easier if we could kind of narrow it down to what we're good at and that we have enough personnel, enough funding to be good at what we're doing. So, it's not really a backlash, it's just that to give us time to evaluate all this and see what's working and what's not working. And so far it seems like it's working okay.

Contrary to Fred's desire to provide more options for this students, Charlie believed students have ample opportunity. For his school, Charlie believes they offer enough opportunities.

Although he does not like open district enrollment, he understands that since each high school cannot offer everything, students have the option to transfer to schools who have the pathways they want. He believes that open enrollment makes the district better and improves student's educational opportunities.

Counselors. All counselors shared the same frustration when it came to HB 5 implementation which is trying to balance the transition of phasing out one graduation plan while trying to implement the new HB 5 graduation plan. They also identified two groups that seem to have more frustration over the law: students and teachers. For students, the reality of being placed on a strict coherent sequence of courses did not allow for the addition of extracurricular courses they wanted. Maria explains:

Uh, really frustration from students because of their schedule. Um, this time of year, we have a lot of kids that are trying out for sports, uh, and our sports, we have an advisory period and the actual practice time. Uh, a lot of times we have to take away that advisory period from the kids, so coaches aren't very happy because they want the kids for two

periods where they do the workout, uh, weights or whatever they need to do at the beginning and then they actually do the actual practice.

As for counselors expressing why teachers are frustrated with the law, they provided two examples: 1) teachers who are the only ones able to teach a course on a very popular pathway are overwhelmed with the number of students in each class, and 2) specialty courses like yearbook, where teachers would normally be selective as to who might be able to enroll in the course, are told they have to take everybody. Maria described:

I just had that happen last week where a teacher was like, “Well, here’s a list of the kids that are in yearbook.” We’re, like, “Well, yes, we understand, but because you’re an endorsement now, we can’t do that. You have to take everybody.

The final frustration the counselors shared was with the limited number of courses students could choose from based on limited number of teachers certified to teach specific CTE pathways. As Patrick stated,

Yeah, the frustration is that there’s not enough courses...or the weakness. It’s just implementing their elective courses needed in their pathway and then what the district has set up. So, that is the frustration, is just to make sure we have it available. You can’t blame the principals, their hands are tied due to, uh, you know, the restriction of financial, uh, output or money that are due to House Bill 5 and the teachers, ‘cause the main, main thing is you gotta service everybody on our campus, you know, you gotta be able to service and that’s the funding. That’s the big thing.

HB 5 Teachers. From the teacher perspective, all three indicated they had no frustration with the college readiness course. They did share student’s viewpoints. Moises indicated that students placed in his HB 5 college prep math course wanted to get out because it

was a lot more rigorous than other courses they were taking. Moises expresses, “You know, it’s harder, it seems to be harder than any of the other classes they’re having, so...well, I guess I’m doing it right, hah. Because it’s supposed to be as rigorous as a college course.” Both Moises and Claudia claimed that students did not want to be enrolled in the course but counselors would not let them out because, as Moises puts it, “You know, it’s for your own benefit.” Adam described the community as it relates to the implementation of HB 5 college prep-courses and parental involvement. Adam states:

No, I haven’t seen that (frustration) and I think a lot of it has to do with our community. Our, parents are very trusting. You know, so, they, honestly they question very little about anything.

4.1.5 HB 5 Weaknesses

Principals. A weakness of the law in which all participants agreed was the fact that no additional funding was tied to this state mandate. For Charlie, it seems that it’s always an issue with state mandates “I think that’s the biggest thing that a lot of times they mandate and they ask us to do things, but they don’t put the backing by funding us correctly.” Iris sees funding as an issue when she was trying to get middle schools principals to have a HB 5 course taught at the eighth grade level to alleviate some of the schedule challenges at the high school. She mentioned principals telling her “You know what, the thing is they’re not gonna give me an extra teacher to teach these classes so I gotta find somebody, I gotta cut something to be able to implement this.” Iris also stated that principals would ask her “Can you help us with resources? Because there’s no way, we don’t have the funding to be able to get the resources that we need.” She mentioned this statement when she was trying to get the feeder middle schools to start a robotics and engineering club. Iris mentioned that middle school principals could not pull away a teacher and

have them teach a robotics course due to the tight teaching schedule of middle school teachers.

Fred expressed a concept not opined from the other two principals where he mentioned that HB 5 should have end of course exams for all subjects. For example, Fred shared:

Some of the weaknesses of House Bill 5 it's good in theory. We're forgetting about the multitude of others, 25 other subjects that we have on campus. I think that every grade, every subject needs to be tested-not just five. Nobody would probably say that, but I'm saying that.

Counselors. Four out of the five counselors believed that one weakness of HB 5 was that several courses were not sufficient enough to truly expose students to the realities of that actual career pathway. In fact, three out of the five believed that the coursework and experience students were getting was simply “rudimentary and basic.” One counselor, Andrea, noted her prior experience at another high school where the financial means of parents presented a different academic expectation than her current school. Andrea recounts:

Like HB 5 now, in the other school, um, we were trying to follow it, but honestly it wasn't very successful 'cause those kids in a school like that, their parents' concerns is, they want them to be prepared for college so their, their priority is they want them to take dual credit, they want them to take advanced courses. So, they don't', they really don't put a lot of importance in, in electives or pathways. They're more, they're more concerned with the rigor of the curriculum of the student's core. Then I come to a school like Vista High School and my experience is very different. There are kids here that are homeless. There are kids whose parent just got deported last week. So, it just depends on the population of students that you're serving.

Another HB 5 weakness expressed was the fact that students really do not have that many options when it comes to selecting career pathways. Patrick expressed his opinion:

So, if the student wants to go to that high school, they can apply to go to that school and then the district provides transportation for them to get there, so we can help 'em in that aspect. But, um, at just a simple campus level, yeah, when they come in there's not a lot of choices. If we don't have it...we'll try to work with them to help 'em out and stuff.

Counselors also stressed that for those students that decide to change pathways, it creates a weakness for the student since they are not getting the full benefit of the pathway. As Rebekah states "if a child is gonna be changing endorsements every year, then they're never gonna get a solid foundation for a pathway?" Lastly, counselors noted that several students will not benefit from this law because of learning disabilities. As Andrea expressed:

Sometimes it's not gonna work for every kid. That's just the reality of it. A lot of them still have no clue what they wanna do and not everybody can fit into a box. As a matter of fact, we were talking about that this morning in our meeting because we're getting error reports on our computers about kids who are not, you know, tied into a pathway. And we're like, well not every kid, it's not an error, it's that these kids, for instance, we have kids, we're the campus with the biggest, um number of learning disabled units. So, we have a lot of kids who are in special ed. Those kind of kids, sometimes just depending on their IQ levels, we're able to send them to vocational to try and get them some kind of skill so they can go out into the workforce after high school. But not every kid has the capability of doing that. So, those kids don't necessarily always fall into a pathway.

Maria believes that a way for HB 5 to correct the low curriculum standards is to bring in more community members and businesses to the classroom. She explains:

I think we need to do more where we bring in the community to the schools. Um...we need to make time to actually bring engineers for a STEM program, um, actual journalists for our communication program, uh, business executives to our MBA or business administration program. But I think seeing an actual professional or actually people in the field, um, there needs to be more of that public-private, um, venture with the schools.

HB 5 Teachers. The weaknesses of HB 5 for college preparation teachers seemed to involve more of the procedural process of within school student selection rather than the law itself. Both Moises and Claudia expressed differences when it came to student placement within their class. For Moises, he mentioned having students in his college prep course who were also taking calculus. He could not understand why those students were in the college prep course since taking calculus implied they were college math ready. However, Moises found those same students to be challenged with the college preparation math course: “You know, it opened up their eyes, it’s not that easy.” Adam also stated a different weakness he saw teaching the HB 5 college prep course:

I don’t see a lot of structure in that. You know, whether it’s, uh, the, communication between that senior year student and that freshman year student at college. I see a gap and I think that that bridge that House Bill 5 is meant to do could benefit by more of a relationship, um, with senior teachers and college personnel.

Adam also believed a lot of the strategies used under the college prep course could benefit other senior level courses.

4.2 HB 5 Main Objectives

The 11 participants expressed the realities of implementing HB 5 and now shared how the schools are addressing the main objectives mandated by the law. To gain understanding of each participant's experience, the following sub-question was addressed: Are schools addressing the main objectives recommended by HB 5? To address this question, the following questions were asked during the interviews:

4. What are the issues with the implementation of HB 5?
 - a. How would HB 5 benefit from funding at this level?
5. What HB 5 policies have been the most difficult to implement and why?

4.2.1 HB 5 Implementation

Principals. All three principals believed the district was doing an adequate job in helping them implement this policy because each high school in the district offers all five endorsements with multiple pathways. They were able to build pathways specific to what each school was more capable of sustaining. Even more so, having the correct number of teachers required to expand each pathway for next year's junior and future senior classes, district officials were taking initiative to provide each principal with options. As Charlie states: They are giving us ideas on how we can better utilize people, they're guiding us, they are coming around and saying, "Okay, what pathways do you have? Are they popular? Do you need to have all these pathways?" This type of school pathway evaluation helps principals determine what route they will focus on based on student input and teacher availability. For Charlie, this evaluation of pathways shaped his opinion that: "maybe we have so many pathways that we spread ourselves too thin that maybe we need to consolidate a little so we can still offer more as they, the kids go up, into becoming seniors." Parental communication was also a part of the issues associated with

implementing HB 5. Iris expressed, “we just have to kind of explain to parents there are limitations, there’s no way we can offer every single pathway within every endorsement because we just don’t have the staff.”

All three principals agreed that implementing HB 5 required having the right staff to successful roll out a four-year pathway. Iris states:

When you’re looking at, like, STEM, there’s a huge push for STEM right now, that’s the popular word all over the nation, and state. If you’re looking at teachers, they have to be able to teach, for example, the engineering classes, that’s huge. Engineering is big right now. But when you look at how many applicants out there have the certification—very minimal. So it’s hard to fill those position.

The issue of limited staff to allow students to complete all four year pathway requirements was an issue for Fred. He expressed his challenge with school counselors placing an unlimited number of students in certain pathways that would place a burden on junior and senior level teachers. He commented:

So the issues to me come from...you have to have counselors who, who can foresee and foreshadow the chaos with scheduling and having pure cohorts of kids per pathway and endorsement. They’re just throwing kids in because it’s the easiest thing to do. They’re not understanding the point that—I keep on mentioning the word “cohort.” You can’t put every kid in the school in one pathway. We have to find a way to strategically, based on their request, place kids and fill up, but once it fills, it’s filled up. And be able to cut pathways when we need to cut’ em. But of course in high schools, it’s hard and it’s...excuse me...hard to cut positions.

All three principals expressed concern with implementing HB 5 with no additional monies from the state. The issue with providing students with certain pathways when they enter as freshmen and guaranteeing those to exist when they are juniors or seniors depends on staffing and training required of teachers. For example, Charlie mentioned the challenges with staffing:

If we offer a class as a sophomore and as a freshman now, who's gonna offer that as a junior? Now you need to offer another class, now you need another person to do that. So now those are the little issues that are starting to become apparent to us, like, we need, we need to offer more classes, we need to have more people to offer this. But we don't have enough personnel to have 'em. So...we're, that's something we're dealing with right now. Funding will help because then we can offer more classes.

Funding challenges also raised an issue with principals when it came to supporting student competitions. In trying to meet business and community expectations, regarding student participation in fine arts and academic competitions, principals are limited. Iris comments:

With CTE money, we can only use for a course in technology or new equipment and tools that the kids need, but tied to these pathways the kids go and compete, Skills USA, but the cost to send our children per competition cannot be pulled outta CTE money. And it has to come outta local funds. That puts a strain on us, because it's expensive. Its local funds that the district has that they distribute to us. For example, that's the smallest pot of money that we have and out of that pot of money, that's where I have to pay for all the fine arts, it's tremendous, just...being able to buy instruments for our kids through band, you know, one instrument can cost you \$4,000 and for these hands-on and project-based type of learning and experience...for the kids to fully get it, it's good that they go and

compete and it creates that competitive nature in the kids that I think business is looking for, but they gotta be able to fund that.

Another point that was expressed by principals was in how teachers were going to react to possible new trainings for certifications. Charlie expressed:

One of the things that we're doing, we're actually training people and they're willing to attend trainings. Uh, like, Project Lead the Way. And we're calling that a path, but then the teachers have to sacrifice 2 weeks out of the summer to attend these trainings, so they know, this is good for the kids, it's good for the school, so they're willing to, kind of, donate their time to actually get training so they can help us with these new pathways too. And not only that but it's how we hire new people. We're looking into the future and we're looking also to certificates that they have that can help move forward with that too.

Counselors. One of the main challenges that counselors faced regarding implementing House Bill 5 policies involved student placement in their desired pathways. All five counselors noted that student schedule conflicts existed because they are limited as to how many students to place in a certain pathways based on teacher availability. Reliance on overloading teachers with student desired pathways not only challenges teachers but when a pathway is based on one teacher who retires mid-year, it changes the impact of HB 5. Oscar shares his experience:

Uh, we've had to...I guess, kill some pathways because, you know, people retire, the program has lost interest, the students have lost interest in the program so we sort of redirect and come up with new endorsements and, uh, for example, our architecture and design program that was around for a number of years, the teacher who taught it retired in December. So we finished this year with those courses, but we have a number of students

that, you know, were all excited to, to do that program just sort of has gone to the wayside.

With limited numbers of teachers who have specific CTE credentials to teach courses, this situation limits student placement and the opportunity to create more pathways for students. This problem of not being able to provide students with more opportunities is cause for concern with Patrick. He believes in making sure that students have more than one career choice but is restricted to those teachers who have the required CTE certifications. Rebekah, on the other hand, believes that even though all five endorsements are offered at Prospect High School, the reality is that they cannot offer all careers that students want. A final challenge counselors face regarding the implementation of HB 5 is dealing with out-of-state and out-of-district students. Counselors have to find certain endorsements and pathways that will work for those students given the shorter time they have to get the required credit per HB 5 regulations.

All counselors believed that additional state funding for schools would better improve the implementation of HB 5. Those additional funds would be used to add staff with correct CTE certifications to open up more courses within popular pathways or even open new pathways for students. Maria knows how much impact additional funding would mean for her school:

Uh, unfortunately because we don't have enough funding for teachers, right now we have one law enforcement teacher. Well, that's a very popular pathway in our area because of the border patrol, you know, again, firefighter, police department. But because of customs and border patrol, a lot of kids are very interested in that pathway. Well, we only have one teacher. Well, if you don't take the 4 years because of scheduling conflicts, then that child is then, loses out. And so we have to kind of rearrange their schedule, so

they're not able to take, um, probably some sports, because it conflicts with their House Bill 5 class or they can't take multiple foreign languages.

HB Teachers. Both Moises and Adam agree that they really could not find any issues regarding the implementation of HB 5 or the college preparation course. Moises realized the way he was teaching his regular classes was different than the HB 5 college preparation course. Moises describes the two teaching experiences:

We model, they try it out...and we do a lot of spiraling, we do a lot of scaffolding and the math class, the House Bill math class, I try to mimic the community college, the way they teach it. When they get to either community college or college, that's the way it's gonna be, they're gonna have to be a lot, they're gonna be, have to be on their own. Because like here, with my other classes, we kind of, like baby them, you know. And ...they need to start, uh, feeling how it's gonna be. I wish I could, you know, do it like they do it in college but I can't...I, I am a little more lenient and I give 'em a little more time on the homework and stuff but...I try to be as, um, you know, as rigorous as, uh, as a university or college.

Going along with the rigorous demands of college, Claudia agrees with Moises. She states:

Sometimes students want to get out again because of the rigorous work. And so, this is offered for seniors, that [if] they did not do well on the TSI, and many students want to just relax their senior year and they don't wanna do the, the level or be doing homework in math their senior year, and not all, I end up with students dropping the class.

For this reason, Claudia believes the implementation is not being addressed correctly because the wrong kids end up in the class.

4.2.2 HB 5 Implementation Difficulties

Principals. All principals believed the overall implementation of HB 5 has not been difficult but what has been challenging was trying to anticipate what the future schedule and staffing needs would look like. As Charlie points out:

The fact that you have to offer all these classes and sometimes you don't have enough people that are certified...this is the first year we're gonna, uh, see that and actually experience it. So that's what we foresee, but it might not be as bad as we think or it might be worse."

Iris, brought up an interesting point. She mentioned the most difficult part in implementing HB 5 has been the parental education aspect of it. She's been at the district meetings where HB 5 is presented to eight-grade parents. It's at that meeting where parents hear about endorsements and pathways. Iris believes parents "still don't understand it," since it's the first time parents hear about endorsements, pathways, graduation requirements, and credits. She claims parents come out looking like "a deer caught in the headlights!"

Counselors. Three out of the five counselors believed that getting the parent signature for the student personal graduation plan was the most difficult to implement. Counselors described how the House Bill 5 Parent Nights were a great way to get the message but noted that many parents either were not ready to sign the form, had more questions or just forgot to sign the personal graduation plan. Patrick described the situation:

In the eighth grade year, we go over to the middle school and we help implement what they, what we call a "House Bill 5 Night" where we bring the parents in, the district does a presentation for them and they're supposed to make a decision on that night. A lot of

parents aren't ready for that. Our middle school counselors and colleagues over there, um, do go out and talk to the students in their classrooms and when they have parent nights and stuff at the high school, we go over there and we talk to them and participate, but we're really not getting, like out of the 400 students coming over we're still probably still missing 75 cards...the parents don't come in.

Counselors mentioned that identifying those students without a plan and pulling them out during instruction was discouraged. Maria recounts "I mean, we've tried different versions, you know, different little versions of it and still it's a little tough to get over 2000 student signatures."

The recurring theme of helping out-of-state students catch up with the missing pre-requisite courses was also identified as most difficult to implement by most counselors. Oscar mentions that they would try to double-up with electives but most students are placed in the multi-disciplinary pathway which is "sort of a catch-all, I think, for some students. Uh, we might probably be looking at that more closely as the third year approaches." Counselors also expressed difficulty in transitioning between HB 5 student schedules and current junior/senior graduation requirements. Finally, counselors expressed difficulty in balancing extracurricular activities with HB 5 course sequences. Andrea explains:

Pathways are competing with athletics, with all the extracurricular things that kids do. Um, with student council, from choir, to I'm an athlete, to you know, all, the kids who want to take dual credit. There's so much, there are so many things that the kids have the opportunity to take advantage of that, you know, we still gotta sneak in the pathway too, also on their schedule.

HB Teachers. All three teachers felt student placement in the course was the most difficult in to implement the House Bill 5 college prep course correctly. For Claudia, she had to wait a couple of weeks before a good number of students were in her class. She also mentioned she had to wait several months for the school district to purchase the correct math and English books before they could teach the course. For both Claudia and Adam, they had juniors taking the course the first year the class was offered. Unfortunately, this course was made for senior level students only. Adam mentioned that students were told they all would receive credit; however, they ended up receiving local credit and not the state credit they thought they would be receiving. For those juniors that took the HB 5 college prep math course and enrolled in calculus with Claudia the following year, she noticed a big difference. Claudia described:

No, they did but I had some juniors too. They were not placed right. Now, this time I've only got seniors 'cause I told 'em, like, this is only supposed to be for seniors. They were, they're strong students, I can see. Yeah, they are much strong students because they took that course. Because they don't know how to do math without a calculator. They don't know how to do fractions without a calculator, they don't know how to do basic graphing without a calculator. So if they have those foundations, they will be a lot stronger students in high school and in college. And I think that this course is doing that.

4.3 Management and Accountability of HB 5

To gain understanding of each participant's experience of HB 5 as it relates to management and accountability of the law, the following sub-question was addressed: How is HB 5 accomplished within schools? This section asks participants to consider the way in which HB 5 are being implemented in the participants schools? Here I also asked participants to

describe the accomplishments of HB5 and make recommendations about HB 5 as well as other like policies.

The actual interview questions asked to address this question include:

3. What are the ways in which HB 5 policies are being implementing at your school?
10. What are some recommendations you would make for future policy implementation?
11. What are the accomplishments of HB 5?

4.3.1 HB 5 Implementation

Principals. Two of the three principals viewed the implementation of HB 5 as a way to redirect the focus of the school regarding what pathways to offer and what to invest in. For both Iris and Charlie, that redirection has enabled them to be more proactive in helping shape the direction of not just the high school but also impact the surrounding community. Iris stated:

And so we've revamped and gotten rid of, like, very old pathways and, uh, have really modernized 'em. Uh, like the health sciences is gonna be something new that we're doing. Um...because as we're cutting staff...it puts us in a bind to be able to revamp and get the right teachers that we need for these certifications. I think it was more towards who you cater to, it's based on, okay, these are the teachers you have on your campus, these are their certs so that's how you're gonna go. And so, okay kids "These are your choices," based on their certs. But I've shifted to where, really it's gotta be geared towards what business people are wanting.

Charlie shares the same vision but see's HB 5 implementation as more of a showcase for his school. Charlie explained:

One of the things that we've done here, uh, we have two pathways that are very popular here. One of them is called the "Systems," which is engineering. And the other one is called the "MBA," which is business. So, what it does, it kind of forces us to showcase our school. And by showcasing our school, what are the biggest two, programs that you have at your school that kids wanna come here? But it, it actually promotes what you're doing and it gives kids the opportunity to get that choice.

All three principals had different recommendations on ways to implement HB 5. Iris felt it necessary for the district to provide a greater role in helping principals evaluate current pathways and ensure success. For example, Iris believed "the district is looking at revamping pathways if we need to for those that are, you know, back from 25 years ago. And then looking at having an action plan of what we are willing to implement to get facilities or to get, uh, equipment to be 21st century and then go, run with the plan." Fred did not touch on the district role with HB 5 but places more of the control for implementation on the state. He believed something like HB 5 should be accompanied by more money to phase in more staff. On the other hand, Charlie believed the state should evaluate the current law to see what's working, what is not working and how to make it better. Charlie believed the state should seek an opportunity to listen from parents and students.

Counselors. Four out of the five counselors mentioned the district House Bill 5 Nights as the first stage of informing students and parents about endorsements and pathways. Maria describes a typical House Bill 5 Night for the district:

We bring in the middle schools, all their feeder patterns and we get a presentation to show the parents, to educate the parents in both English and Spanish. Then we show them what we have to offer and what other schools have to offer, as well, like with the magnet schools and everything else. And afterwards they can ask us questions and we can go over it and, you know, we present 'em the card, It seems really quick.

For those students or parents that did not get to fill out a personal graduation plan during the House Bill 5 Nights, counselors met with students prior to registration. Patrick describes the follow up process, “We do have meetings with our students on an ongoing basis. We go out once or twice a year to talk to, uh, classes or grade levels about their House Bill 5 endorsements. We remind them at registration for the next school year.”

4.3.2 Information Dissemination

As for accountability purposes, the district career technology education department goes to each high school and audits both in the fall and spring. Rebekah notes: “during the audits, we’re making sure the kids are on track. If not, we’re calling them in and getting their paperwork sent home to get, to maybe change their pathway to help ‘em out.” Rebekah acknowledges that it’s an ongoing process to get the right documentation each year and realizes that time is part of the process. For students who wish to change pathways or who have chosen a pathway that requires attendance at a neighboring high school to complete the sequence of courses, counselors do what is necessary. Andrea describes this process:

We are lucky enough to have an AutoCAD program at a neighboring high school but that would mean the kids would have to be willing to travel. And it’s a pretty good program. But, not all the kids are willing to travel. Why? Because they’re in football or, you know, they do student council and, you know, baseball players or whatever. So sometimes the

kids will say, “Miss, I understand it’s a really good opportunity, but I don’t wanna travel. I don’t wanna spend half my day at another campus.” So that becomes a problem sometimes.

How to better implement HB 5 resulted in several counselors agreeing that educating students and parents needed to start earlier than eight grade. Andrea stated how early exposure requires more communication between high school and feeder middle schools:

I think that has been a hiccup too, because the middle school people are saying, “Well that’s not something that really implements itself until high school,” so they’ve done very...they haven’t done as much work as they should. And, and then you’re talking, convincing a 12-year-old of well, what do you wanna do?” Like, they need to start at the middle schools, even at, at the elementary schools, talking about, what do you wanna do, you know after high school? I know that a 7-year-old isn’t going to have that answer, but it’s something that they need to start contemplating.

When it comes to pathway exploration while in high school, staying on a coherent sequence of courses for a pathway seems to not be a good idea for Oscar. He believed that students should have “more flexibility in letting students try a variety of pathways and being okay with having, maybe, I don’t know, up to 4 years of different pathway courses each year, but at least that student has that exposure specifically to these different arenas or even being just a course or two in each.”

Another recommendation from counselors is to deal with transfer students in a more unified manor. As students transition between high schools and at times, district-to-district, a need to have a common pathway agreement within local districts could help with these

situations. However, Patrick is quick to point out that most districts “don’t like sharing stuff sometimes.” The last recommendation was to go back to what is known as “Four x Four,” which is four English credits, 4 math credits, 4 science credits, and 4 social studies credits to graduate high school along with a minimum number of electives. Although the state has lowered graduation requirements to 22 credits, most school districts have mandated students to graduate with 26 credits. Rebekah believes that 26 credits is too much and would prefer 22 credits instead.

HB Teachers. For teachers, the implementation of HB 5 was seen strictly as a counselor and administration issue. For both Moises and Adam, they responded by simply stating that they had no involvement either with student selection or the choice to teach the course. They viewed their role as simply teaching what they are certified to teach. Both teachers also expressed a bit of disappointment the first year that HB 5 college preparation courses were taught. Adam explained:

It was a backburner issue. Um...and then when the, you know, when we kinda got, you know, called in on it, I think everybody kinda jumped through hoops to make it happen. My first year of doing House Bill 5, the course, or the polices, I started out with maybe, I’m gonna say probably 15 kids. And then that group began to dwindle. You know, down to almost 10. But the kids didn’t know what it was, the community didn’t know what it was and why it was, um the question was, is this for credit? Is this instead of another course? You know, what are we doing here?

Claudia described the same experience:

It was really crazy because it was a last-minute thing they told me. “You need to go to the ESC, because you’re gonna be teaching this course.” I was, like, “Why, me?” I started

teaching, I didn't know I had to learn how to do the, use the My Math Lab, the book, I didn't have 'em right away, I think got 'em 'till the second semester...It was a few too, I think I had about 20 and I ended up with about 10, something like that.

Although the implementation of HB 5 seemed unorganized at first, that did not take away from the positive impact the HB 5 college preparation courses had on students. When asked what type of recommendations they had for HB 5 implementation, teachers simply addressed the scheduling issues. All three teachers believed that counselors needed to do a better job of screening and sorting the right students to place in the HB 5 college preparation courses. Claudia described her experience:

I think the course, like I said, it does benefit the students that, that do want to be here and that take college serious. And, like I said, I would survey the juniors and ask them, because, like I said, many times I had juniors in pre-cal and that's their last math state requirement, um, math course they need. So many times those seniors don't wanna be in another math class. So that's why I'm saying, survey some of those juniors to make sure that they do wanna be in this class or the seniors also, make sure they know what it is about and send a letter, have a meeting with the parents that do want to take the course and know what it is about also.

4.3.3 HB 5 Evaluation

Principals. Although both Charlie and Iris expressed a view that HB 5 is accomplishing what it sets out do, Fred believed otherwise. He feels that the assessment part of HB 5 sets low standards for students. In fact, he believes HB 5 to be a conspiracy:

It's designed to keep a certain population oppressed, because the majority, and this generally speaking, of urban African American, urban Hispanic children, border children

and low socioeconomic children in more of the rural areas. So, your rural Anglos in East Texas, West Texas, Central Texas. It's designed to keep them low, because teacher accountability is not high, the standard is so low, so we're telling the kid that they make a 38-39, they met the standard for knowing Algebra I, the most important math. And that's what, that's what the kids that I just described of those various sub pops are making. They're barely getting by, they're getting their nose barely above the line. And so now we're putting them out in the real world to where whenever they go to college, if they go to college, they got to enroll in remedial classes. But the state's House Bill 5 says, you have these endorsements, you have these pathways, um, and you met the standard on exams –a very low standard. But how does that standard compare across the nation that you're competing against? So it's keeping, it's keeping a bell curve to society and to the economy.

Iris and Charlie did not mention the state assessment aspect of HB 5 but instead highlighted the benefits that HB 5 offers students. They believed that students are provided with the environment to grow and help make the best decision available to them. As Charlie states:

I think with the HB 5, the students have choices, they have options. I mean, even the opportunity that they might become a good plumber and then they open their own company and then they can become very successful. So I see this as a great opportunity for those kids that are not necessarily going to college but they have an opportunity to kinda, like, do, become ...good citizens when they finish...and if they wanted to go to college, they'll be prepared for it! Maybe they decide, you know, I'm going to college in 5 years, not, not right now. But even then they'll be prepared for college. They, they don't have to be taking those remedial courses.

Counselors. Three of the five counselors believed that HB 5 was accomplishing what it sets out to do. On the other hand, one counselor did not believe it was accomplishing its goal and another stated it was too early to tell. One of the three counselors who viewed the law as working, Oscar, mentioned that he judged the law based on two different objectives: academic and career readiness. Oscar shared:

If the idea is to make students more prepared for career and college readiness, um...I think any high school worth its salt does that through its core curriculum. Um...it's a basic degree plan for any student should do a solid job of preparing them for college, for sure. Career readiness, again, these courses offer a sneak preview, a little bit, uh...but it's such a ...light exposure that it's hard to say that that's really making the impact that they're hoping. Uh...so...college preparedness, yes; career, that's a trickier, uh, goal to achieve.

Andrea, again expressed how HB 5 has provided counselors with the authority to help guide students decision making process because HB 5 has made “kids pay more attention, made their parents pay more attention and then take these classes more seriously. And not only that, but challenge themselves.” Andrea, like Oscar, also placed a lot of the success of HB 5 on parent involvement and community expectations. Andrea provides the following example:

Here, we have really smart kids that don't believe that they're smart. I have to convince them that they are. You know, because they come from homes where no one's gone to college. So they'll tell me, “No, Ms., I'm just gonna take regular.” And then I look at their grades, I'm like, “No, you're not. Like, you're gonna go into an advanced course.” “No!” And then they'll tell me, “No Ms., I'm scared, I'm scared I'm gonna fail.” And then I tell them, “Well, then if you're scared you're gonna fail you're gonna work at

7/11.” But I do, I think in a community like this...It’s a, it’s very beneficial for our students.

Oscar, who’s also a counselor at the same school as Andrea, describes his experience with those parents who are involved with the HB 5 pathway selection process. He states:

The student will want to pursue a particular pathway and the parent will say, “No, No, no, no, no. This is what you need to pursue instead. No more music classes for you, you have a talent in math and science, I want you to pursue something in the STEM program.” So, there’s that complexity to it. And that skews a little bit, I think, what House Bill 5 is trying to do, ‘cause, you know, if you ask a child honestly what he or she would like to do, they’d give you an answer and the parents’ ideas can vary quite a bit from what the child wants to try and explore.

For Rebekah, who needed more time to decide if the law was accomplishing its intended goals, she needed more quantitative data before deciding. She explained:

“I think that once we go through the first group of, of our seniors, and someone has to track them and see, you know, after going through these 4 years of this new plan with the endorsements and the new graduation plans, and they went to college, you know, did this, everything that we’ve done for them these four years, is that where they went? Did we do the right thing? Or are we missing something?” Uh...the kids that we say are not college-bound, are they going to technical schools or getting an Associate’s degree? And, and our bright kids or are all the students that selected endorsements, did they register? Did they, uh, go to college and, continue the path that they said they were following in high school?

Although Patrick stated that he did not believe HB 5 was working, personally he believed that House Bill 5 was a good idea but short-lived. He faults limited government guidelines as a reason for his opinion. For example:

Since the state didn't come out and talk to districts, giving them specific guidelines, how are they gonna fund this, how it's gonna be rolled over from year to year and what are the changes...in education, everybody wants to put a Band-Aid on something. There's 1100 school districts in Texas, so how do you work and make sure all 1100 are on the same thing? It's communication.

Patrick does provide a possible answer:

“To accomplish House Bill 5, they need more money, more availability, more pathways and, uh, be able to work through the district, but as a taxpayer, I'd hate to see my taxes go up again.”

HB 5 Teachers. All three counselors agreed that HB 5 was accomplishing its intended goals. The idea of having dialogues with local community colleges and universities over math and English expectations was invaluable. Adam stated:

I think one of the ways is, it's, well, for me, anyway, getting to meet with the folks that we can maintain, with the folks with the community, having somewhat of a relationship with the folks from the university. You know that's a, that's successful, you know, that's getting me information I can use, um, so I see that as a strength. And our kids are, more prepared. I think the kids are more prepared as a result of the House Bill 5 course.

Adam had stated that prior to the law, there would not have been any need for dialogue to occur between high school and post-secondary institutions. Claudia mentioned the law was doing what

it was supposed to do by decreasing the number of students taking remedial math in college and making students stronger in math.

4.4 HB 5 Communication

The final sub-question was: How do the educational actors involved disseminate HB 5 information to students and families? To answer this question, the following two questions were asked of participants:

6. How have you/the school engage parents regarding HB 5?
 - a. What difficulties have you encountered in engaging parents?
7. What resources have you used to share the information with families?

4.4.1 Parent Engagement and Resources

Principals. All principals relied on district staff to help create a standardized personal graduation plan handout that highlighted each high school's strongest programs and included top pathway programs from other high schools within the district. This is standard practice since the district is open enrollment. These personal graduation plans are distributed to eighth grade students and parents at what are known as HB 5 Nights. These events are held at each high school during different days to allow parents the chance to visit as many high schools and programs as possible. These events are held in a bilingual setting along with printed material in both English and Spanish. If parents are unable to attend, the district provides access to each schools HB 5 Nights online and is accessible at any time. All principals acknowledged that although this type of standardized presentation format is acceptable, it is not enough to help students and parents become educated on HB 5. Iris shares that "It's not enough. They don't understand, they have a hard time and they're like, "We don't get it," and "Where's, what does this mean?" For Fred who acknowledged that "no one even clicks to view the presentation on-line," he also believed that

his high school and district are not doing enough to communicate effectively. Charlie concedes that even the previous 4 or 5 years, they have not done a lot to communicate with parents except to have one HB 5 Night sessions.

When analyzing the difficulties in engaging parents, the principals realized that they could communicate better. Fred was quick to realize that he had no difficulties in engaging parents “Cause, we don’t engage them. We have, uh, one meeting a year put on by the district and that’s it.” As for what resources were provided to parents regarding HB 5 information, they shared the following: HB 5 meetings, campus HB 5 pathway brochures, newsletters and presentations on the web. The principals felt that even though information in both English and Spanish were provided it was not adequate. For Iris, it meant more prior education was needed to help students and parents make a more informed decision: “If we don’t sit down and really explain it to them, they have a hard time with it. So they, they need a little bit more of that one-on-one.”

Counselors. Since parent engagement is required by the mandate, high school counselors rely on middle school counselors to inform students on available pathways according to each feeder high school. Maria stated that schools relied on the district to produce a common House Bill 5 brochure that contains information on pathways specific to each high school within the district. Counselors stated that middle school parents and students were then asked to attend House Bill 5 Nights at the feeder high school. The problem was getting parents and students to attend these meetings. Rebekah describes the challenges with this reality:

We had House Bill 5 Night in January and we brought in all the parents or we tried to bring all the parents from the middle school ‘because we only have one middle school

feeding this campus. There's about 400 eight-graders, incoming eighth-graders, and only half showed up.

For those parents and students that do not show up and failed to sign the personal graduation plans at the event, Patrick claims that they focus on those students during freshmen orientation. If parents and or students wanted to see the event, they could view it online.

As for the difficulties in engaging parents, most counselors felt that having more House Bill 5 Nights was necessary and at different times since parents do not work 8-5 time frame. As Oscar notes:

The difficulty sometimes is getting parents out to these events because it's hard, it's nighttime and they've worked all day, or sometimes they work in night, their schedule won't allow for it, uh...I think we even tried during the daytime but the audience there primarily was just students as opposed to the parents. So we try to repeat presentations to catch as many parents as we can.

On the hand, Andrea who works at the same school as Oscar mentioned no difficulties in engaging parents. She states:

"I think that I was very surprised at actually the turn out, of all the parents that came. Because once we said it has to do with their graduation, it's going to affect their graduation and what is on their schedule, I think parents pretty much knew, you know, understood that it was important.

What Andrea does indicate as a challenge involves parent signatures on the personal graduation plans if students choose to change pathways after the initial signature. She mentions that getting parents to come back to the school just so that a student can change their pathway, that's a little

difficult, “I won’t let the kids take my...endorsement cards because I’ll never see it again. So I tell them “No, your parents have to come in.” So that’s the challenge.

Regarding resources to share House Bill 5 information, counselors relied on school district call-outs to parents to inform them about House Bill 5. The only problem with phone calls is that it assumes that phone contact information is correct. Patrick also mentioned that the call-out system does not apply to out-of-area phone numbers which might cause some information to not get across. For Maria, the use of social media was also very important in informing parents: “so we try to do a lot of technology, we do have a Twitter account, Facebook, everything available, social media to alert them in both Spanish and English.” Andrea and Oscar also described the district House Bill 5 handout as the Personal Graduation Plan document. This paper document, written in Spanish and English, contains endorsement and pathway information unique to each high plus it includes other programs from inter-district high schools. Andrea believed that if students are set to attend a different program not offered at their feeder high school, they are allowed to apply to other inter-district school programs. The only problem is that parents would have to provide transportation.

HB Teachers. All three teachers really did not have a direct role in engaging parents on HB 5 except through common parent involved assignments or student behavior issues through phone conversation. Claudia did mention that the district, via school counselors, had sent a letter to the parents informing them that their child does qualify to enroll in the HB 5 course. This letter also explains to students and parents the benefits of enrolling and successfully completing the course. They also noted that the only official paper resource that gets to parents from the course is the syllabus that students use. Adam noted that when they have the HB 5 Nights, teachers are not

invited to attend those meetings and did not know what information or resource parents are getting. To get a better sense of the parent contact and experience, Claudia describes:

Uh, the difficulties, I have called parents and some of 'em do react positive and they do encourage their students to stay. Because, like I said, they don't think or they don't wanna ruin their GPA their senior year, because they don't need it, it's not, it's a local credit that they're getting, it not counting for their degree so they don't see the purpose for it.

Adam shares a similar experience with parents:

The parents of, my House Bill 5 kids, the parents are very, whenever we have parent nights, they show up. You know, they're, they're not the kinds of parents who are just kind of, you know, show up for graduation, hahaha, you know. They take an interest in what their kids are doing and they actually show up. In my House Bill 5 class, all those parents are pretty neat people, you know, they do show up and their kids are generally doing very well in other classes as well.

4.5 Conclusion

I addressed the realities of principals, counselors and teachers who experienced implementing House Bill 5 during the past two years. Data to answer the research question were garnered through semi structured interviews involving 11 participants, who all self-identified as either principal, counselor or teacher involved in HB 5. Chapter 5 offers a discussion of data findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V: Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine how administrators, counselors, and teachers implement HB 5 in a far-west Texas school district. HB 5 promises to help all students become college and career ready by the expansion of curriculum options for students, the reduction of standardized testing, and the enhancement of school accountability (Texas Education Agency, 2014a). HB 5 as a policy seeks to improve the opportunities for students in Texas but there are also some important considerations of HB 5. Foremost, HB 5 is a policy that was implemented without the usual funding that accompanies major education reform. In fact, HB 5 received absolutely no funding but as stated above, was supported by a bipartisan House. As a result of this lack of funding, school districts were responsible for implementing HB 5 successfully without typical guidelines. I recognized the relevance of such kind of policymaking and wanted to explore how this was being implemented in this Far-west Texas region.

I was introduced to HB policy as a college and career readiness coordinator during my time at a central school district around the Austin, Texas metro area. I was involved in implementing HB 5 during its inaugural year. The following year, I moved to a Far-west Texas school district where I continued to implement the law. By this time, I had seen potential of HB 5 to help students but I was interested in the issues of implementing a policy with no funding especially in a region where students face unique challenges.

5.1 Discussion

Research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with eleven total participants. This summary reviews, analyzes and presents the implications of the findings which deal with how schools address and implement HB5 along with the realities associated with

policy implementation. Interviewees contributed data to the questions which resulted in the following emergence of themes associated with the study.

5.1.1 School Feedback

This section addresses how the outputs of HB 5 policy are actually being implemented by those educational agents who are tasked with this process. As this research recomunicates the outputs of the law within the environment, the political system gets an opportunity to modify its behavior through this feedback. This process allows the system to continue in a never-ending cycle and thus becomes a stable political system (Easton, 1965). The following themes immersed from this part of the political system.

Personal Fulfillment

To get to a deeper understanding of how participants viewed HB 5 implementation regarding their personal motivation, they found it was part of their life purpose to work within education. Participants in this study expressed a desire to be in the education field either following employment in the private sector or directly starting within education following college graduation. The feeling of being involved with students and being part of a larger purpose helped bring about a sense of personal fulfillment for the participants. This drive is what helps participants face the challenges within education to include helping turn around schools. As Fred stated, “I never thought I would get the principal position but I got that school. And I actually stayed there for 5 or 6 years and that school moved from being one of the lowest to one of the highest performing schools.” For Oscar, he found working several years in a successful business was not as satisfying. He became self-aware of a deeper desire to impact the greater good and found that calling to be education. For Maria, implementing the experience of HB 5 at her current school represents one of the main reasons she is an educator. Working in the private

sector as a journalist, she would research and report on education topics but always wanted to improve what she saw as low community expectations. Part of this personal fulfillment is to work with underserved communities. Participants see the connection between helping expose students to different options regarding college and career readiness with their desire to give back and support students make the best decisions. While the general sense is that teaching is a calling and that teachers have a holistic view on the importance of the profession, this strongly supported the notion that these teachers were invested in the success of their students. It is also evident that many of these teachers have grown up in the region and understand the possible challenges with being college and career ready. Thus, leading them to implement HB 5 through their own reality of past experiences and making better decisions for their students.

Uniform Implementation

Within institutions, there exists a set of formal and informal procedures that can be used to help or hinder aspects of school life. These realities have its roots in historical, social and legal precedent. However, there are also issues of systemic or institutional racism and prejudice that serve to hinder success. Such may be the case of many minority groups. Prior to HB 5, the process of allowing placement of students in certain pathways based on consent from student and parent was not really followed. Prior research indicates that often times Latinos were tracked into vocational or lower ability coursework than their white peers (Meier & Steward, 1991; Crips, Taggart, & Nora, 2015). However, through this study, uniform implementation of student placement was evident through the shared decision-making meetings between counselors or other administrators, the student, and parent.

Educational agents would wait for the school district to set dates for feeder pattern school HB 5 Info Night meetings. These Info Night meetings help students and parents understand the

college and career pathway they are intending to be placed in and the benefits it provides while looking at student data and analysis to make the right decision. These sessions were done in both Spanish and English to accommodate the community. HB 5 Info Nights were not simply information but also had endorsement tours of all possibly programs of study for 8th grade students to make the best informed decision regarding endorsement selection. In fact, these breakout sessions had hand-on activities for not just students but parents as well. These sessions were aimed with the intent that most in attendance were 1st generation students whose family lacked the additional knowledge of HB 5 policy and its possible impact on students' future college and career planning. Following multiple breakout sessions within the information nights, both student and parent/s would have time to discuss the presentation and breakout sessions and fill out a personal graduation plan. The plan contained different endorsement options and pathways available to students at each feeder high school along with possible certifications and licensures. If students and parents needed more time to discuss endorsement and pathway selection, then they would schedule appointments with counselors at a convenient time.

HB 5 potentially offers a remedy to address some of the barriers that have been built into a system that have impacted minority groups. Charlie summarized the general consensus of the participants, "I think that's basically the biggest thing, it gives the kids opportunities, it gives them choices. It gives them choices to go to the army, it gives them choices to create their own business, because it really might prepare kids that might not go to college to actually do well in life." But it also built a strong connection to the parents who were made part of the education process from inside, instead of being informed of decisions after. In other words, parents were brought into the fold to explain the nuance of HB 5 and how it could help to engage their child. All participants were told by policymakers and media that Texas HB 5 was to help students

formalize a college or career pathway and to also incorporate desired workforce skills to benefit the local community.

Unintended Consequences

With advanced knowledge, administrators recognized that they would need a different caliber educator. Consequently, administrators changed their hiring practices to seek candidates with more credentials and also help those teachers with no desire to grow professionally to retire. This adaptation to address a new mandate through changing the hiring practices and teaching culture is part of having a successful reform occur (Sarason, 1996; Ancess, 2000). This result has significant implications on the hiring practices of new teachers. Principals now have greater demands of and higher expectations for incoming staff due to the needs of pathways with endorsements and required credentialing of teachers expressed by counselor feedback during master schedule discussions. Iris sums up the administrator experience,

So when you have a teacher who's been doing home economics for 20 years and we're, like, we know we need to revamp, we need to change, you know, we gotta go with the 21st century, she can't teach anything else. So that's the situation right now that we're stuck in. And so, we're looking at where we can get her certified in other areas.

The importance of administrators finding teachers with more certifications allows them to place teachers in areas of greater demand along certain popular pathways. Since each high school within District Horizon has a specialty endorsement program, administrators know how to prepare for a possible increase in student enrollment. This is important to the community since students would deem a rejection of their intended program choice as negative and possibly lead to endorsement dissatisfaction. Knowing this possible reaction from students and parents, administrators view hiring practices as important to stem this negative outcome.

Challenging administrators is also current teacher non-interest with HB 5. With implied educational trainings and a push for current teachers to get additional certifications, administrators face some resistance to these initiatives. Some responses from teachers to this type of new credentialing resulted in several early retirees. This helped open up new full time teaching positions with better credentialed employees but also cut some programs from existence within the campus. In fact, one campus had to cut a popular pathway since the only teacher who could teach architecture retired mid-year and no other replacement could be found. This led to students being moved out of the endorsement and placed in a second option of their choice.

Funding Challenges

Participants also expressed the reality that schools were not adequately staffed to meet the demands of growing pathways. One of the drawbacks of an unfunded policy was the lack of adequate staffing to support HB5 initiatives. Counselors, tasked with placing students in desired pathways along with meeting classroom size restrictions experienced the most frustration with HB endorsements. Maria describes a common experience for counselors, “I just had that happen last week where a teacher was like, “Well, here’s a list of the kids that are in yearbook. We’re like, “Well yes, we understand, but because you’re an endorsement now, we can’t do that. You have to take everybody.” Pairing students with desired courses and correct course sequences were difficult due to limited staff and classroom limitations. They would like to place more students in desired pathways, but since schools have limited funding, they can't expand certain population pathway programs. This challenge allowed more dialogue between administrators and counselors to problem solve regarding staffing schedule and the decision to either expand individual pathways or eliminate ones currently offered. Prior to HB 5, counselors noted some interaction and feedback regarding master schedule teacher development. With HB 5

implementation, counselors have been more involved with master schedule involvement since they are aware of the circumstances regarding student demand and teacher supply of pathway selections. Since HB 5 endorsements have multiple pathways, and certain limits are placed on school size from the state, counselors can predetermine where issues will arise as classes are viewed in cohort form rather than simple class registration. With HB 5 information sessions taking place during the 8th grade year, counselors will know which programs to limit entering freshmen based on future staff need and student request. Funding challenges place a strain on certain programs by schools not being able to fill pathways based on one teacher only.

Bridge Program

Participants described how district policy to have all students graduate with an endorsement would not only benefit the student but would also help students attain certain desired workforce certifications to help them with direct employment following graduation. This type of policy acknowledgement along with personal fulfillment from being an educator, staff understand their role as gatekeepers of this knowledge. This revelation helps teachers connect HB 5 policy, with implementation and the possible impact on guiding students towards a career and college pathway.

Students rely on teachers and the education system to provide them with correct information to make informed decisions about college and career readiness. Therefore, viewing this policy through the lens of helping a first generation student helps break down the perception that these students do not receive adequate support. Participants expressed a desire to inform students of the various options afforded to them either under the endorsements or distinct pathways created under each high school. Participants described this process as a “bridge” to get students ready for either college or career or both. The key to the success of this bridge is that

students have the knowledge to know what possible careers align with their interest and matching that potential career with a pathway under one of five HB 5 endorsements through parent and counselor shared decision making meetings. Helping students bridge a connection between high school and post-secondary success is what helped several participants make a career decision. Participants really expressed either a desire to help students make right decisions as they had the same guidance in high school or they reflected something that they never experienced and wanted to change student outcomes. Participants had a common experience like the students they serve and they wanted to help students through the options available to them under HB 5.

5.1.2 School Implementation

Stability

Participants described the districts role in compliance regarding the main objectives of HB 5 (curriculum options, assessment, and accountability) as satisfactory. Principals were pleased that each of their high schools offered all five endorsements and each had a sort of specialty that was only available at their school. This became an attractive recruiting tool for students as the district is an open enrollment district. The school district provided each school with specialized power points, parent handouts and student fliers that discussed HB 5. In fact, school district staff were taking initiative to provide each principal with options regarding HB 5. Charlie established the common experience of administrators as:

They are giving us ideas on how we can better utilize people, they're guiding us, they are coming around and saying "Okay, what pathways do you have? Are they popular? Do you need to have all these pathways?"

Staff members rely on stability from the district since they deal with an ever changing experience when dealing with HB 5 as each grade level moves up. This is difficult since each counselor has to determine how many students within each cohort will need to take the final sequence of courses their senior year in order to comply with HB 5. This presents a common challenge among all schools since a final course sequence must be taught by a qualified teacher and one is accurately credentialed to teach that course. As teachers are made aware of the importance of HB 5 and how they play a role in helping students complete a pathway within an endorsement, they become part of the larger fabric of the school. This pressure of being part of a team in this community helps teachers become more loyal to the school and thus feel a sense of ownership to each other and the community at large. In fact, teachers and counselors like that they all receive the same information and support from district office to help implement HB 5 effectively. Providing teachers, counselors and administrators with a sense of stability in implementing an unfunded state mandate can help ease the transition when other state policies are introduced.

Lack of Training

Administrators described one of the challenges when implementing HB 5 is the lack of training received from district and or state officials. This reveals itself when counselors are unaware in how staffing needs and student placement need to be in unison. This goes to a deeper question regarding the training that counselors get when conducting student registrations and knowing which classes have special state requirements while at the same time staying within the limits of class schedules. Administrators expressed the need for counselors to have prior training when it comes to scheduling students and understanding have HB 5 students. One example expressed by an administrator is the need for counselors to understand how student cohorts are important not just for current class planning but for future master schedule needs. HB 5 exposed

the need for counselors to know how to be able to anticipate student schedules with current or future staffing needs. For administrators, the fact that a basic skill like counselors knowing how to register students for the next coming year while staying in compliance should be know. However, not all counselors have the same training and experience. Not only does this show how the district can improve HB 5 through better training but having a consistent expectation among counselors is a must.

Teacher Engagement

There were two distinct patterns that emerged within the research that addressed teacher responses towards HB 5. The first pattern that emerged was the reality of a college going culture found in a school prior to HB 5 implementation. Charlie become the new administrator of a high school campus in year three of HB 5 implementation. He described the common challenge of finding new teachers to help teach certain specific courses that would allow students to complete a sequence for a pathway. He recalls sharing specific data with teacher leaders about how certain programs would benefit students through programs. These programs had specific courses that required additional training during the summer for several weeks.

This meant that staff members would not only give up 2 weeks in the summer but would also need to bring back what was taught and shared with the school as well. Charlie felt hesitation when asking his staff for volunteers but was surprised with the response from teachers. One response that was common was teachers stating “if this is good for the kids, it’s good for the school, then yes, we will attend.” Having a college going culture where teachers are reflective of their past and understand the bridge students need to succeed in the future, helps make policy implementation a bit easier.

On the other side, a not so positive pattern emerged. Oscar described the challenges that he had with teachers as they did not see the need for continued educational training to increase student pathway selection. In fact, at one school, it was common for teachers to notify the principal that they were going to retire mid-year or at the end of the year due to additional training required for HB 5. This puts the importance of students graduating on-time with the correct sequence of courses if the pathway is built around one or two teachers. Again, this exposes the lack of funding in providing administrators with more funds to expand programs and not rely on one-teacher for program success. This school also showed of teacher involvement with the same student demographics and social economic status as the school with a more college going culture. This challenge would also explain why counselors where having a hard time with student schedules if they knew certain teachers were going to retire or not return the following year.

5.1.3 Compliance

Shared Decision Making

HB5 also presented some issues with how it would be managed within the school and how to address accountability. HB5 placed the responsibility of management and being accountable on the district and with individual schools. In this study, all participants were required to take on greater duties while maintaining current work standards. Participants stated that overall management and accountability for implementing HB 5 was shared decision making between both district and individual school personal. A sense of ownership was implied. Administrators believed that their efforts to manage HB 5 was based on current teachers they had on campus and any decision to move towards expanding a new pathway within an endorsement would be limited based on teacher certifications. This allowed discussed to happen at the district

level for either financial support in adding more moneys for additional staff or other options. Also, administrators believed that Texas HB 5 allowed them to redirect the focus of the school regarding improving current pathways and branching out into new areas of interest with support from district and business leaders. HB 5 allowed trade and community members to be involved with the development and improvement of courses aligned to business expectations through quarterly meeting either at the district or school level. More evidence of business involvement helps administrators push teachers towards more problem-based learning to build the career readiness of students. Iris summarized the general consensus of participants:

I think it was more towards who you cater to, it's based on, okay, these are the teachers you have on your campus, these are their certs so that's how you're gonna go. And so, okay kids "These are your choices," based on their certs. But I've shifted to where, really it's gotta be geared towards what business people are wanting.

Limited Parent Knowledge

HB 5 helps parents and students become socialized to the aspects of college at a young age. In fact, the law mandates for individual staff to talk with all students and inform parents of planning for college and postsecondary success beginning in kindergarten and ending in 12th grade. In this case, the process is in the form of letters sent home to parents, phone calls, HB 5 pamphlets, and parent-teacher-counselor meetings. All of these were centralized at the district level to ensure compliance and common standards among all schools. This type of communication was also done in English and Spanish to meet guidelines. Additionally, participants in the study expressed how HB 5 provided them with the authority to help guide students' college and career decision making process. It was common for a student to decide on one pathway and at the same time, a parent would decide a separate pathway for the student.

Thus, the law mandating school personal communicate the importance of planning for college and career readiness would help parent and students come up with a common solution and not so much conflicting. As parents become aware of the benefits regarding college and post-secondary options, this helps increase the knowledge of parents to feel confident to select a path that is in their child's best interest. This allows parents to better reflect responsibility when it comes to these important decisions rather than relying on school officials to make life changing decisions like HB 5.

5.1.4 Communication

Engagement Challenges

With HB5 becoming law in 2013, it became necessary to disseminate the criteria and expectations to the educational actors involved in its implementation. Each agent was given instructions but of concern was whether or not, key details were included or absent. Although participants stated that HB 5 Nights were a way to get information out to parents and students, they noted it was not enough. Many believed that students and parents needed to become more informed with the basic understanding of pathways and college/career decision making as early as elementary and early middle school. HB 5 does mandate counselors communicate the importance of college and career readiness with each student and parent from elementary through junior high; however, this is year three of implementation. One reason for parental engagement challenges is the belief that parent involvement during high school is very limited compared to more involvement of parents during elementary and middle school.

This study also revealed that very limited to no communication (written, email or phone calls) had taken place in engaging parents and students on the basic premise of HB 5. Some participants at the high school noted that it was not their fault but that of the middle school

counselors for not doing their part in educating their students on college readiness and pathways. Also, relying on middle school staff to highlight and answer the intricacies of high school pathways and credits was not always effective. Currently, there is no systematic training at the district for middle school counselors to learn more about HB 5 and the pathways of feeder high schools. Administrators stated that they had not done an adequate job of informing parents throughout the years.

Currently, one of the accountability dimensions within HB 5 includes a parent and community engagement piece which measures the level of access, involvement and communication a school and district have with the community. Educating parents as early as the 8th grade on college and postsecondary activities increases the prospects for completing college which is one of the reasons for parent engagement in HB 5. Secondly, since HB 5 is in its third year of implementation (school year 2016-17), the level of interest and participation has not impacted the administration because they have not dealt with the scheduling challenges of next year's graduating seniors under HB 5. For high school counselors, they communicate with parents and get the necessary forms from incoming freshmen to be in compliance; however, they rely on district staff and middle school counselors to truly get the word out on HB 5.

5.2 Recommendations

The research findings from this study can be used to assist policymakers, institutions of higher learning, school district leadership, principals, counselors, and teachers who provide educational services to students. The findings of this study point to seven recommendations for addressing and improving the implementation of HB 5 in schools. The following recommendations are:

1. Policy makers need to consider expanding the endorsement section of the personal graduation plan to the middle school or junior high level. Not only would this plan help students and parents become more familiarized with the intricacies and impact of future career/college planning but it would also create more curriculum alignment with feeder high schools. In fact, grades, attendance patterns and engagement during middle school are the strongest predictors of high school graduation and college-going patterns. Providing parents and students with a similar endorsement selection plan might provide greater awareness and discussion leading towards better alignment of student values and post-secondary selection and success.
2. Policy makers need to consider adding additional funding to school districts with the purpose of hiring more career and technical education credentialed teachers and consider temporary grant programs to help teachers get additional certifications (career and technology/dual credit). The purpose in additional funding is to reinforce current pathways and help develop new ones. Also, additional funds need to be considered to help hire more counselors with the intent of being strictly HB 5 college and career counselors.
3. Institutions of higher learning should include more career and technical education certification training to local school districts and have it become part of teacher certification programs. However, selecting which certification programs depends on local feedback and funding.
4. School district personnel need to facilitate more communication with local business, industry and post-secondary leaders to help shape a more focused college and career ready community. Collaboration with local business, industry, and post-secondary

providers, through quarterly meetings or conferences, can contribute to improving current pathway programs and lead to new pathways development.

5. Principals need to consider teacher education workshops, during profession development days, on HB 5 endorsements and paths to encourage greater understanding and build faculty support. They should also look at implementing certain aspects of HB 5 college preparation courses within regular high school courses to increase academic rigor. Principals should consider new hiring practices to get qualified teachers with multiple certifications to help expand and grow pathway programs.
6. Counselors should continue to dialogue with students and parents while guiding them through the HB 5 process until successful graduation. Counselors need to be part of the teacher hiring process and master schedule planning to ensure pathways are fully utilized and developed. Counselor duties should be reevaluated to allow for proper guidance regarding college readiness. Counselors and principals should work on a yearly calendar that lays out the college readiness plan for each grade level including assigned roles and outside contacts.
7. Teachers should consider partnering with local institutions of higher learning to share best practices on building student college expectations and curriculum development to help increase college readiness scores. Meeting times and cohesive goal setting would be required to implement this recommendation.

5.3 Future Research

This study presented data describing the realities of implementing Texas HB 5 in a far-west Texas borderland community. This research sought to describe the experience of principals,

counselors, and teachers who are mandated to implement this policy. Additional research is needed to:

1. Study the perceptions and experience of middle school principals, counselors and teachers to explore the challenges of getting students prepared for pathway decisions leading to high school enrollment.
2. Study the perceptions and experience of current high school juniors as they are the first cohort to fall under House Bill 5 graduation requirements.
3. Explore the direct to college enrollment rate of HB 5 cohorts and compare with non-HB 5 cohorts.
4. Replicate this study in other areas of the state and focus on more affluent school districts with different ethnic populations.
5. Explore the impact of HB 5 education on parents from middle school through high school.
6. Study college and career decision-making impact on parents and students regarding HB 5: Section 30. (a) §33.007 (a) and (b).
7. Explore the sustainability of the current state of HB 5 and if it can expand without funding.
8. Study HB 5 district expectations of high schools and what type of benchmarks would indicate progress with implementation.

5.4 Summary

My original aim was to address what I saw as inequities within the school system in far west Texas as HB 5 was being implemented. At the time, HB 5 was not yet a policy but was a public issue. I became aware of the HB 5 and its objectives to aid students while working for a

school district in central Texas where I had almost immediate updates and training workshops on understanding HB 5 and its potential impact. Proximity to the state capital and all surrounding educational agencies, which play a vital role in helping guide school districts with education policy, was key to my development in understanding the law.

This research, being conducted away from the political center of Austin, Texas, further engaged my interest in observing how state education policy would be implemented. Easton helps us understand how the implementation of HB 5 can be analyzed through the model of a political system. This model provides the guidance needed to see how outcomes interact with the stresses and crisis arising from the environment. The results indicate that a form of recommunication is taking place at the local level that would provide feedback to the political system. This system must maintain a sense of resilience to respond to feedback and adjust. Feedback from HB 5 implementation can be viewed either negatively or can be seen as goal-transforming. It's these results that make the political system more dynamic and purposeful. If the political system does not take in feedback then it is likely to lose support.

Furthermore, I was also curious to know the role that HB 5 could play in aiding student college and career decision making. This information would be important for those authorities under the political system to allocate some type of value to this demand and consider any further action. The research presented feedback to indicate HB 5 is being implemented and helps aid students' college and career decision making by:

- 1) helping students become academically prepared for college/career options through career and college pathway options,
- 2) helping students adjust to change by increasing college/career knowledge,

- 3) by connecting family decision making with school guidance, students are exposed to learning lessons of value towards academic/career achievement, and
- 4) links higher education with meaningful employment and creates a fit between a student's value system and academic environment.

In fact, data also revealed that HB 5 changed the scope of what accountability means. Texas legislators, parents, and media recognized the negative aspect of high-stakes testing. HB 5 is a way to redress the testing while at the same time takes into consideration the needs of the state.

5.4.1 The School Experience

Effective policy implementation reveals that substantive and lasting change must transform current school practices and simple not be seen as an add-on (Fullan, 2001; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; 2006). In fact, changes require teachers to reflect deeply on the changes that are made, and to incorporate these changes into their beliefs about schools and their understanding about the culture of their school (McLeskey & Waldron, 2006; Borko, 2004; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Sarason, 1996). Thus, the implementation of HB5 is most felt at the school level. This study revealed the personal experiences of teachers, counselors, and administrators as they implemented this mandate and experienced themes like: shared decision making, data sharing and analysis, and joint problem solving that leads to higher levels of trust and respect among colleagues, improved professional satisfaction, better outcomes for all students, and school change that is maintained over time (Fisher & Frey, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 1995, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

However, initial reaction to HB5 ranged from concerns that it will hurt minority students to business community members saying Texas had taken a step back regarding college readiness. A study by the University of Texas at Austin Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis

found that "HB 5 might lead school counselors to set minority students on a less rigorous degree plan designed for students who do not want to go to college...because school administrators often have low academic expectations for poor black students" (Serrano, 2013). Some business members sounded the alarm that passing HB 5 would set Texas back regarding college and career ready standards:

“Over the last decade, Texas lawmakers have admirably ramped up the state’s preparation of students for college. National organizations have praised Texas' efforts to get students ready for college. Through several major pieces of legislation, the state is known for its clear college- and career-readiness standards. But SB 1724, along with SB 3 and HB 5, would reverse that progress. They would do so by reducing the rigor students need to graduate” (McKenzie, 2013).

Interviewee responses revealed a surprising number of informal decisions to promote the success of HB 5 cautiously. Over time, these respondents painted a vibrant picture of the ways they were able to navigate the system that allowed for success. Participants shared evidence of stability and peer support regarding HB 5 implementation. These factors are believed to be examples of successful system reform policy (Payne, 2008).

The concerns addressed by interviewees dealt more with local administrative issues such as hiring teachers to increase student pathway options to encouraging a small portion of the student population who had not bought into the new graduation plan. Oscar, a counselor, confirms:

I wanna say, I wanna say...a good 80-85% of our students are okay committing to a particular pathway and seeing it out. Um...the rest, it’s hard for them to have a buy-in sometimes to these pathways. Yeah. Would they rather be taking, you know, other

electives that are not career technology orientated or other, uh, extracurricular activities that are also local credits that they wanna explore but sometimes, you know, this isn't a priority, so I'll have to put this in your schedule, everything else is gonna have to wait kinda.

Ultimately, Texas HB 5 provides the structure and guidance schools need to streamline a successful pathway where students are exposed to several pre-college dispositions needed to pursue a post-secondary opportunity. Successful implementation of this mandate will also be critical towards showing real campus performance as the Texas legislature looks towards measuring schools and districts on the percentage of students who graduate college and career ready beginning the academic year 2017.

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Appendix A

Texas Education Reform Guide

Legislative Session	Year	Legislative Bill Name	Description
64 th	1975	House Bill 1126	Elementary bilingual education required, study of school funding mandated
65 th	1977	Senate Bill 1	Education funding is revised, teacher salaries are increased
66 th	1979	Senate Bill 350	Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABs) created to test student basic competency, pupil funding is increased
66 th	1979	House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 90	Study of Texas public school curriculum is requested
67 th	1981	<i>U.S. vs. Texas</i>	District Court requires Texas to implement bilingual education and English as a second language programs for all limited-English-proficient (LEP) pupils, Texas Governor appoints Bilingual Education Task Force
67 th	1981	Senate Bill 477	Mandates bilingual education in K-6 th grade and ESL at the secondary
68 th	1983	House Bill 246	State uniform curriculum and essential elements (EE's) established for K-12 grades
68 th	1984	House Bill 72	Education reform includes: exit testing for diploma, no pass-no play, equalization of funding, district performance reports, teacher testing (TECAT), replaced student assessment known as TABs with Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), development of a system to monitor student accountability (Academic Excellence Indicator System)
70 th	1987	House Bill 1010	Legislation requires the counting and reporting of dropouts
	1992	Senate Bill 350	Texas Supreme Court rules SB 350 provisions in school funding are unconstitutional
73 rd	1993	Senate Bill 7	New accountability system used to assess Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), which replaces TABs
75 th	1997	House Bill 588	Texas "Ten % Plan" passed which allows for automatic admissions into Texas funded institutions of higher education
	1997		New statewide curriculum known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) developed to reflect higher expectations for students, TEKS replaces EE's
76 th	1999	Senate Bill 103	New statewide testing program known as Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is developed which replaces TAAS
77 TH	2001	Senate Bill 218	Establishes nation's first public school fiscal accountability system
79 th	2005	Executive Order RP53	Executive order to increase college readiness standards and develop end-of-course(EOC) assessments to replace TAKS
80 th	2007	Senate Bill 1031	College Career Readiness Standards adopted and incorporated into TEKS, EOC replace TAKS student assessment instrument
Adopted from "A Historical Summary of Major Texas Education Reforms" (2004) by Intercultural Development Research Association. San Antonio, TX.			

Appendix B

College Readiness Definitions according to ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2014/glossary.pdf

STAAR % at Postsecondary Readiness Standard (Two or More Subjects): STAAR % at Postsecondary Readiness Standard. This indicator shows the % of students who are sufficiently prepared for postsecondary success by performing at this level on two or more assessments. Note the following: This is the first year this indicator was calculated; only results for 2014 are available. The measure Two or More Subjects. The numerator includes the performance of 1) students who took only one assessment and scored at the post-secondary level or better and 2) students who scored at the post-secondary level or better on two or more assessments. A student who took more than one assessment and did not score at the post-secondary level on at least two of them is not included in the numerator.

This measure was part of determining the score for Index 4.

4 Year Graduation Rate: Based on the 2009-10 cohort, this shows the % who received their high school diploma on time (in four years) or earlier-by August 31, 2013. It is calculated as follows: number of students from the cohort who received a high school diploma by August 31, 2013 divided by the number of students in the 2009-2010 cohort.

College-Ready Graduates (English Language Arts and Math Subjects): To be considered college-ready as defined by this indicator, a graduate must have met or exceeded the college-ready criteria on the TAKS exit-level test, or the SAT test, or the ACT test. The criteria for each are as follows:

Subject	Exit-Level TAKS		SAT		ACT
ELA	≥ 2200 scale score on ELA test AND a "3" or higher on essay	OR	≥ 500 on Critical Reading AND ≥ 1070 Total	OR	≥ 19 on English AND ≥ 23 Composite
MATH	≥ 2200 scale score on mathematics test	OR	≥ 500 on Math AND ≥ 1070 Total	OR	≥ 19 on Math AND ≥ 23 Composite

Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Results (AP/IB): These refer to the results of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) examinations and the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Diploma Program examinations taken by Texas public school students. High school students may take one or more of these examinations, ideally upon completion of AP or IB courses, and may receive advanced placement or credit, or both, upon entering college. Generally, colleges will award credit or advanced placement for scores of 3, 4, or 5 on AP examinations and scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7 on IB examinations. Requirements vary by college and by subject tested. The following two values are calculated for this indicator: (1) Tested. This shows the %age of students in grades 11 and 12 taking at least one AP or IB examination number of grade 11 and 12 students taking at least one AP or IB examination number of grade 11

Appendix B (con't)

and 12 students (2)Examinees \geq Criterion. The %age of examinees with at least one AP or IB score at or above the criterion score (3 on AP or 4 on IB) number of grade 11 and 12 examinees with at least one score at or above criterion number of grade 11 and 12 students taking at least one AP or IB examination. This indicator was used in determining the 2014 Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation for schools. For a detailed explanation of Distinction Designations, see Chapter 5 November 2014 TAPR Glossary page 4 of the 2014 Accountability Manual. (Sources: The College Board, Aug. 2013, Jan. 2013; The International Baccalaureate Organization, Aug. 2013, Aug. 2012; and PEIMS, Oct. 2013, Oct. 2012)

Average SAT Score: This shows the average score for the SAT critical reading, writing, and mathematics combined. The maximum score is 2400. It is calculated as follows: sum of total scores of all students who took the SAT divided by the number of students who took the SAT.

Graduates Enrolled in TX Institution of Higher Education (IHE): This is the % of students who enroll and begin instruction at a Texas institution of higher education in the school year following high school graduation. The rate is determined as follows: number of graduates during the 2011-12 school year who attended a public or independent college or university in Texas in the 2012-13 academic year number of graduates during the 2011-12 school year divided by the number of graduates during the 2011-12 school year.

Economic Disadvantaged: The %age of economically disadvantaged students is calculated as the sum of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or eligible for other public assistance, divided by the total number of students: number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or other public assistance divided by total number of students.

Appendix C

Questions for All Actors

Research sub-questions include:

- What are the school realities involved within HB 5?

Tiered Questions:

1. How would you describe your educational background?
 - a. How long have you been in education?
2. What is the purpose of HB 5?
 - a. What benefits does HB 5 provide?
8. What frustration or backlash has HB 5 implementation caused among staff/students?
9. What are the weaknesses of HB 5?

- How are schools addressing the main objectives recommended by HB 5?

Tiered Questions:

4. What are the issues with the implementation of HB 5?
 - a. How would HB 5 benefit from funding at this level?
5. What HB 5 policies have been the most difficult to implement and why?

- How is HB 5 accomplished within schools (management and accountability)?

Tiered Questions:

3. What are the ways in which HB 5 policies are being implementing at your school?
10. What are some recommendations you would make for future policy implementation?
11. What are the accomplishments of HB 5?

- How do the educational actors involved disseminate HB 5 information to students and families?

Tiered Questions:

6. How have you/the school engage parents regarding HB 5?
 - a. What difficulties have you encountered in engaging parents?
7. What resources have you used to share the information with families?

Appendix D

Informed Consent for Interview

University of Texas at El Paso Institutional Review Board

Protocol Title: Texas House Bill 5: Reform Realities in a Predominantly Latino School District

Principal Investigator: Tomas Sigala UTEP: Education Leadership and Foundations Department

You are being asked to voluntarily participate in a research study about your experiences with Texas House Bill 5. By participating in this interview, you will be helping us understand the concerns of those educational agents who implement this mandate. You will also help us understand more clearly how state policies are implemented at the district and local level. All data will be collected confidential and will be audio recorded. You will not receive any compensation for participating in this interview. If you feel upset after the interview, contact the UTEP counseling center at (915) 747-5302 or contact the Dissertation Chair, Angus S. Mungal at asmungal@utep.edu.

Participation: Is completely voluntary. You may choose to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any time. If you decide to leave the study, the information you have already provided may be used in data analysis. The content of the interview should cause no discomfort and has no foreseen risks to you as a participant.

Compensation: There is no compensation for completing this interview. This information will be kept confidential in a secure computer web-based interview program.

Confidentiality: Your responses on this interview will in no way be associated with your name, email address, mailing address or any other identifying information. While every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all the information you complete and share, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Texas at El Paso (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Internal Review Board, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study in the event that they need to ensure quality improvement and regulatory functions.

The principal investigator of this study is Tomas Sigala, a Doctoral Candidate in the Educational Leadership and Foundations Department within the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso.

By agreeing to take part in this interview, your consent for participation is inferred. If you do NOT wish to participate in this study, please decline participation by declining this email invitation. The University of Texas at El Paso appreciates the participation of people who help it carry out its function of developing knowledge through research. If you have any questions regarding this study, you are encouraged to email Tomas Sigala at tommysigala@yahoo.com or Dr. Angus Mungal at asmungal@utep.edu or UTEP IRB Coordinator, Christina Ramirez at cramirez22@utep.edu.

Vita

Tomas Sigala was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. He graduated from Socorro High School and enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) in the fall of 1999. He was selected as a Gateway Scholar under the Longhorn Opportunity Scholarship. While at UT Austin, he served as a resident assistant and was part of Alpha Phi Omega and the Texas Blazers organization. During his senior year, Tomas was honored as a Bill Archer Fellow where he interned in Washington D.C. for the Texas Office of State and Federal Relations. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in communication studies from The University of Texas at Austin in 2003. Shortly after that, he began his career as a higher education advocate working for UT Austin as an admissions counselor serving the Dallas/Fort Worth region and west Texas.

Shortly thereafter, he was acceptance to law school but chose to pursue work as a high school educator. During that time, he attended the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and graduated in 2011 with a Master's in Education: Concentration-Higher Education. He was named Outstanding Graduate Student. He later served as the College and Career Readiness Facilitator for several school districts where he helped implement Texas House Bill 5 and garnered a best practice award. Tomas was admitted into the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations-Doctor of Education program, spring 2012 where his research is focused on the realities of implementing HB 5 among border communities. He was recently selected as a Barbara L. Jackson Scholar.

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This dissertation was typed by Tomas Sigala Jr.