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Christine P. Wernle  
*University of New Mexico*

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**THE WAR AGAINST TEACHERS: HOW THE DISCOURSE  
OF A NATION AT RISK SET THE AGENDA FOR  
CONTEMPORARY NEW MEXICO EDUCATION POLICY**

**by**

**CHRISTINE PROBASCO WERNLE**

BA, Psychology, University of New Mexico, 2005  
MA, Elementary Education, University of New Mexico, 2008

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May, 2017**

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the children of New Mexico, particularly in Thoreau and Alamogordo. May we always be mindful of how our actions—in word, deed, and thought—impact your future and well-being.

For Angélica, I carry you with me always.

I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. – Philippians 4:13

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**ABSTRACT**

*A Nation at Risk* (ANAR) represented a paradigm shift in national education policy and public education discourse. This Critical Discourse Analysis utilizing the theoretical framework of Fairclough and Wodak (1997) found five major recurring themes between ANAR, national and state discourse, and NMTEACH (as referenced in the Final Report and Recommendations of the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force, 2011): 1) The Establishment of Pedagogic Authority; 2) The Common-Senseness of Education; 3) Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and the Artificial Support of Teachers; 4) Deracialisation of Educational Policy and Color-Blind Ideology; and 5) The Movement from Symbolic to Physical Violence. This study has uncovered how both public discourse and NMTEACH not only re-discourse the symbolic violence of ANAR, but

how the thematic elements of ANAR are continually reproduced under the guise of “cutting-edge” educational research and policy.

The past three decades of educational reform and policy have created a War Against Teachers, from the federal to the state level. While the stated intentions of policy pieces have had altruistic roots or different intentions, what has ultimately emerged is a symbolically violent war against the profession of teaching, which has dehumanized generations of teachers. Teachers have become the scapegoat of all of the ills of public education, while businesses have greatly profited from the marketization of education and the deskilling of teachers. This hermeneutical and reproductive cycle must be broken in New Mexico and nationally while a new educational paradigm must emerge.



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In New Mexico, there is a general lack of trust that the teachers in public schools are producing desired student outcomes. 2013 was a watershed year for the state of New Mexico, with the crowning of numerous titles of dubious distinction—it became the worst state in which to raise a child (Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2013), the state with the lowest high school graduation rates (Education Week, 2013), the state with the highest percentage of residents living in poverty (US Department of Commerce, 2013), and the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, 2013) stated that no teacher preparation program in New Mexico provided a high-quality student teaching experience. The implications of these findings catalyzed the rapid implementation of a controversial pilot program enacted in regulation, and spearheaded by then Secretary Designate Hanna Skandera of the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED)—called the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System (2013). NMTEACH is designed to measure teacher effectiveness by collecting student achievement data (50% of the formula), observations (25%), and various other measures (25%), which include parent surveys, teacher attendance, student surveys, and graduation rates.

Concurrent to the release of the new evaluation system, traditionally certified teachers in New Mexico entering the profession confronted a novel employment situation in 2013. Upon entering their first professional role as an educator, they were already receiving the blame for the education that they had yet to impart and that they were often a product. As is common throughout New Mexico, new teachers were entering struggling schools serving a large percentage of students growing up in poverty. They did this after graduating from a teacher preparation program that was purportedly found

to be underpreparing them and these teachers were subject to not only school grading, but also a teacher effectiveness evaluation that heavily incorporated the standardized test scores of their students— all for a starting salary of \$31,000-34,000.

In 2016, despite years of major and wide-scale educational reforms led by Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera, New Mexico is still ranking 49<sup>th</sup> in overall child well being (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016), 51<sup>st</sup> in school system quality ratings (WalletHub, 2016), 50<sup>th</sup> with high school dropout rates, and 50<sup>th</sup> with student reading scores (WalletHub, 2016). The Albuquerque Public Schools began school year 2016-2017 with over 100 teaching vacancies (Gregorczyk, 2016) and major New Mexican universities reported fewer teaching candidates entering their teacher education programs (New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee, 2016).

The question must be asked— why are we here and how did we get here?

### **Background of the Study**

In early May 2011, I received an e-mail from the Office of the Governor of New Mexico indicating that I had been nominated to be a member of the Governor’s statewide 15-member Effective Teaching Task Force. Like any hungry graduate student, I was honored by the nomination but confused by the anonymous nomination. I quickly assembled a notarized application packet, which involved a background check and questions asking if any of my published work could be deemed controversial. With no expectations or clear idea of the taskforce’s scope of work, I received a second e-mail six days after I submitted my application that the predetermined number of spots for Albuquerque educators had already been filled.

Throughout summer 2011, the assembled Effective Teaching Task Force met ten times to discuss various issues encompassing New Mexico Pre-K to Higher Education – using value-added models, measuring teacher effectiveness, and pre-service training— amongst others. On August 26, 2011, the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force released their findings, a 51-page document spanning both information and recommendations for the New Mexico Public Education Department. The recommendations of the task force (which will be explored further in this study) include the creation of a school leadership academy, the creation of a superintendent evaluation system, higher standards for teacher education programs, and shifting the advancement in teacher pay schedules to be based on student performance rather than on amount of years spent in the 3-Tier Licensure System. These recommendations have given rapid rise of several initiatives introduced by the New Mexico Public Education Department— NMTEACH, a new principal evaluation system, and further changes to the tiered licensure system. Many of these recommendations are not surprising, however, as educational policy in New Mexico has tended to mirror national trends that emerged from the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in April 1983.

Traditionally, American educational policy has increasingly flourished while maintaining a symbiotic relationship with major educational shifts since the emergence of modern schooling in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One seminal piece in the history of American education is not a policy at all, but the findings of a government commission entitled *A Nation at Risk*. This commission, assigned the task of creating a report on the quality of American education, changed the educative reality of the entire country. *A Nation at Risk*, published in April of 1983, emerged as a landmark report that forever changed how



the American public viewed education, educators, and itself (Barrett, 2009; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Heikes, 1986; Hewitt, 2008). Educational policy post-*A Nation at Risk* has been greatly informed by the discourse and sense of great urgency regarding American education and the failure of the schools. In order to understand current American policy decisions and national educational discourse, which “emphasis[es] standards, accountability, and marketization,” the roots must be traced back to *A Nation at Risk* (Barrett, 2009, p. 1018).

*A Nation at Risk* permanently changed the landscape of American public schools and federal educational policy. The widespread and continued success of the document is due to various factors: the pre-existing political climate, the evocative and war-like discourse embedded within, and the kneejerk public reaction to it. In order to understand the effectiveness of the commission report, the context of the 1983 American political landscape and who would benefit most from such a publication must be explored. In the 33 years following the publication, the landscape and means of American education has violently changed as a result of *A Nation at Risk*, even down to state introduction of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System.

The extreme shift in the production of American education can be best likened to a Kuhnian paradigm shift in education. Thomas Kuhn (1996) writes extensively on the topic of paradigm shifts in science—shifts that have changed all understanding of what was and changes the direction of what must happen in the future. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, he writes that philosophers and scientists such as Ptolemy, Lavoisier, and Aristotle were capable of scientific revolutions for two reasons:

Their achievement was sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity. Simultaneously, it was sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve. (p. 10)

This open-ended and unprecedented publication is precisely what occurred with the evocative text of *A Nation at Risk*. The U.S. Department of Education, which was teetering on President Reagan's chopping block, became relevant and indispensable practically overnight. Educational researchers, teachers, administrators, professors, and politicians were immediately called to confront the alarming results of *A Nation at Risk*. The publication, which did not cite or provide any tangible pieces of data or research, presented the problem with few solutions, leaving ample room for the answers emerging from politicians, educators, vested businesses, and the public. The widespread faith in public schools and the teachers working within them was deeply shaken. All federal educational policy post-*A Nation at Risk* has dealt with addressing the educational crisis with increasing demands for reform, standardization, and a shift towards privatization. As with so many other textual pieces, the interpretation of the commission report is what has fueled educational policy and practice over the past three decades. While the authors of the seminal piece might argue that it was not intended to marginalize or micromanage teachers, this is one of the outcomes.

Educational policy since 1983 has directly or indirectly appealed to solving the massive and urgent failures of the American public education system outlined in *A Nation at Risk*. Like every state, the outpouring of educational reform and standardization has impacted the State of New Mexico since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. This

dissertation seeks to understand how the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* aligns, embeds, and is re-introduced in the NMTEACH Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system. A hermeneutical understanding and Critical Discourse Analysis of the discourse of these publications and interpretation is the aim of this dissertation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To paraphrase Dr. Carl Sagan, in order to understand the present, you must understand the past. This is certainly the case with unpacking the discourse of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System, which was introduced nearly three decades after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. *A Nation at Risk* was a watershed piece that normalized a violent discourse that has become the dominant *lingua franca* for policy writers, the media, and the general public alike. The evocative discourse of *A Nation at Risk* (briefly illustrated in the following) is the precise reason it was, and still remains, so salient and seminal:

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are

matching and surpassing our educational attainments. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 7)

This starting paragraph is an excellent example of the educational call-to-arms that enabled educational policy, widespread reform, and a shift in societal stereotypes of education.

Education is an institution that continues to produce massive inequity.

“Education reproduces inequality by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure” (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 114). Largely borrowing from the seminal work of Louis Althusser (1971), this work assumes that public education is a function of the Ideological State Apparatus, which reproduces not only ideological stances in pupils, but also reproduces the same working classes of the communities in which it operates. This idea of reproduction within the Ideological State Apparatus can be best illustrated in the work of Jean Anyon (1981), which elegantly outlines the difference in not only the quality of education, but the literal difference of ‘work’ being performed in the school. Schooling itself functions quite contrarily for different classes, and the discourse introduced by *A Nation at Risk* has contributed to this disparity.

Public discourse on education, as with reaction to and consequent discourse after ANAR, is ideological. The individual ideological lens in which members of the public interpret educational policy is revealed in discourse. Studying the discourse of the general public around education and educational policy is paramount in understanding why the status quo is repeatedly reproduced. Not only is the discourse reproduced, but the ideology is also reproduced. The dominant ideology spread through public discourse is vital in understanding why the same systems and ideas are continually reproduced with

little change in outcome. By highlighting the reproduction of public policy discourse in education, the reproduction of ideology in education will be illuminated.

This dissertation will explore policy making in a limited capacity, but will more specifically look at the public discourse in response to public school educational policy within texts. An entire lifetime could be spent in this work, particularly in the process of creating policy, which is why this study will focus solely on the interpretation of public discourse surrounding educational policy. I am specifically concerned at how educational policies such as the rapidly assembled and disseminated New Mexico Educator Effectiveness System will continue to produce the same inequity that unremittingly puts New Mexico at the bottom of so many national educational outcome rankings. I claim that this system not only borrows the publication process of *A Nation at Risk*, but also mirrors the same war-like discourse demonstrated above. This reproduction is another instance of the Ideological State Apparatus—shaping the minds of the next generation and ostracizing agents of the State (districts, principals, teachers, as well as education professors and administrators) that do not fully comply.

### **Purpose and Significance**

This proposed dissertation seeks to further understand the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk* and how the embedded symbolic violence towards teachers is reified to the general public via a state-mandated teacher evaluation system. Though *A Nation at Risk* has been extensively studied (Barrett, 2009; Berliner & Biddle, 1995), there is a dearth of literature surrounding the influence of *ANAR* on state-specific educational policy post-*ANAR*. This research hopes to understand not only how an alarming public discourse is created, but also reproduced for decades at the state level.

New Mexico educational policy has continually been abided by the students, staff, and general public in New Mexico, but seldom critically analyzed by an educational researcher. While the history of NM education will be explored further in the literature review, little has been written about education within the state of New Mexico aside from language research and Native American education—two incredible worthwhile and rich research foci that are also notably absent from the NMTEACH Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation System criteria. There is currently a rich public discourse emerging around the current educational climate, government control, and policy in New Mexico. For the first time, there is a massive response to the policy makers and the mandates signed into law and practice. Additionally, this dissertation aspires to be written in a way that the general public can understand as well as inspire those on the receiving end to be more critical and participatory in the state and federal government that makes decisions on their educative behalf.

This dissertation is significant for several reasons—it contributes to the post-*ANAR* research canon, it contributes to the existing bodies of academic literature that study policy, and it might reinvigorate why we need to study *A Nation at Risk* as a major marker in American education. Instead of simply accepting the past as the past, researchers and the public can correlate punitive educational reforms as a direct outcome of the paradigm shift in education and begin to construct a different future. *A Nation at Risk* has been studied as a milestone in American education for decades, but it is time to reinvestigate the following decades of reproduced discourse, particularly how it is now being used in New Mexico's education policies.

This research will provide both the general public and educational researchers alike a way to reinterpret educational policy text. This could also be used as an exemplar of how to analyze public policy discourse and as a guide for other researchers hoping to better investigate the educational policy in their own state. This research could also assist novice teachers in understanding how their daily classroom reality is shaped by education policies and inspire them to run for office or change the educational system from a top-down to grassroots approach. This research could allow teachers to have a greater sense of literacy of their common experience in the Freirian sense, by allowing them to better read their world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). From this research, a new more amicable public discourse surrounding education could emerge.

### **Research Questions**

In order to unpack the discourse and interpretation of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System, I will address the following questions in my dissertation:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How does it embody a historical shift in educational policy discourse? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?
2. In what ways has the national public discourse on education policy since *A Nation at Risk* emerged embodied similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?
3. As a specific current example, how does the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of *A Nation at Risk* re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

## Key Terms

### Discourse

This dissertation views discourse through a critical lens utilizing Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) definition, which:

...sees discourse—language use in speech and writing—as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as a social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. To put the same point in a different way, discourse is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially influential, it gives rise to important issues of power. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

### Public Policy Discourse

Public policy discourse is the actual text of public policy as well as largely the discourse surrounding a public policy subject. When policy is created, released, and mandated, the media and general public consume the policy and create rich discourse around the subject. For the purposes of this dissertation, both the discourse of the general public and educational policy will be studied.

### Symbolic Violence



Symbolic violence, as described by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, p. 196), “is the gentle, hidden form which violence takes when overt violence is impossible....” To elaborate, symbolic violence is all forms of violence that are covert—public policy, television, print media, news media, social discourse, advertising, etc. The aim of symbolic violence is to maintain the status quo and keep hierarchies of power as well as groups or individuals in place.

### **Discursive Strategies**

Discursive strategies are any techniques employed by a speaker(s), writer(s), group(s), or designer(s) to demonstrate a hierarchy, rank objects, classify people or objects, or any other strategies through discourse that can be used to exclude or normalize behaviors. For example, the *A Nation at Risk* was written with alarming, war-like discourse in order to get the attention of the general public and government officials, thereby normalizing a new paradigm in education. This evocative tone is evidence of a discursive strategy.

### **Methodology**

As a lifelong resident of New Mexico, a teacher educator, a teacher, and staff member of a non-profit education organization, I am deeply invested in the educative future of New Mexico. In my graduate studies, I became fascinated with *A Nation at Risk*, everything from its origins to the publication to the lasting effects.

I wish to understand the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk* and how it embodies a historical shift in educational policy discourse. I want to examine if and how it is an example of symbolic violence, particularly towards teachers. I want to explore if and how the national public discourse towards educational policy has employed similar

discursive strategies as ANAR in their representations of teachers and education. Finally, I want to see if and how the symbolically violent discourse of ANAR is reproduced within the New Mexico Teaching Task Force (TTF) Final Report and Recommendations.

This proposed research will require Critical Discourse Analysis of both ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations as well as of state and national public discourse around educational policy. The aims of this dissertation emerge from my multiple experiences in education. I have been privy to building relationships with New Mexico district administrators, classroom teachers, school principals, businesspeople, university professors, and so many others involved with the institution of education. With my unique positioning, I have witnessed violence towards classroom teachers at multiple angles. I believe that teachers must take more ownership in their own evaluations, with this small step possibly rising to a different type of education that does not benefit only a select few. I dream of a New Mexico where our children growing up in abject poverty or great affluence receive a culturally responsive and rigorous education from teachers that not only care about their students, but expect great things from them and are held responsibly and mindfully accountable for their professional decisions.

I approach the texts of this dissertation with a steady and wary critical eye. I was born the year that *A Nation at Risk* was published and have only experienced attitudes towards teachers after this paradigm shift. I believe that ANAR created a legacy of top-down reform that has repeatedly marginalized the profession of teaching and created harmful stereotypes that are perpetuated in harmful policy. My hope is that this dissertation unveils hierarchies of power that will allow teachers, communities, and students to refuse more standardization, assessments, and violent discourse. I hope that a

more respectful, loving, and holistic view of education and teachers can give rise to greater agency and educative autonomy.

### **Limitations of the Study**

*A Nation at Risk* is a monumental text and studying the educational discourse that has emerged since its publication would take a lifetime, if not several. It is with full awareness and intentionality that this dissertation's scope of study is small. I have chosen to investigate the reproduction of violent discourse between two large fixed points—ANAR and the New Mexico TTF Final Report and Recommendations as well as specific pieces of discourse from general public educational discourse in the past three decades.

The New Mexico TTF Final Report and Recommendations is deliberately chosen, as I believe that it encompasses and reproduces not only the discourse of *A Nation at Risk*, but also as a microcosm of the same urgency and political climate. Of course, it cannot be assumed that every state educational policy over the past thirty years has been written in the same urgent and evocative discourse or created similar policies, so the space of this study will be mindfully limited to ANAR and TTF Final Report and Recommendations and the context of New Mexico, rather than on the thousands of other educational writings over the past thirty years and across other states' experiences.

It is also with full awareness that my role of researcher is inherently biased in analyzing this discourse through a critical lens. I am deliberately seeking seemingly violent discourse and I believe that *A Nation at Risk* has helped maintain and reproduce the status quo. Understandably, there are invested stakeholders that would disagree with my claims, my lens, and my findings; yet ultimately this dissertation is written for our

students, current teachers and teachers to come, as well as teacher-educators - not directly for the makers of policy.

The issue of time is also at play in the limitations of this research. The NMTEACH system is very young, and over the course of writing and submitting this study to the committee, the system might implode or an entirely different system may evolve. Both the reproduction of ANAR and the reaction to the NMTEACH evaluation system are continuously unfolding and may never be fully captured at one juncture in time, but perhaps this research can help inform our next steps in New Mexico.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction to Literature Review**

California Governor Ronald Reagan was elected to the presidency in November 1980. For many conservatives, this election was a reclaiming of “America for Americans” and the result of a shifting voting demographic that reflected “true” American values. To liberal citizens, this election was the result of conservative backlash against the progressive era of the 1960’s and 1970’s, which included the Civil Rights movement, the American Indian Movement, the federal funding for education through the ESEA act, and multicultural education. The movements of the late 1960’s and 1970’s, grounded in progressive thought, imploded for various reasons - the critical emphasis on economic production, the plea for continued international dominance, and a strategic White blue-collar backlash to Affirmative Action and Civil Rights (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Coleman et al., 1997; Ehrman, 2005, Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2009). The 1980 election was ideologically divisive and a victorious rebirth for conservatives, which paved the way for a conservative national education agenda.

*A Nation at Risk*, a byproduct of the Reagan administration, irrevocably changed the landscape of American public schools and federal educational policy (Barrett, 2009; Berliner & Biddle, 1995). The widespread and continued success of the document is due to various factors: the pre-existing discordant political climate, the evocative and war-like discourse embedded within, and the broad public reaction to it. In order to understand the effectiveness of the commission report, the context, that is, the events and political climate leading to its publication, must be explored. In the 30 years following the

publication, the landscape and means of American education has permanently changed as a result of *A Nation at Risk*.

The creation, distribution, and dissemination of ANAR was a symbolically and discursively violent event that justified a reformation of the education system while reinforcing the need for more government oversight. Through the misrepresentation of the American school system with inaccurate data and the powerful discourse embedded within, *A Nation at Risk* became a distortion that veiled internal power struggles within the Reagan cabinet, which revolved around establishing the scope and role of the federal government in education. *A Nation at Risk* produced a discursively violent (McLaren, Leonardo, & Allen, 1999) educational discourse that alarmed the public. The ultimate result has been decades of mounting educational reform and policy crafted by politicians and businessmen that trickle down to the classroom level with little to no pedagogical consideration, reproduced generation by generation.

The violent changes in American education can be best likened to a Kuhnian paradigm shift in education. As previously mentioned, Thomas Kuhn (1996) writes extensively on paradigm shifts in science, which occurred with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The U.S. Department of Education, which was on President Reagan's chopping block, became relevant and vital practically overnight. Educational researchers, teachers, administrators, professors, and politicians were immediately forced to confront the alarming results of *A Nation at Risk*. The publication, which did not cite or provide any concrete pieces of data or research, presented the problem with few solutions, leaving ample room for differing approaches and answers emerging from politicians, educators, businesses, and the public. As a result of ANAR, the widespread

faith in public schools and the teachers working within them was deeply shaken. All federal educational policy post-*A Nation at Risk* has dealt with addressing this educational crisis with further reform and standardization (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Heikes, 1986; Heise, 1994; Lauen, 2007; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1984; U.S. Department of Education, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The educational paradigm shift that occurred with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 did not occur quickly, nor does this paradigm shift focus solely on the changes that occurred within education research. The context of the educational landscape up to the publication of ANAR must be explored. For decades, the educational world was leading up to a crucial moment, which rose to an alarming crescendo with *A Nation at Risk*. The paradigm shift not only impacted researchers and educational reformers, but it ultimately trickled down to elementary age schoolchildren in America, who, by the current implementation of the Common Core curriculum and state-mandated *Race to the Top* initiatives, are being educated in vastly different ways than children even a decade before. The outcomes-based approaches currently in place in American public schools can be traced to ANAR. Like a stone thrown into a still pond, the ripples of ANAR are seen daily in the scripted curricula, standardized tests, and a back-to-basics approach to literacy and mathematics, which replaced the relatively holistic education of the 1970's.

In order to better understand the political and educational milieu of the early 1980's, when *A Nation at Risk* was created and published, the events and contributing

elements to that particular time period must be explored. According to Kuhn (1996), paradigm shifts can only occur when the public or interested group is ready or when viewed as advantageous to vested parties. Comprehending *A Nation at Risk* requires an explanation of how education became permanently linked to global economic and scientific dominance, which began with the successful launch of the Russian satellite Sputnik (Bracey, 2008; Constable, McGrath, & Stanley, 1983; Hechinger, 1983b).

### **The Launch of Sputnik to 1965**

After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, the booming post-war American economy and society experienced feelings of paranoia and fear that world dominance was slipping away, and the effects of these shifts trickled down to the American classroom in the way of curriculum changes (Bracey, 2008; Constable, McGrath, & Stanley, 1983; Hechinger, 1983b). After winning the arms race of World War II, the American public acutely understood the importance of technological advancement. Hand-to-hand combat was no longer necessary with the invention of the atomic bomb and the advancement of the United States Air Force. With the deterioration of diplomatic relations with Khrushchev's Russia as well as the advent of the space race, Americans became aware that technological development was vital for continued international dominance (Urban & Wagoner, 2009). Russia discovered nuclear power and sought to defend itself with missiles. After the seemingly improbable launch of Sputnik proved to be true, the American government hastily shifted strategic priorities. Americans were terrified that Russia could strike at any time, building fall-out shelters in major cities and in suburban backyards while schools held regular nuclear drills. Science and math curriculum exploded in schools post-Sputnik with the threat of Russian superiority, with curricula



developed by disciplinary scholars. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed to promote recruitment and training of engineers and mathematicians. With no constitutional consideration of the government's role in education, the reactive approach to international threats to any form of domination became an unfortunate and recurring trend in education.

After World War II and through the launch of Sputnik, enrollment at American colleges and universities ballooned with recipients of the GI Bill, transforming both higher education and some of the faces within it. In theory, the GI Bill paid tuition and fees for all American veterans enrolled in vocational and college programs. The demographics of higher education institutions changed—with many ethnic Europeans (e.g., Irish, Italian, Greek) and a small number of African American men entering previously all-White affluent campuses (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). The GI Bill did not challenge existing Jim Crow segregation laws, which led to Black veterans being unable to claim their benefits with GI Bill mortgages or being admitted to colleges to utilize their educational funding.

Higher numbers of students flooded university campuses, and colleges of education were founded to lessen the burden on other swollen departments. While some believed that a liberal education was hypothetically and sufficiently preparing better teachers, a national push towards a standardized teacher education was also taking place (Ravitch, 2008). “The elevation of preparation and certification standards... produced substantial improvement also in professional welfare, financial compensation, and conditions of service of teachers. Higher standards for teaching have produced a higher level of respect and prestige for those engaged in teaching” (McDonald, 1956, p. 956).

Organizations were also pushing for standardization. Groups like the National Education Association (NEA) were beginning to develop standards for teacher certification (as seen in the creation of their Department of Higher Education). Every college and university that was pursuing the standardization of teacher education was affiliated with the NEA (McDonald, 1956). To many, the need for a national teacher education curriculum and an outside monitoring entity was long overdue. This need was actualized with the creation of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1954.

Standardization, credentialing, and accreditation in education arrived in the years after World War II, in response to the perceived threat of international domination as well as the maintenance of the social and economic status quo. The professionalization of the field of teaching emerged with the beginning of compulsory schooling and the perceived need for a standardized elementary curriculum (Spring, 2007). Every child in the United States was required to go to school for the first time. “State normal schools transformed into state colleges—in response, partially to the influx of WWII veterans—and state colleges, over time, into universities. After WWII, attention was increasingly riveted on producing a sufficient number of teachers to staff schools running double shifts to accommodate the post-war baby boom” (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008, p. 138). As the large number of teachers was entering the classroom, the need of quality assurance for teachers emerged. McDonald (1956) and Conant (1963) note that the logical progression of professionalization in teaching emerged from the credentialing processes already in place in the fields of law and medicine. College-educated individuals were quickly replacing the traditional schoolteacher while concerns about the scientific

advancement of the Russians were swiftly changing the academic landscape and curricula within schools (Conant, 1963).

Colleges and schools of education were established, in large part, in the 1950's and 1960's. The post-war population increase resulted in the rise in numbers of school-age children. With compulsory schooling and desegregation, integrated public schools under the instruction of White, credentialed teachers were becoming a part of a national American experience and the place where the current role and expectations of teachers became defined. Concurrently emerging with the schools of education were professors of education and cross-disciplinary teacher preparation programs quickly became passé (Conant, 1963).

It is important to note that these organizational shifts and creations purposefully coincided with desegregation school laws via *Brown v. Board of Education*. The verdict of *Brown v. Board of Education* helped justify the massive firings of Black educators, approximately from 1954 to 1965, which left 38,000 African American educators without a job (Epps, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 6). As Hudson and Holmes (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 6) note, before 1954, "approximately 82,000 African American teachers were responsible for educating the nation's two million African American public school systems." This startling juxtaposition demonstrates that nearly half of the African American teaching force was swiftly eliminated within a ten-year time frame. These changes in higher education were implemented for greater control and as a reaction to the changing face of education and educators. The changes also influenced degree-granting higher education institutions. As the NEA (1965, as cited by Foster, 1997) published in a task force survey,

It has been, and still is, widely assumed by many school board members that Negroes, both students and teachers, are intellectually inferior. From this specious premise, it follows that 'quality education' can be obtained only when schools, even after being integrated, remain in spirit and often in name 'white schools.' White schools are viewed as having no place for Negro teachers.

Black educators were often let go and their contracts were not renewed because they were deemed as being intellectually inferior to White teachers based upon teaching credentials (Foster, 1997). It is necessary to note that the requirement for a bachelor's degree to teach elementary school became the national norm during the period of desegregation.

One particular change in the academic and curricular landscape is tied to the emergence of educational and developmental psychology after the launch of Sputnik. In 1959, Jerome Bruner published *The Process of Education*, which advocated for a scientifically based approach to education and changed the voices of educational academics. In addition, the book called for wide scale curricular reform in American public schools to better prepare students for vocational choices later in life. Schools, the purposes of schooling, and the aims of education began to enter the national conscience like never before. Standardization became an educational trend that continued throughout the 1960's.

### **1965 to *A Nation at Risk***

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law for the first time. As part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, the ESEA was created to help equalize education through the creation and use of Title I funds to better academically support children who were living in highly concentrated poor communities.

This act also explicitly forbade the future creation of a national curriculum for American schools. As part of further educational legislation in 1965, the national Teacher Corps was established to teach in low-income communities. Another notable education legislation passed during the Johnson administration is The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (Title VII of ESEA), which authorized the spending of federal dollars on providing bilingual education programs to English language learners. As the educational policies of Johnson indicate, education became federally linked to fighting poverty and social issues.

In the era of American social progressivism from the late 1960's throughout the 1970's, many new teachers entered the profession, heavily influenced by the words of ontological optimists like John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Eager and idealistic, many young people entered the teaching field as "...part of a broad movement for social justice..." and a "...way to broadly contribute to building a more just society in addition to the contributions...to our students through our classroom teaching" (Zeichner, 2009, p. xiii). Gaining entry into the profession, these teachers were parts of movements such as the Democratic Party-endorsed Teacher Corps, modeled after the successful Peace Corps. As many idealistic teachers entered the classroom, the counterculture also brought widespread social movements demanding change and equality. Various counterculture movements include the Anti-war movement, the African American Civil Rights Movement, the American Indian Movement, the United Farm Workers, feminism, Gay liberation, and others. To those within the movements, it was the boiling point after centuries of stifling oppression and mistreatment as well as a backlash to the conservative 1950's. To those outside of, or opposed to the movements, it was a terrifying unsettling of the status quo (Erhman, 1996).

During the Democratic administration of President Carter, the U.S. Department of Education was signed into law and opened on May 16, 1980. For the first time in American history, there was a national Secretary of Education and the department was a cabinet-level appointment of the President of the United States. Republican sentiment was against the newly formed department, as many believed that it would undermine state power and rights as well as add to the already-bloated federal bureaucracy. The Carter administration was fraught with public relations disasters like the Iran hostage crisis, a rise in inflation and little economic growth, and numerous energy crises (Ehrman, 2005). The overall culture was rife with tension and the United States was seemingly threatened by the economic rise of nations with technological innovation—South Korea and Japan—as well as racial and cultural tension. Russia, while remaining a threat to national security, was no longer the technological leader of the world. In the 1980 presidential election, Republican nominee Ronald Reagan ran on a tri-fold education agenda: 1) restore prayer in schools; 2) provide private school tuition tax credits; and 3) abolish the Department of Education (Neshoba Democrat, 2007; Woolley & Peters, 2015). He argued that the money saved by cutting the Department of Education could be better spent on the arms race with Russia and on arming Afghan insurgents in the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Reagan positioned himself and built a powerful political coalition around the idea that he was working for the White American middle class, which attracted White Democrats who felt ignored throughout the social progressivism era (Ehrman, 2005). With his landslide election, Reagan set the stage for an educational paradigm shift.

## ***A Nation at Risk***

*A Nation at Risk* was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. Reagan's Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, created the commission on August 26, 1981 (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). A longtime educator, Bell spent his life in various roles in education—bus driver, high school teacher, and graduate student. Bell, acutely aware that Reagan had campaigned with the agenda to cut the newly founded U.S. Department of Education, realized that “a major study of the condition of education would focus public attention on our schools and colleges and make it difficult politically to eliminate or significantly diminish the federal role” (Bell, 1993, p. 593). Acting as a political agent against eliminating the role of the federal government in education, Bell created the commission (Bell, 1993; Bracey, 2008; Fiske, 2008; Heichinger, 1984a).

Comprised of 18 members from various disciplines and careers, the commission was charged with reviewing programs, research, curricula and standards in order to create a report on the condition of education. The commission included chemists, college presidents, engineers, government officials, and former school principals. Over a period of a year and a half, the committee met intermittingly and drafted the report without presidential oversight, which was typical of Reagan's leadership style (Ehrman, 2005). Subsidized by several provisions of the General Education Provisions Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the committee only publicly met eight rushed times as a full committee and conducted several symposiums and focus meetings on different subject matter at a combined total cost of \$785,000. According to Fiske (2008), the White House presentation of *A Nation at Risk* was nearly canceled after the White House staff did not find any of Reagan's education agenda embedded or advocated, such as restoring prayer

in public schools or providing tax credits for private school tuition. “The President . . . used his remarks to reaffirm his political objectives. . . Several members of the commission later confided that they left Washington that day in a depressed mood, convinced that they had been ‘used’ and were destined to be ignored” (para. 8). On April 26, 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was reluctantly and cautiously presented to the public.

The Commission’s findings were dim. American schools were failing their own children and the integrity, even the future existence, of the U.S. was threatened.

### **“A Rising Tide of Mediocrity”**

The public was presented with the following:

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983, p. 7)

This paragraph is representative of the nationalistic tone of *A Nation at Risk*. The report, with its evocative text, brought immediate attention to the public schools and changed



how society looked at them. In order to understand the how the document brought about a paradigm shift, the discourse must be analyzed. The above text begins with a description of what America once had—“preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation” (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983, p. 7). This dominance and superiority is quickly threatened by non-American competitors the world over. The commission notes that there are many different reasons why America is slipping away, but that there really is only one that “undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility” (p. 7). Not only was the American “preeminence” threatened, but the American way of life, the future of the country, and even politeness (p. 7). The report attributes all American historical accomplishments and contributions to “our schools and colleges” (p. 7), but quickly notes, “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people” (p. 7). Seemingly, the once-strong foundation of the American nation was being single-handedly destroyed by mediocre public schools. Because of this erosion, our international educative dominance was declining. Words such as “eroded,” “rising tide,” “overtaken,” “risk,” “undergirds,” “security,” and “civility” implied a violent war already being waged on American soil, which signifies the discursively violent discourse. These words were selectively chosen by the commission to bring alarm to the American public and justify the continued existence of the U.S. Department of Education (Goldman, 1983; Fiske, 2008).

The violent discourse used within *A Nation at Risk* emphasizes the perceived state of emergency confronting the United States both educatively and financially. While America emerged as a major world power in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, growing

technological and manufacturing advances by Japan and South Korea were seen as threats to national security (Fraser, 2007). Much like the previously detailed hysteria surrounding the successful launch of Sputnik, these threats were seemingly going to unravel the thread of the nation unless immediately addressed by schools. This shift in international dominance drew attention to education as the means to change the perceived threat, just as with Sputnik in the past (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).

Specifically, *A Nation at Risk* found schools to be woefully under-preparing American students. The commission noted the “period of long-term decline in educational achievement” (1983, p. 7), and that the larger consequence of this deficiency would be the loss of the backbone of the nation—patriotism. Without changes in the academic content, teaching practices, and expectations of American public schools, the country would falter financially and innovatively. The findings of *A Nation at Risk* immediately and irreversibly changed the realities of American classroom teachers and schools. The commission found that “declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself [was] conducted. The findings...reflect four important aspects of the educational process: content, expectations, time, and teaching” (1983, p. 9).

### **Content**

*A Nation at Risk* surmised the differences in curricular choice between high school in the late sixties and late seventies and defines content as “the very ‘stuff’ of education, the curriculum” (p. 19). The commission found that the “[s]econdary school curricula have been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer

have a central purpose” (p. 19). The vast amount of student choices between different classes in high school (i.e., being able to take interest-based genre courses, such as science fiction writing in lieu of a general English survey course) was viewed as harmful. The content findings advocated a track for all students that revolved around core classes such as math, science, and language arts and more foreign language courses for college-bound students. These courses aligned to the back-to-basics Republican approach and were a dramatic step away from the Carter administration’s push for multiculturalism, bilingualism, and elective choices. These changes in curriculum, hypothetically, would make American high school students more competitive on the job market nationally and internationally. As noted by the report, “[i]t is, therefore, essential—especially in a period of long-term decline in educational achievement—for government at all levels to affirm its responsibility for nurturing the Nation’s intellectual capital” (p. 15). The commission argued that the content must not only be changed, but become controlled by federal, state, and local governments. As with all of *ANAR*, no data or specific examples were cited or reported.

### **Expectations**

The commission did not only deem curriculum a problem, but also expectations. The committee defined expectations “in terms of the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills school and college graduates should possess. They also refer to the time, hard work, behavior, self-discipline, and motivation that are essential for high student achievement” (p. 16). The report detailed that expectations are transmitted to students through grades, graduation requirements, required competency tests before graduation, college admission standards, and the difficulty of material presented to students.

According to *ANAR*, all American students enrolled in the public schools were not receiving or completing enough homework, taking enough courses in science, foreign language, or math, and were victims of low expectations and low graduation requirements. Again, these aligned to the back-to-basics approach and place more value on foreign language, science, and math courses. The commission also expressed concern with the lack of rigor and money spent on curricular textbooks, but again, with neither data nor examples. The chronically low expectations placed upon high school students influenced how teachers and students spent time in the classroom.

### **Time**

Time in the classroom was outlined as a major concern for reasons regarding the efficiency of how it is spent in the classroom. The committee noted that American students spend far fewer days and fewer hours per day in the classroom than in “England and other industrialized nations”<sup>1</sup> and argues that the time spent within the classroom is not packed with academic content but with useless vocational curriculum (p. 18). The commission wrote that high schools need to focus on teaching study habits and the “core” subjects, noting that “time spent learning how to cook and drive counts as much toward a high school diploma as the time spent studying mathematics, English, chemistry, U.S. history, or biology” (*ANAR*, 1983, p. 18).

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that England, not South Korea or Japan, is the example country. England is not previously mentioned as a threat to international dominance in *A Nation at Risk*.

## **Teaching**

The final portion of the committee's findings revolved around teaching—who became teachers, teacher preparation programs, and the teaching shortages in certain subjects. The report claimed that “[h]alf of the newly employed mathematics, science, and English teachers are not qualified to teach these subjects; fewer than one-third of US high schools offer physics taught by qualified teachers” (p. 11). The perpetually low salary of teachers, both novice and veteran, is also noted as one reason for the low professional status. The commission takes issue with the low academic performance of student teachers in their high schools, emphasizing that teaching is not attracting the best and the brightest. The commission also placed greater value on the content courses of prospective teachers and highlights that undergraduate students are embroiled in too many irrelevant methods courses. The findings on teachers and teaching are relevant to the public response and educational policy post-*ANAR*.

## **Response to *A Nation at Risk***

The media response to *A Nation at Risk* was immediate, and continued to unfold for several years. The story was picked up and widely disseminated by the media—from national magazine covers to nightly news broadcasts to newspapers and other media. Within a year 400,000 copies were produced and distributed with an estimated 5 million Americans reading the report, while major news organizations reproduced portions of the report for publication and broadcast (Department of Education, 1984; Hechinger, 1984a; Lewis, 1984). This was a pivotal moment, as education took center stage in media attention and the “warnings, grim and intentionally provocative,” (Constable, McGrath, & Stanley, 1983, para. 3) were both accepted and challenged. The report undoubtedly

put education on high alert, and the call for educational reform and federal initiatives was widely accepted. Proponents of the back-to-basics reform movement, like Chester Finn, Jr. and TheodoreSizer, looked to *A Nation at Risk* as the opportunity to advocate their educational plans as the solution to the problem. Being that the report came from the federal Department of Education, the findings were disseminated and accepted on a larger scale than any previous report, article, or book on education.

The dismal findings of the report, particularly the claims that the public was not satisfied with schools and that students were being academically crushed by their foreign counterparts, were refuted by some (Kozol, 1986), but the return of education to the public discourse was widely acknowledged by all parties (Fiske, 1985; Goldman, 1983; Melvin, 1986). The National Parent Teacher Association had a surge in membership, President Reagan set foot into several classrooms, and the discussion about eliminating the Department of Education abated. One year after *A Nation at Risk* was presented, the Department of Education published *A Nation Responds*, a bloated 230-page document outlining a year of progress state-by-state (Department of Education, 1984). The report states that:

- Forty-eight [of 51 jurisdictions] are considering new high school graduation requirements, 35 have approved changes.
- Twenty-one report initiatives to improve textbooks and instructional materials.
- Eight have approved lengthening the school day, seven, lengthening the school year, and 18 have mandates affecting the amount of time for instruction.

- Twenty-four are examining master teacher or career ladder programs, and six have begun statewide or pilot programs.
- Thirteen are considering changes in academic requirements for extracurricular and athletic programs, and five have already adopted more rigorous standards. (p. 18)

With *A Nation Responds*, the need for federal control of education is made clear through the state-by-state data collection on progress and outcomes. With such a large document, it is implied that national standards and curricula requirements would streamline data collection for the nation's benefit. This is representative of the expectations outlined in the report, which lauded states and metropolitan areas that announced the need for "rigorous academic standards" for students and "tougher mathematics and reading requirements" (p. 155). While *A Nation Responds* attributes these changes to *A Nation at Risk*, Lewis (1984) notes that many of these seemingly related reforms reported in *A Nation Responds* (standards, graduation requirements, teacher career ladders) were actually already well underway prior to the 1983 publication and presentation.

*Educational Leadership* published many successful student outcomes of reform informed by *A Nation at Risk* in October of 1983. These publications were noticeably odd, as Lewis mentions, because the majority of public schools were on summer break for at least half of those five months, which makes student data collection very difficult. The sudden onslaught of academic publications and media brought a vast amount of attention to not only education, but to the Secretary of Education as well.

Secretary Bell, as the result of increased exposure and pressure from the far-right, resigned from his position on December 30, 1984 (Bell, 1984; Fiske, 1984). Rigid

conservatives were unsettled by *A Nation at Risk* and by the reality that the Department of Education was unlikely to be cut because of the findings and dissemination. Bell was quickly replaced by Democrat William J. Bennett<sup>2</sup>, the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Bennett, considered “politically maladroit” (Delaney, 1985, para. 2), advocated for Reagan’s original platform - large financial aid cuts to higher education, school vouchers, better school assessments, and a return to a “systematic familiarization with our own, Western tradition of learning: with the classical and Jewish-Christian heritage, the facts of American and European history...in short, the basic body of knowledge” (Bennett, 1986, p. 6). Bennett, taking key ideas from *A Nation at Risk* and the ultra-conservative agenda, pushed for a return to basic curriculum, educational standards, and more accountability in higher education (Bennett, 1986; Fiske, 1986). With the authority of the federal government in education now firmly established, Bennett was able to call for these changes in curriculum through assuming the veracity of the alarming findings embedded throughout *A Nation at Risk*. Bennett was not alone in trying to propagate and reproduce the rhetoric and urgency of ANAR.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) elegantly outline the paradigm shift in education through ANAR:

The bashing of public education has long been a popular indoor sport in America, but never before had criticism of education appeared that

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<sup>1</sup> Bennett, endorsed by Jerry Falwell, later wrote *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*, became a Republican and George H.W. Bush’s drug czar, and developed a much-publicized gambling problem.



- was sponsored by a secretary of education in our national government;
- was prepared by such a prestigious committee;
- was endorsed by a president of the United States;
- made such explicit charges about a supposed recent, tragic decline of American education—charges said to be confirmed by both longitudinal and comparative studies;
- asserted that because of this putative decline of education the nation was losing its leadership in industry, science, and innovation;
- assigned blame for said decline to inadequacies in teaching programs and inept educators; and
- packaged its messages in such flamboyant prose. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 139)

In the years immediately following the publication of ANAR, many different groups attempted to solve the issues raised within the document by publishing response reports. Riding the coattails of this major publication, these groups quickly sought to establish themselves as pedagogic authorities, adopting the same colorful discourse and suggesting changes in the same alarming vein as ANAR. These responses and recommendations are outlined in the coming paragraphs.

In 1986, the Holmes Group report was published. Though the attention of *A Nation at Risk* primarily revolved around the K-12 public education system (directly under the umbrella of the Department of Education), the Holmes Group extended the conversation to higher education, specifically teacher education, as based on research about the lack of teacher knowledge. The Holmes Group, nationally comprised of

academic officers and education deans, justifies their work by explaining, “America’s dissatisfaction with its schools has become chronic and endemic” (p. 3). The ‘cure’ for the chronic problems was not based in the findings of *A Nation at Risk*, but took the media attention and national conversation as an opportunity to put forth their agenda. The group recommended: dissolving undergraduate teacher education programs, moving teacher preparation to the graduate schools, building career ladders for teachers, encouraging teacher professional development, and teaching standards that can test teacher competency. The Holmes Group discussion on the elimination of the elementary education major was not new. The report posited that “[t]eacher education has long been intellectually weak; this further eroded the prestige of an already poorly esteemed profession, and it encouraged many inadequately prepared people to enter teaching” (p. 6). By eliminating the major in education at the undergraduate level and moving teaching solely to the graduate level, teachers would earn the professional respect long denied. The group also promoted three-tier licensure systems to promote good teachers through pay-scales and reward good teaching and credentials. This recommendation would prove to be prophetic, as it would become strongly advocated for when defining a highly-qualified teacher less than two decades later.

With *A Nation at Risk* claiming that “too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students,” attention shifted towards recruiting the best and the brightest college students to teaching. The Holmes Group, intent on professionalizing the field of teaching, commented on the welcoming cohesiveness of elementary schools yet advocated the removal of the elementary major. With the addition of a fifth-year teaching credential master’s degree, the Holmes Group

outlined three necessary components to make teacher education “intellectually sound”: “subject matter knowledge, systematic knowledge of teaching, and reflective practical experience” (1986, p. 62). These components mirror the recommendations of ANAR—a return to content, expectations, time, and teaching.

Nearly simultaneous with the Holmes Report was the publication of the Carnegie Report on teacher preparation, which replicated the urgency and alarm of ANAR. “America’s ability to compete in world markets is eroding” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 2), which speaks to the perceived importance of American dominance. While many of the reforms recommended by the Carnegie Report have come to fruition, the forgotten reforms include competitive teaching salaries with other professions, using resources to recruit minority children into the teaching profession, and reshaping American high schools did not. The largest contribution of the Carnegie Report was the recommendation for a national board for educators. Like the board process for medicine, the Carnegie Forum encouraged the formation of the board to choose teaching standards and certify those teachers that meet the criteria. This comparison of teaching to medicine was not new, but the high expectation of teachers to perform as doctors was a foreshadowing to the following twenty years. The discursive context had been established by ANAR, and each successive report responded to and matched the alarming discourse. The established context gave rise to the standards movement in teaching, increased pressure on teacher accountability, and new licensing requirements.

In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded upon this recommendation. Led by Carnegie Forum member and attorney James B.

Hunt, the National Board centered on the premise that classroom teachers would lead evaluation and certification decisions. This approach believed that excellent teachers were capable of defining and evaluating good teaching. This approach was novel, as previous measurements and definitions came from educational researchers, business models, and the government. The National Board published and created standards for excellent teaching and an application process to become nationally-board certified, similar to the accreditation required by the medical and legal profession.

As these education groups published their recommendations, the federal government continued to assert pedagogic authority through strategic goal-setting and the implicit threat of removing Title II funding. America's perceived threat to international dominance that could be best solved using teachers as the mechanism by which schools were going to meet these goals. Secretary of Education Bennett published *American Education: Making It Work* (AEMIW) in 1988. Significantly published five years after *A Nation at Risk*, AEMIW sets forth five goals to guide American school reform:

- 1) Strengthen content throughout the curriculum;
- 2) Ensure equal intellectual opportunity for every student;
- 3) Establish an ethos of achievement at every school;
- 4) Recruit and reward good teachers and principals;
- 5) Institute accountability throughout the education system for student learning.

(Bennett, 1989, p. 1)

The goals of AEMIW originate from the conservative educational agenda of the Reagan administration. The strengthening of content implies the return to the core curriculum, the intellectual opportunity for each student is the implementation and

“mastering a solid curriculum...for disadvantaged youngsters...[which] may take more learning time and creative teaching techniques” (Bennett, 1988, p. 35). The ethos of achievement revolves around “order and discipline” and “hard work” (pp. 39-40), recruiting good teachers requires alternative routes to teaching and accountability requires school choice. Though these suggestions seem innocuous on the surface, the pedagogic authority placed in the federal government in *A Nation at Risk* provides credibility to the conservative agenda otherwise missing. The suggested goals, regardless of ideology, did not provide measurement tools for determining whether these goals were met, a foreshadowing of what was yet to come. Higher education was no exception to these trends, as teacher education programs and the professional fields of teachers became subject to state standards, teaching entrance exams, and, as outlined in Coleman et al. (1997), became a product manufacturer. Coleman et al. goes as far as to represent schools as franchises of the broader educational institution.

From the discourse of texts like Coleman et al. (1997), a new educational narrative emerged, one advocating for outcome-based education built upon test scores, incentive pay, and accountability measures. Teachers, in the eyes of the state, most administrators, and the corporate publishing houses are not seen as individuals with something to offer, but rather as workers who produce a product—test scores.

### **Discussion**

*A Nation at Risk* was quick to claim that education was in “a period of long-term decline in educational achievement” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 3). It is important to note that the “wit, skill, and spirit of a self-confident people” (p. 3) was never historically associated with public schooling. If these are the

principles that founded our nation, it is important to note that the birth of the nation was not concurrent with the birth of public schooling. Compulsory free schooling is most often attributed to Horace Mann and the Massachusetts normal schools he helped guide and establish beginning in the 1830's. The period of long-term decline in educational achievement noted in ANAR is also uncited and unproven, as many educational research studies have shown that achievement in both math and reading has remained largely static for the past sixty years (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Carson, Huelskamp, & Woodall, 1993; Kozol, 1986; Sizer, 1989). Regardless of these notes, ANAR embedded the idea of academic and national failure deeply into the psyche of the nation.

As mentioned earlier, America focuses on education in times of economic or social crises (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986). *A Nation at Risk* was written when “the country was in the grip of the most severe recession since the Great Depression” (p. 11). With the current global economic depression, education is once again central in the national discourse for producing failure. Bad teachers, teaching unions, and traditional teacher preparation programs bear the brunt of the criticism of failing schools, as demonstrated in the film *Waiting for Superman*, yet these explanations for failure are largely similar to the complaints of the 1980s. Many politicians often cite education as a top priority in election years, yet hire business and policy experts to oversee public schools once elected, not educators. Local, state, and national politicians have campaigned on the premise of a broken school system, but have little know-how on the deeply imbedded issues of race, class, gender, and sexual inequalities in the public schools let alone the history and contextual evolution of federal education policy. This is repeatedly reproducing the same situation as the Charlottesville Summit of 1989, where

the voices of educators were intentionally left out to make way for the individuals that counted—politicians. This is a continual misstep with deep implications. Within the past thirty years, the proposed reforms of both Democrats and Republicans have included buzz words of accountability, qualifications, quality, parent involvement, lifelong learners, standardization, school choice, and of course, international competition. These words, traceable to the rhetoric of *A Nation at Risk*, demonstrate their surface-level understanding of teachers, education, child development, and the country they live in. Until educators are allowed to address and contribute to educational reform, the impractical and harmful laws and reforms of education will continue to be created by politicians and businessmen.

The nationalistic rhetoric of *A Nation at Risk* continues in current discussion of educational reform. In the 2011 State of the Union address, President Obama stated:

Maintaining our leadership in research and technology is crucial to America's success. But if we want to win the future — if we want innovation to produce jobs in America and not overseas — then we also have to win the race to educate our kids.

Think about it. Over the next 10 years, nearly half of all new jobs will require education that goes beyond a high school education. And yet, as many as a quarter of our students aren't even finishing high school. The quality of our math and science education lags behind many other nations. America has fallen to ninth in the proportion of young people with a college degree. And so the question is whether all of us — as citizens, and as parents — are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed....

Let's also remember that after parents, the biggest impact on a child's success comes from the man or woman at the front of the classroom. In South Korea, teachers are known as "nation builders." Here in America, it's time we treated the people who educate our children with the same level of respect. We want to reward good teachers and stop making excuses for bad ones. And over the next 10 years, with so many baby boomers retiring from our classrooms, we want to prepare 100,000 new teachers in the fields of science and technology and engineering and math.

In fact, to every young person listening tonight who's contemplating their career choice: If you want to make a difference in the life of our nation; if you want to make a difference in the life of a child — become a teacher. Your country needs you. (The White House, 2011, para. 31-32, 37-38)

Like *A Nation at Risk*, the 2011 State of the Union address once again equates a failing educational system with economic strength, international competition, and teacher shortages and training. Patriotism involves an unfailing belief in federal educational reform. By strategically employing the alarming discourse equating national security and dominance to educational reform, the federal government once again establishes itself as the pedagogical authority of the nation.

*A Nation at Risk* changed the federal role in American education through the strategic discourse of panic and international competition embedded within. While the National Commission on Excellence in Education may have intended to write the report in efforts to maintain the Department of Education, the booming effects of their handiwork have been heavily felt in the decades since. The past three decades have been



a reaction to the findings of *A Nation at Risk*. The problems of education quickly became a national problem in need of serious reform, and the federal responsibility of the Department of Education quickly grew into a national issue.

Under the Reagan administration, educational policy called for a return of the ‘basics,’ a thinly guised attack on multiculturalism, a shift to standardized curricula in schools, with accountability measures coming to fruition in the *America 2000: An Educational Strategy, Goals 2000* and *No Child Left Behind* policies during the Clinton and both Bush eras respectively (Barrett, 2009; Hunt, 2008). Teacher education programs and the professional field of teachers became the focus of reformers and subject to standards of quality, teacher examinations, tiered pay schedules and licensure, and questions of accountability and evaluation (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 1988; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Heise, 1994; Holmes Group, 1986; Hunt, 2008), which flows from *A Nation at Risk*.

This dissertation is based on the premise that the commonsense interpretation of *A Nation at Risk* legitimated and demanded federal power over education. By legitimating and cultivating this power, educational control and authority has quickly transitioned the majority of control from the state level to the federal level within the past three decades. The result of this transition is greater federal control of social reproduction in America. *A Nation at Risk* produced a discursively violent (McLaren, Leonardo, & Allen, 1999) educational discourse that alarmed the public and provided a gateway to education for opportunistic non-educators and businesses. The discourse of *A Nation at Risk* must be analyzed, as it is a great part of its overwhelming triumph.

## **America 2000: An Education Strategy**

In August 1991, Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander unveiled the George H.W. Bush education proposal, *America 2000: An Education Strategy*, which put forth an education plan that included six goals to reach by the year 2000. These goals were:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. American students will leave grades four, eight and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. (1991, p. 7)

These goals were largely developed at the Charlottesville Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia in 1989 (Heise, 1994; Superfine, 2005; Vinovskis, 1999).

Attendees at the conference primarily consisted of state governors and the president, with members of Congress, the media, and educators excluded. With no educators in the conversation, it is strikingly apparent that their voices were not considered important

enough for inclusion, even though educators perform the duties that are tied with their decisions.

The strategy for reaching these ambitious goals was divided into four parts: 1) make schools accountable for results; 2) create new schools with new technology; 3) create life-long learners in every citizen; and 4) communities must contribute by helping schools and creating learning opportunities. This strategy encouraged the use of a standardized achievement test (on reading, writing, and mathematics) to determine student performance and competency, school choice, the creation of educational standards, and advocates for the creation and maintenance of alternative certification programs for aspiring teachers and school administrators. The goals of *America 2000* also align with the goals of ANAR: content, time, expectations, and teaching.

The discourse of *America 2000* was also strikingly similar to *A Nation at Risk* as demonstrated by the following quote. “[Education] is at the heart of our economic strength and security, our creativity in the arts and letters, our inventions in the sciences, and the perpetuation of our cultural values. Education is the key to America’s international competitiveness” (p. 36). The sense of alarm and urgency in approaching educational reform makes those who accept the reform visionary and caring citizens and posits those who oppose the proposed changes as unpatriotic and detrimental to America’s future. This assertion of authority and power in education legitimates the view of education as an indicator of national economic success and strength. By linking success to education reform, the mass distortion created by *A Nation at Risk* allowed further federal involvement in educational policy.

*America 2000*, released late in the Bush administration, maintained, but did not re-create the widespread panic of *A Nation at Risk*. It is striking that the educational summit in Charlottesville created a key piece of educational legislation without any educator input. At the Charlottesville Summit was the governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton. By having all state governors present at the summit, state support and adherence to *America 2000* was largely assumed (Vinovskis, 1999). With economic and international strength on the line, Clinton's participation in the creation of goals in *America 2000* assured that his own future presidential education platform would not go against the tide of educational reform, accountability, and standardization, perpetuating the same education agenda of the past decade. While the aims seem innocuous, the drawbacks to these reforms were not.

### **Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement**

President Bill Clinton signed *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* into law and on March 31, 1994. Much like the aforementioned *America 2000*, *Goals 2000* used the upcoming millennium as an end date for the proposed goals and was seen as many as the continuation of the Charlottesville agenda (Heise, 1994; Superfine, 2005; Vinovskis, 1999). Unlike its predecessor, however, *Goals 2000* greatly expanded the federal role in educational policy and reform by encouraging systematic reform and expanded standardized testing (Heise, 1994; Superfine, 2005, Vinovskis, 1999). When signed into law, *Goals 2000* provided initiatives for state development of standards.

A key piece of educational legislation, as a result of *Goals 2000*, from the Clinton administration was the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* (IASA), a reauthorization of ESEA signed into law in October 1994. The IASA required states to

test students in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades on core subjects of math, writing, and reading. While the aims of Goals 2000 seem to be generally agreeable (i.e., few would argue with lofty goals such as 100% of American children will graduate, all third graders will be fluent readers by the end of the year), the means of testing proficiency were not. Standardized tests, as described by Sizer (1989):

... properly ‘measure’ only a limited range of intellectual and academic talent and that they disproportionately favor youngsters whose learning style is congenial with such assessment practice, yet we allow the ‘scores’ on such tests not only to serve as the basis of any school’s ‘effectiveness’ but also to ‘sort out’ youngsters.

(p. 86)

By the end of the 1990s, the national standards movement and standardized testing had spread to all fifty states under the guise of helping “states and communities realize the national commitment to improving education and ensuring *all* children reach high academic standards” (Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement, 1998, p. 6). By linking federal Title II funds to the development of state standards, federal priorities were secured by the Department of Education, thereby increasing their stake on education. Missing from the discussion was how these normalized standards would fit into every distinct community and culture in the United States.

### **Current Impact on Education: *No Child Left Behind* to Present**

The educational precedence set by the Clinton administration continued with the passage of the 670-page No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which reauthorized the ESEA. An early priority of President George W. Bush, the act received sweeping bipartisan support and was signed into law on June 14, 2001. NCLB mandated yearly testing of all American students regardless of ability or language capability beginning in the third grade and linked student test performance to school effectiveness and “adequate yearly progress” (NCLB, 2002, p. 22). Adequate yearly progress, met if schools met gradually increasing percentages of proficient numbers of students in math and reading, determined school funding with punitive restructuring when not met. Building upon the goals of previous educational initiatives, the goal of NCLB was for 100% of students to be fully proficient in both reading and math by 2014, as measured by a “statistically valid and reliable” state-selected assessment (NCLB, 2002, p. 22). The implemented measures of NCLB, designed to determine school accountability, spread to teachers through the requirement of a “highly-qualified teacher” in each classroom (NCLB, 2002, p. 196). The definition of what constitutes a “highly-qualified” teacher varies, however, on the various definitions adopted by each state under NCLB. NCLB demonstrates vestiges of *A Nation at Risk* through the demand for widespread educational reform, the urge for greater numbers of math and science teachers, and by linking school success with national success and security.

By this time, the context was such that education, unlike other professions, became the explanation for the economic and societal woes. Why is this? Goodlad (1990) calls the scapegoating of education:

...unrealistic and dysfunctional. Schools can only educate. It is appropriate and sufficient to expect them to do this well. Yet so long as we fail to address today's critical problems through political action directed at economic and social restructuring, schools will continue to be burdened with inappropriate, excessive demands; to disappoint us; and to serve as scapegoats for our incompetence and inadequacies in both domestic and international arenas. (p. 2)

The distortion of schools created by *A Nation at Risk* justified the reform movements of the 1980s and 1990s, and raised public alarm about international competition, as measured by the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) annual testing. The existing paradigm in education shifted after the publication of ANAR. The global comparisons on achievement, prevalent in the text of *A Nation at Risk*, are commonplace in current discussions on education. The need to create global citizens and maintain global dominance in the marketplace drove the educational reforms of *No Child Left Behind* and the yearly discussion of education in the State of the Union addresses. The paranoia towards South Korea and Japan (as previously discussed) in the 1980's has simply been substituted in name for China and India, the current global industrial and economic leaders.

Much has been made of international academic dominance in recent years and some businesses and educators have decided to counter this with the application of outcome-based education (Coleman, et al, 1997). Outcome-based education aims to empirically measure student performance in school through standardized testing, which has already been demonstrated as an aim of both *Goals 2000* and *No Child Left Behind*. American schools are franchises of American society that are expected to produce a

certain type of product—the ‘successful’ student (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Coleman, et al., 1997). What is not said in this statement is that schools are also the means of reproducing the desired society, which still requires the presence of many persons at the bottom of the hierarchy.

After the implementation of the neoliberal approach to schools, the *No Child Left Behind* Act came to fruition, which nearly ensures that failing schools will continue to fail while high-performing schools will continue to be rewarded. A notable example of the business approach to education is the Total Quality Management (TQM) business approach, advocates the continuous improvement of schools through the analysis of data, relationships with stakeholders (administrators, parents, and students), and output (Johnson, 1993). Students, compared to products of a manufacturer, need quality assurance of output in schools. Through test data-analysis, clear classroom mission statements, and benchmark assessments, quality assurance is certain. There is no end of this management in sight, however, as the Race to the Top spearheaded by Secretary Arne Duncan advocates the same type of outcome-based education. The Race to the Top provides competitive grants to different states that apply for funds to address the four core reform areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2009):

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and



- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (p. 2)

These core components are grounded in the same urgent rhetoric of *A Nation at Risk*, tying global competition and national security to the public schools. The replication of the discourse demonstrates the lasting power of the educative paradigm shift—*ANAR* is reproduced by not only federal education policy, but also the discourse surrounding education and the connection between school failure and national failure. As of this writing, the 2015 ESEA reauthorization has been signed into law by President Obama, and states are working to interpret the new policies for implementation.

We are at an interesting juncture in American and New Mexico education. After decades of standards, outcome-based education, and accountability measures post-*A Nation at Risk*, teachers are beginning to fight back. The context and underpinnings of *A Nation at Risk* are important to study and understand because of the educational paradigm shift that resulted from it. Without understanding the full picture of the context and educational culture surrounding the publication of *ANAR*, we are condemned to reproduce similar educational reforms without the voices of the educators they directly and immediately impact. The next portion of this literature review focuses on educators and the professional stereotypes they encounter and how these stereotypes have been influenced by policy.

### **Stereotypes of Teachers**

Greater standardization in the profession of teaching and federally mandated standardized testing was introduced with the passage of *America 2000: An Educational Strategy*, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. While the aims of these policies appeal to the American public, the means of these

federal policies ultimately damaged not only children, but also teachers. American public school teachers became subject to numerous competency examinations for licenses and scripted curricula to teach from while simultaneously losing their collective voice in the development of educational policy and reform. These reforms reinforced the take-away message of ANAR—teachers were no longer trusted in their own classrooms and not viewed as skilled professionals (Apple, 2013). The current educational climate is not conducive to autonomous and creative novice teachers that enter the field with an outdated vision of the classrooms they were educated in only a decade ago.

Teaching has traditionally been viewed as a non-career by the larger society, with a perpetually low professional status (Fraser, 2007; Holmes Group, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Urban & Wagoner, 2009). With teaching being ascribed a low professional status; both pay and benefits have also consistently remained low. Some blame low status for teacher attrition (Lortie, 1975; Shen, 1997). In the hierarchy of professional jobs requiring a college education, teaching is at or near the bottom in terms of salary, benefits, and public respect. Many teachers are the first in their family to attend college, thus using the profession as a way to gain entry to the next rung on the ladder of social mobility. There are several explanations for this low professional status: misconceptions of the profession as based on personal experience, teacher stereotypes, and material benefits.

Misconceptions of the responsibilities around the teaching profession contribute greatly to the low status of teaching. Most Americans are familiar with compulsory public schooling and many consider themselves as educational experts as solely based upon their own educational experiences (Labaree, 2006). Unlike other white-collar jobs requiring a college degree, teaching is comprised of an easily accessible worksite,

vocabulary, and common experience (Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2008). Many Americans who have not been teachers view teaching as a part-time or non-job that ends daily in the mid-afternoon for only ten months per year. They do not understand what teaching entails—the endless amount of planning and grading, the high level of energy required, extracurricular responsibilities, or the daily balancing acts and negotiations. The large-scale societal deficit view of educators chips away at the visage of professionalism. Unlike medicine or law, the work of educators is behind open doors, which invites scrutiny from all angles. The public cannot generally place themselves in the shoes of doctors and lawyers, but can easily place themselves in the shoes of teachers, which may contribute to the low status ascribed to teaching.

In the current rhetoric on teachers, many of the stereotypes of teachers are upheld as truth and hurt the professional status of educators. Teachers were originally hired as based on their religious and moral character, with many teachers entering the clergy after teaching. This moral expectation of teachers is still upheld in the conservative stereotypes of teachers (particularly in the elementary grades), from dress to personality to methods—endlessly cheerful, patient, kind, witty, smart, and willing to sacrifice all for students. This Mary Poppins-like individual is not only grounded in fantasy, but sets a lofty goal for many teachers to fall short of. Stereotypes, particularly for teachers, can be a dangerous threat to professional status, as Britzman (2003) explains:

Stereotypes engender a static and hence repressed notion of identity as something already out there, a stability that can be assumed. Here identity is expressed as a final destination rather than a place of departure. For example the image of the ‘good’ teacher is implicitly antiworker in that any attempt to unionize, agitate for

better working conditions, or seek more of a voice in the governance of schools is viewed as an individualistic example of being ‘selfish,’ ‘greedy,’ ‘into power,’ or ‘unprofessional.’ In the case of women teachers, who are merely seen to carry their ‘natural’ abilities into the marketplace, they are apt to be characterized as either martyrs or idiots. Male teachers are expected to assert a machismo identity in their classrooms, and depending upon their proximity to this image, become characterized either as wimps or as tough guys. (p. 28)

These detrimental stereotypes of the ideal teacher demonstrate the dialectical and often contradictory archetypes of teachers that are socially constructed: good and bad, nurturing or uncaring, professional or lazy (Agee, 2004; Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

With the larger societal confusion between stereotypes of teacher as either villain or hero, the roots of the role of teacher must be explored. Stereotypes may be rooted in the altruistic nature of teaching—both as a calling and as a service, both seeping with religious undertones. From the beginning of modern schooling to present day, teachers have been expected to live a pious life without significant monetary compensation. Much like the clergy, the compensatory pay for these low status compassion-based professions has remained low, which may be a factor in teacher retention and attrition. For a job that requires a college degree, competency exams, and continued professional development, the monetary rewards, to some, do not match the demands of the job. With the low monetary compensation tied to low professional status, many teachers leave the field for more fiscally lucrative professions.

Why do individuals choose to become teachers and how are they initially drawn into a field fraught with low professional status and pay? Lortie (1975) outlines five

themes of attraction to teaching: 1) the interpersonal theme; 2) the service theme; 3) the continuation theme; 4) the material benefits; and 5) the theme of time compatibility. The interpersonal theme cites working with children as the main attraction to the profession. The service theme is salient for individuals that want to make a difference through teaching, either for moral values or personal gain. The continuation theme attracts those that are unwilling to leave schools after years within the system—these individuals are deeply attached to school and may have been very successful within the system. The material benefits theme revolves around the fiscal, prestigious, and social rewards associated with teaching. The final theme is that of time compatibility. Many people, when considering a profession, look at the time expectations and duties. On the surface, teaching is incredibly appealing, with long summer and winter vacations, work days that end in the mid-afternoon, as well as federal and state holidays. Prospective teachers, particularly those that have recently finished their collegiate careers, can keep the same schedule as their schooling. These five themes for attraction to teaching provide an understanding of the material, social, and emotional gains for entry to the profession. With so many different accepted reasons, idealistic societal expectations of teachers emerge.

Britzman (1986) labeled the unrealistic expectations of educators as three cultural myths, which provide the stereotypical standard of an American teacher: “(1) everything depends on the teacher; (2) the teacher is the expert; and (3) teachers are self-made” (p. 448). Britzman further correlates these expectations to the individualistic determinism that undergirds American society. These myths are harmful to the status of teachers in that it implies that teaching is a solitary endeavor, where in reality, it is comprised of

social relationships entirely (both with students and staff). The responsibility for student success cannot rest solely on the shoulders of teachers, but must be shared between students, parents, schools, community, and the government. The myths establish the teacher as the definitive dispenser of knowledge in the classroom and does not posit or consider the teacher as learner. This is particularly important when considering novice teachers in that they have had little to no prior experience and may feel like an imposter in their own classroom. The final myth, that teachers are self-made, is also harmful in that it discounts the formal preparation of teachers and glorifies the sink or swim mentality usually thrust upon novice teachers.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) write extensively on why teachers are such an easy scapegoat to policy-makers. They write that since schools are public institutions received huge amounts of American tax dollars (both nationally and by state), expectations for outcomes and standards are likely to be unrealistic. They write:

...educators are a relatively passive group, often from working- or middle-class backgrounds, who have an embattled professional status and who are also likely to be women—a traditionally unempowered group. In sharp contrast, many of the critics have been males who were educated in private schools and who presently enjoy secure and prestigious positions.

And if these weren't reasons enough, American teachers actually sent themselves up for attack because of some of their most responsible, professional conduct. How does this occur? As it happens, American are very likely to take personal credit for when they succeed in difficult tasks. Not only is this tendency widespread in the United States, but it is also approved of by Americans who

associate it with creating the appearance of being able to cope. Moreover, the tendency is promoted in American schools by teachers, who encourage students to believe that *they* are personally responsible for their successes in schools. But if students are to take personal responsibility for their successes, what does that say about the teachers who helped them to succeed? According to data presented by Philip Tetlock, teachers are most approved of when they *downplay* their own contributions to student successes. Should we then be surprised if others sooner or later take teachers' self-deprecatory styles as evidence of incompetence? (p. 147)

Educators are *not* responsible for most of the reputed shortcomings of American schools, let alone for the overwhelming problems in American society. Indeed most of the 'shortcomings' of schools suggested by critics are nonexistent; and in most cases American educators are coping well with intellectually complex, emotionally demanding, time-consuming, and often dangerous tasks. (p. 148)

Teachers in current classrooms are typically not entrusted with the responsibility to lead in their own classrooms, which can be tied to the low professional status and harmful stereotypes of teachers as well as the trickling-down effect of recent federal educational policy. This is currently evident in the daily or weekly walkthroughs occurring in schools (Barrett, 2010; Crocco & Costigan, 2007), increasing formal evaluation systems, and reward pay. With the outcomes-based reforms and high-stakes testing associated with the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, teachers are subject to increased monitoring and less autonomy. This sort of observation negatively impacts the productivity of teachers, for they do not create a greater output of quality work, but they work in constant

fear of observation. Observing workers is not a new trend (with roots in Taylorism), but in education, the focus of these observations has greatly changed in the past two decades. Instead of long observations of an entire lesson while looking for quality teaching, it has devolved into a classroom walk-through, where a checklist is filled out on clipboard. Instead of watching classroom interactions and instruction, walls are checked for standards, lesson objectives, and the pacing of the scripted curricula. Teachers are subjected to daily teacher-proof scripted curricula.

The dehumanizing accountability standards that have exponentially emerged since the publication of ANAR can be best defined as the “deskilling” of teachers, a term coined by Michael Apple (1982) which is the:

Skills that teachers used to need, that were deemed essential to the craft of working with children—such as curriculum deliberation and planning, designing teaching and curricular strategies for specific groups and individuals based on intimate knowledge of these people—are no longer necessary. With the large-scale influx of prepackaged material, planning is separated from execution... (p. 255).

Deskilling was nationally actualized with the *No Child Left Behind* Act, which mandated a ‘highly-qualified teacher’ in every classroom. The definition of what standards define ‘highly-qualified’ was left to each state. Many states within the union looked to standardized competency testing and tiered licensure systems to ascertain teacher effectiveness. As previously mentioned, these suggestions were suggested by the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Forum. Like many of the policy initiatives created by *NCLB* and the federal educational polices stemming from *ANAR*, the aims of the policy were



innocent, but the means were not. Teaching competency is difficult to gauge, particularly by a standardized test. One can earn teaching endorsements having never taught the subject or taken university coursework within a content area—and this demonstrates the effectiveness of the teacher.

Another current measure of teacher effectiveness is using student test scores to measure the efficacy of teachers. On an instinctual level, it makes sense. If a teacher is successful, all students in his/her room should be measuring as proficient on state standardized tests. But if a group of students are already entering a classroom three or more years behind, it is virtually impossible, regardless of teacher effectiveness, for all students to test as proficient on a test as arbitrary as a standardized test, which is designed for over half to be below the passing level. However, it is important to note that teacher effectiveness scales are nearly always measured by student output rather than teacher conduct, which would be undoubtedly more expensive and time-consuming to measure.

The dehumanizing experiences that deskilled educators are facing in the post-*NCLB* milieu are occurring on a daily basis. This is not merely a statement on the downfall of professionalism in teaching, but the treatment, duties, and expectations of teachers. Many teachers may feel dehumanized, but do not have the mindset, framework, or critical lens to combat the deficit view of teachers. With textbook companies and federal educational policies (such as *NCLB*) devaluing teachers and emphasizing their incompetent abilities, the need for school takeovers and teacher replacements is justified. Teachers, in the eyes of the state, most administrators, and the corporate publishing houses are not seen as individuals with something to offer, but rather as another thing to fix—failing workers who produce a single product—test scores. By producing scripted

curriculum, the confidence and trust of teachers to produce relevant, creative lesson plans is stripped away. By monitoring the implementation of the scripted curriculum, the focus shifts from observing authentic instruction to ensuring that the teachers are doing the bare minimum—following directions. Many classroom walk-throughs now include an administrator ensuring that a teacher is on the right page at the right time. The scripted curricula are expected to be delivered with fidelity, another buzzword that promises sound test results in exchange for intellectual control of the classroom.

The back-to-basics approach to curricula and societal issues are not viewed as the culprit of low test scores by larger society—teachers are. The placement of blame onto teachers is a direct connection the fallout from *A Nation at Risk*. Teachers are not seen as valuable members of a school, particularly teachers that are viewed as ‘low-performing,’ as based on student test scores. Unlike many other professions where further education and support is made available to the struggling professional, teachers are threatened with replacement or punitive professional development plans. By emphasizing the disposability of teachers, many teachers (both novice and experienced) feel disenchanting, disheartened, and dehumanized. As Dworkin (1987) implies, this may be a strategy employed by the educational structure. “When teachers quit, school districts usually replace them with neophytes, thereby maintaining a reduced annual budget” (p. 2). This is reminiscent to the feminization of the field in the 1800’s, where female teachers would be hired because they were less expensive than their male counterparts. With new and inexperienced teachers entering the schools, administrators are able to better control what occurs in the classroom.

Another example of how teachers have become dehumanized is held through the actualization of the belief that teachers are dispensable. This is most salient in the restructuring process dictated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Many schools under NCLB were labeled as failing. With the aim of 100% of students being proficient in both math and reading by 2014, the numbers of ‘failing’ schools increased every year. Many of the failing schools were labeled as Title I schools, with the majority of students receiving free/reduced lunch. Restructuring occurred in schools when Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was not attained for five consecutive years. There were several different possible fates for schools undergoing restructuring. The respective school board that the failing school was located in selected between the following choices:

1. Converting the school to a charter school with new rules for operating.
2. Replacing the principal and teaching staff—known as ‘reconstitution’—and hiring others who would presumably do a better job.
3. Allowing state takeover of the school until it demonstrates winning ways.
4. Entering into a contract with a private management company or other entity that can bring success.
5. Initiating other approaches, such as hiring a school improvement specialist (turnaround artist) or imposing ‘whole school reform’ programs that typically have very rigid curricular approaches. (Darden, 2008, p. 1)

In addition to these stipulations, parents were allowed to move their children from a ‘failing’ school to an ‘achieving’ school. Title I funding, which is determined if at least 35% of the school population received free or reduced lunch, was pulled if the school continued to not make AYP. The school isn’t the only victim of this labeling process, as

the staff become aware that they are working at a failing school with little hope of quick improvement (Agee, 2004; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Zeichner, 2008).

The implications for teacher burnout are severe: “At the professional level, one may observe a significant decline in the capacity to perform in teaching, extended absenteeism due to illness and early retirement” (Friedman, 1991, p. 325). As Ingersoll (2007) states, “teachers with high ability, as measured by test scores such as the SAT, the National Teacher Exam, and teacher licensure tests, are more likely to turn over” (p. 167). This is also supported in the work of Friedman (1991) and the Alliance for Excellent Education (2008), who found that teachers with more education (as measured by advanced degrees) were more likely to turn over. Why are these teachers leaving, and more importantly, who is choosing to remain in the classroom? These existing trends in teacher attrition are exacerbated by federal educational policies, which have been developed under the guise of helping children but are hurting both children and the adults charged with teaching them.

*A Nation at Risk* named four major categories to focus attention on to fix American education: Content, Time, Standards and Expectations, and Teaching. With *No Child Left Behind*, the four guiding categories were: Accountability, Flexibility and Local Control, Parental Choice, and What Works. While neither *ANAR* nor *NCLB* explicitly label teachers as failing American children, teachers were the recipients of the largest reform recommendations. The tenor of *NCLB* does not mirror the alarming discourse of *ANAR*, but perpetuates the same educational paradigm and political suggestions presented in *A Nation at Risk*, as demonstrated in the guiding categories. The

actual discourse of *No Child Left Behind* is detached, which is not surprising being that the alarming paradigm established by *ANAR* has not yet shifted. The deplorable state of American education is a given that is now being confronted by educational reform and federal education policy.

Beginning with the implementation *NCLB*, standardized tests have determined the status of schools. Starting in the third grade, every American child is tested on reading/writing, math, and science skills every year. The scores on the math and reading/writing portion determine if a school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Because of this emphasis on reading/writing and math, subjects such as social studies, science, geography, history, music, art, and computer literacy have left the curriculum of many schools. Schools most affected by this reduction in curriculum are typically the schools that do not meet AYP and use scripted curricula. As Crocco and Costigan (2006) discovered, some new teachers:

find that test pressures, scripted lessons, and mandated curriculum are the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back. They leave city schools seeking an opportunity to develop their teaching in settings that provide greater scope for creating curriculum and pedagogy that are more satisfying and that stimulate meaningful educational achievement in their students. (p. 530)

With so many policy-driven measures trickling down onto the shoulders of novice teachers, the question of teacher sustainability comes into mind. With many schools focusing on scripted curricula surrounding reading and mathematics, a creative and reflective individual is no longer needed, an automaton is.

## **History of Ed Policy and New Mexico (past and present)**

Education has been a priority and way of life in New Mexico for thousands of years. The many settled Pueblo tribes, Apache tribes, and nomadic tribes that traveled through New Mexico have deep traditions that pass down traditional life and hard-learned lessons to future generations. Oral histories vary for each tribe and Pueblo, but can include creation origins, agricultural practice, religion, military strategy, seasonal transitions, and instruction on how to live life. The Western European idea of formal schooling arrived with the Spanish conquistadors and Catholic missionaries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, though snuffed out in the Pueblo Revolts of the 1680's, has perpetually escalated since then. The Spanish rule became Mexican through the War for Mexican Independence in 1821, and then Americans began expansion into New Mexico in the 1800's. From these various encroachments onto Native lands, cultural imperialism and the spread of Christian religions were a focus for all early formal schools as well as the omnipresent desire to break Native American tribes through schooling, force, and decimation in the name of Manifest Destiny (Iverson, 2002; Miller & Peacock, 1998; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Sides, 2006, Urban & Wagoner, 2009).

After numerous unsuccessful applications, New Mexico entered statehood on January 6, 1912, becoming the 47<sup>th</sup> state in the union (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005; Read, 1911; Read, 1912; Sides, 2006). New Mexico currently has 2,085,538 inhabitants, with 47% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latin@, 39.8% identifying as White alone, 10.2% as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 2.4% as Black or African American alone, and 2.4% as Two or More Races (US Census Bureau, 2013).

There are 22 Native American tribes in the state, consisting of 19 separate Pueblo tribes, the Navajo Nation, and two distinct Apache tribes. Education in the State of New Mexico is compulsory for all children under the age of 18. Tribal lands are served by Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, private parochial schools, or traditional<sup>3</sup> school districts. Cyclical and continuous issues in New Mexican education are poverty, language, isolation, religion, politics, leadership, privilege, philosophy, and governance (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005).

Since the publication of ANAR, formal education policy in the State of New Mexico has mirrored national trends. In 1986, around the time of the Holmes Group publication, Senate Bill 106 was signed into law. This bill, which became known as the New Mexico Public School Reform Act of 1986, directly addresses the four foci of ANAR (Time, Expectations, Teaching, and Content) and further amendments in 1989 required districts to submit annual reports including student results on standardized tests. In 2003, the role of the New Mexico Secretary of Public Education was created to helm the secretary-selected staff of the New Mexico Public Education Department, replacing the prior position of superintendent of public instruction (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005).

The first appointed Secretary of Education was Dr. Veronica Garcia, who was appointed by Democratic then-Governor Bill Richardson in 2005. During her tenure, she advocated “for the passage of the New Mexico’s Pre-K Act, she pushed for funding for

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<sup>3</sup> In this case, “traditional” is describing a typical American school district type, governed by a school board and superintendent. This is not a sovereign school district that educates Native children in their traditional Native life or language.

programs like school-based health clinics, breakfast in the schools, elementary physical education, and extended school year programs like Kindergarten Plus; under her tenure she worked to build an infrastructure for a strong system of accountability, pushed for rigorous academic standards which were recognized nationally, as well as advocated for the passage of the Hispanic Education Act” (New Mexico Voices for Children, 2012, para. 1). Garcia was a seasoned New Mexican educator, having worked as a teacher, principal and district administrator.

In 2010, Republican Susanna Martinez was elected to be Governor of the State of New Mexico. Martinez is first Hispanic female governor ever elected in the U.S. and hails from the Borderlands region of El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico. A former prosecutor that also served as a district attorney in Las Cruces, Martinez made education a key platform for her gubernatorial campaign, promising education reform and further educational accountability (Office of the Governor, 2015).

Once elected, Martinez designated Hanna Skandera as her Secretary of Education. Rampant opposition by teacher unions, singular educators, and the Democratic members of the New Mexico legislature dogged Skandera’s initial arrival as well as continued tenure in New Mexico. Much of the initial backlash revolved around New Mexico’s constitutional requirements for the Secretary of Education, most notably the requirement that the secretary have served as an educator. Ms. Skandera’s credentials as an educational advisor were viewed as entirely unacceptable, and she worked as the Secretary Designate until the Democratic-led NM Senate finally confirmed her on February 16, 2015 (Swedian, 2015).



Skandera's credentials and backstory are important in understanding the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. Hanna Skandera is the former Florida Deputy Commissioner of Education, who served under Republican Governor Jeb Bush (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2015). She also previously worked for former California Governor Schwarzenegger and the Hoover Institute, a conservative think-tank. Florida went through drastic educational reforms under the governorship of Jeb Bush (with uneven results), with Skandera as one of the leaders helping make decisions (Bryant, 2015; Dawson, 2013).

Secretary Designate Skandera did not let the lack of an official confirmation hold up her push for greater accountability measures. Governor Martinez assumed office in January 2011, and Skandera quickly assembled the Effective Teaching Task Force by the end of May 2011. Similarly to ANAR, the hasty recommendations of the task force created long-standing and deep ramifications for New Mexican educators. The published August 2011 recommendations of the task force relied on a subset of "scientific research" that aligned with the administration's position, which allowed for the rapid rise of several state-mandated initiatives implemented by the New Mexico Public Education Department in a relatively short amount of time—NMTEACH, a new school grading system, and principal evaluation system (New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force, 2011). In 2015, Secretary Skandera was named as the Chair of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Governing Board, the assessment that New Mexico requires for all students on an annual basis as part of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System (Schneider, 2015). By her appointment, PARCC was only being used in six states and the District of Columbia.

It can be assumed that the entire group of principals, teachers, parents and union representatives that comprised the Effective Teaching Task Force did not seek to create a legacy of harmful educational reform or a justification of punitive teacher evaluations in New Mexico. This is why it is vital to study the alignment and symbolic violence of ANAR and the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness system. This can only be done through a critical discourse analysis of the official publications as well as the public policy discourse and public reactions. Motivations, discursive strategies, and intentions must be studied closer to move the education and future of New Mexico towards a holistic future.

### **Summary**

*A Nation at Risk* is a seminal well-researched publication that has shifted public perception, educational research, and the schooling experience of a nation's children for over three decades. As the previous review has indicated, ANAR enabled the federal government to assume the position of the Pedagogic Authority in the United States. Testing, pressure on teacher accountability, standardization and corporatization of education became cornerstones of public education, regardless of initial commission intentions.

This historical grounding is vital in understanding how each educational policy has built upon the last addition, adding further stipulations and requirements to each iteration of the established ESEA laws. Now that the historical importance of ANAR has been established, the following questions still remain:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?

2. In what ways has the national public discourse on education policy since *A Nation at Risk* emerged embodied similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?
3. How does the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of *A Nation at Risk* re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

In the following chapter, the methods and methodology for answering these questions will be established.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Research Design (Description of Methods)**

This research seeks to understand the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk* and how it embodies a historical shift in educational policy discourse. It aims to examine how it is an example of symbolic violence, particularly towards teachers. Additionally, this dissertation will explore how the national public discourse towards educational policy has employed similar discursive strategies as ANAR in their representations of teachers and education as well as how the symbolically violent discourse of ANAR is reproduced within the New Mexico Teaching Task Force (TTF) Final Report and Recommendations (2011) and the NM TEACH Educator Effectiveness System.

In order to answer the proposed research questions, a Critical Discourse Analysis via a critical hermeneutical exploration of the interpretation of the TTF Final Report and Recommendations and ANAR will be employed. This selected approach allows the discourse and power structures of the selected data to be described, interpreted, and explained at the local, institutional and societal level.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In the spirit of my chosen theoretical framework, it is important to be explicitly clear about myself, my path to this work, and passion for it. I have been continuously enrolled in the New Mexico public education system since 1991. In the past twenty-five years, I have graduated high school, university, and taught within New Mexico public schools and universities. I love my home state and believe that excellent public education is a right for every child.

A common belief is that public education isn't political. This is untrue. My mother served as president of our local school board while I grew up. My mother fought for financial accountability and high academic expectations in a small town that rewarded the "good-old-boys" system and carried a deep distrust of outsiders. My mother, a Greek immigrant and female, was unacceptable to the hierarchy of power and only served one term. In the span of those four years, my mother conducted an audit that led to the resignation of the superintendent, got a multi-million dollar levy passed to build a new school, and productively worked alongside the local teachers union. These four years led to several different outcomes – my mother received awards at the state level for her commitment yet we also lost many local friends that viewed her actions as dangerous.

My mother, a fighter, did not let her defeat define her. She instead poured her energy into different projects – she led the community in building a multi-million dollar playground in our town, she built a summer apprenticeship program for kids to learn from local businesses and scholars, and she set the bar high for her children. She was not allowed to pursue her education after growing up in racist Australian schools, but expected each of her children to reach high levels of scholarship and attainment. My elder brother, who was accused of school board preference for earning the title of valedictorian in high school, became a Rhodes Scholar and is now a neurologist at Johns Hopkins. My younger brother is an assistant district attorney for the State of New Mexico. Our success isn't solely derived from our actions, it was deeply rooted in the dreams my mother had for her children, her understanding of Western structures of attainment, and the opportunities available to us in New Mexico. My mother had the

privilege of being a White military officer's wife, learned the ropes from him and through observation, and developed incredible agency as an advocate.

I knew that my educational experience was different from other children by middle school. Our schools were and still are tracked. Poor kids of color largely end up in the vocational track with remedial academics while kids growing up in more affluent and stable households are in the honors and college track. Even with my skin color and class in my favor, I still received sub-par instruction from long-term subs in science and foreign language classes. The shortage of qualified teachers in my hometown is an enduring problem that continues to the present.

My experiences are important because they have shaped my perspectives and deepened my belief in educational and social equity. I have always wanted to fix problems or help eliminate inequity. Growing up, I thought I was receiving a great education—and compared to my less affluent peers, I certainly did. I did not realize how unprepared I was until I found myself failing science and math courses in college. It is hard to lament my education when I, unlike half of my graduating class, attended post-secondary school. I realized in college that I wanted to take part in changing the future of kids that the state had given up on. I decided that teaching would be the path, and found Teach For America through a late-night Google search in my senior year of college. Teach For America was an appealing program for my Orthodox Christian ideology, using my talents to teach in an under-served community.

I chose to stay in my home state for my Teach For America commitment because I believed I could do more in a place that I knew better. I never knew the meaning of abject financial poverty until I lived and taught in Thoreau, New Mexico. The problems I

saw in my schooling in southern New Mexico were similar (tracking, lack of qualified teachers, lack of respect for poor families), yet grossly magnified. My students and families were entrenched in a system and state that had oppressed their tribal nation for hundreds of years. The lingering past and present trauma of education is glaringly omnipresent, yet never discussed. I entered the teaching profession in the era of *No Child Left Behind*, when the deskilling of teachers was ubiquitous. As a Title I school, representatives from the New Mexico Public Education Department would enter my classroom every year to trouble-shoot issues, yet only discussed my access to resources as a teacher. Similarly, my principal and school leadership team would lament the poor performance of our students on standardized tests and attribute the failure to the families of our students and the lack of teacher fidelity to the scripted curriculums the school had purchased. We spent countless afternoons in school staff meetings, going over student data that further proved ineffective instruction from teachers.

I believe that the policies in place in New Mexico are discursively violent towards New Mexican teachers and students. I believe that the push for greater accountability bypasses the sacred respect for individuals and families and legitimates the violent control and punishment of students, teachers, stakeholders, and school districts. I have seen numerous novice teachers, principals and district officials frustrated and dehumanized by the New Mexico Public Education Department. The NM PED increasingly continues to distance itself from educators, operate in a vacuum, and exert its position as Pedagogic Authority through Pedagogic Action annually vis-à-vis school grading evaluations, teacher evaluations via NMTEACH, and administrator evaluations. I believe that ANAR created a legacy of top-down reform that has repeatedly

marginalized the profession of teaching and created harmful stereotypes that are perpetuated in harmful policy. My hope is that this dissertation unveils hierarchies of power that will allow teachers, communities, and students to refuse more standardization, assessments, and violent discourse.

### **Methodology**

Largely using the seminal work of Louis Althusser (1971), this dissertation assumes that public education is a function of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which reproduces not only ideological stances in pupils, but also reproduces the same working classes and economics of the communities in which it operates. This idea of reproduction within the Ideological State Apparatus of education can be best illustrated in the work of Jean Anyon (1981), which elegantly outlines the difference in not only the quality of education, but the literal difference of ‘work’ being performed in the school. Schooling itself functions quite contrarily for different classes, and the discourse introduced by *A Nation at Risk* has contributed to this disparity.

The power structures that Althusser and Anyon allude to illuminate the concept of hegemony. Hegemony, an old term with ancient Greek origins (ἡγεμονία), is a complex system that operates to keep the dominating economic group at the forefront of power and influence in society. Schools are one function of the Ideological State Apparatus – which is a helpful framework that Americans implicitly believe in, regardless of ascribed ideology or politics. This ideological reproduction can be illustrated post-ANAR with the neoconservative and often faith-based home-school movement and the neoliberal charter school movement (Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman, 2006), in which Americans frustrated by the Ideological State Apparatus left the traditional public education path to establish



independent schooling that will reproduce their desired citizen-type. Regardless of education received, all Americans opt into the social mores and power structures of the United States.

This dissertation explores the power dynamics within American society and culture that both led to and developed from the publication of ANAR, trickling down to state policies such as NMTEACH. Critical theory is most applicable because it is “critical of social organization that privileges some at the expense of others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 22). Following in the tradition of critical theory, *A Nation at Risk* and NMTEACH will be explored as situated both historically and contextually (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2006, Kuhn, 1996, Van Dijk, 2011). The decades prior to *A Nation at Risk* set the stage for the American educational paradigm shift that introduced the federal government as the utmost pedagogical authority (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993). Through the misrepresentation of the American school system with inaccurate data and the powerful discourse embedded within, *A Nation at Risk* became an opaque veil that obscured power struggles in determining the role of the federal government in education (Kozol, 1986). Prior to ANAR, education was a non-issue for many Americans; it was rare for local or major politicians to use it as a platform. As a result of this publication, federal and state education policies have emerged from every president since and have become a hot topic for political debate. Without a critical view of these policies and discourses used within them, the same harmful policies and deficit-focused mindset towards teachers will continue to be reproduced and perpetuated.

Much of the immediate and continual success of ANAR is due to the alarming and suggestive discourse embedded within. The creation, distribution, and dissemination

of ANAR is an event that justified a complete overhaul of the education system while justifying the necessity of total federal oversight. The words that were chosen in the publication are important to consider because, as noted by McLaren, Leonardo, and Allen (1999), "...discourses normalize modes of intelligibility and construct particular regimes of truth as legitimate" (p. 142). The discourse of *A Nation at Risk* became normalized within education and educational policy as the United States Department of Education became normalized as the chief pedagogical authority in education.

Pedagogic action (PA), as explained by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), can be: ...exerted by all the educated members of a social formation of group (diffuse education), by the family-group members to whom the culture of a group or class allots this task (family education) or by the system of agents explicitly mandated for this purpose by an institution directly or indirectly, exclusively or partially educative in function (institutionalized education), and unless otherwise stated, whether that PA seeks to reproduce the cultural arbitrary of the dominant or of the dominated classes. In other words, the range of these propositions is defined by the fact that they apply to any social formation, understood as a system of power relations and sense relations between groups or classes. (p. 5)

This dissertation hinges on the belief that language is powerful and can be used as a form of Bourdieuan symbolic violence. Symbolic violence, as described by Bourdieu (1977, p. 196), "is the gentle, hidden form which violence takes when overt violence is impossible." Language can be used as a vessel of symbolic violence and is a powerful means for social reproduction.

Language, in effect, serves a larger master, a cultural and social system that tends to reproduce itself. Language is a medium of domination and social power that serves to legitimate relations of organized force. Insofar as the legitimations do not articulate the power relations whose institutionalization they make possible....language is also ideological. (Gallagher, 1992, p. 242)

In this dissertation, I write with the underlying belief that ANAR established, through symbolic violence, the federal government as the dominant Pedagogic Authority via discourse.

Discourse is the foundation of education. Without discourse, knowledge and wisdom cannot be created, imparted, or evaluated. It is the cornerstone of human expression. Discourse has a rich history of varying definitions and research traditions. Beginning with philology, linguistics, phonology, grammar, syntax, semantics, and semiotics are all disciplines of studying discourse, each with distinct definitions of discourse. Discourse Analysis is a field of study that has divisions between different perspectives of study and ideologies. In education, prominent styles include many qualitative research approaches including ethnography of communication (Basso, 1974; Hymes, 1972), sociolinguistics (Ervin-Tripp, 1969), and ethnography of communication in classrooms (Cazden, 2001).

Critical Discourse Analysis is the chosen analytic approach for this dissertation. CDA emerged from various research perspectives – discourse studies, feminist post-structuralism, and critical linguistics (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berks, Mosely, Hui, & O’Garro Joseph, 2005). Critical Discourse Analysis sets out to describe, interpret, and explain the relationships between language, social practices, and the social world.

Wodak and Matouschek (1989) elegantly outline vital aims and attributes of CDA as the following:

- a) Research interest: uncovering inequality, power relationships, injustices, etc.
- b) Object under investigation: language behavior in natural speech situations of social relevance is to be investigated (institutions, media, etc).
- c) Interdisciplinary research: social phenomena are too complex to only be dealt in one field.
- d) Inclusion of the historical perspective: social processes are dynamic, not static. This has to be reflected in the theory and methodology (e.g. discourse-historical approach).
- e) Researchers are forced to take sides: the ‘subjects under investigation’ cannot be treated as objects. Research includes the ‘researched’, and eventually ought to help them, if possible.
- f) Social and political practice is aimed at: results of the research should not only imply success in the academic field, but they should also include proposals for practical implementation (school materials, training seminars for teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.).
- g) Thus the ‘leitmotif’ of critical research could be stated as follows: ‘diagnosis’ first, interpretation and therapy to follow! (Wodak & Matouschek, 1989, p. 227)

Although there are many directions in the study and critique of social inequality, the way we approach these questions and dimensions is by focusing on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance. Dominance is

defined here as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality. (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 250)

While the term is fairly new, Critical Discourse Analysis has been informed and framed by the work of Gramsci, Foucault, Woodson, Du Bois, Hegel, Bourdieu and Marx (Rogers et al., 2005). As can be surmised by the term, CDA assumes that the author ascribes to critical theory and theorists. This point is one of contention, as authors like James Gee (2011) write that one can be critical (little c) without borrowing the framework and ideology of Critical Theory (big C). A main difference between mainstream critical and Critical is that CDA views language as dialogic, intertextual, and historically based. Critical Discourse Analysts separate themselves from other forms of discourse analysis in that they believe that their work moves “beyond description and interpretation of language in the social world,” and towards an explanation of how and why language operates (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 369). It is the duty of CDA to understand, uncover, and transform inequality. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) explain, “CDA is the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems. The focus is not upon language or the use of language in and for themselves, but upon the partially linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures” (p. 271). This dissertation views discourse through a critical lens utilizing Fairclough and Wodak’s definition, which:

...sees discourse—language use in speech and writing—as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as a social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s),

institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. To put the same point in a different way, discourse is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially influential, it gives rise to important issues of power. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

Public discourse on education, as with reaction to and consequent discourse after ANAR, is ideological in nature. The individual ideological lens in which members of the public interpret educational policy is revealed in discourse. Studying the discourse of the general public around education and educational policy is paramount in understanding why the status quo is repeatedly reproduced. Not only is the discourse reproduced, but the ideology is also reproduced. The dominant ideology spread through public discourse is vital in understanding why the same systems and ideas are continually reproduced with little change in outcome. By highlighting the reproduction of public policy discourse in education, the reproduction of ideology in education will be illuminated.

The idea of language and discourse as a powerful weapon is vital in understanding educational policy. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) elaborates, policy that assumes that the one-size-fits-all approach to children in educational policy is an example of color-blind ideology, where groups or individuals claim to see the character of a person rather than social status or race. This color-blind ideology is in fact racist by

denying the viewed parties lived experiences in a racist society. Gillborn (1997) writes that the deracialisation of education policy is a global phenomenon accompanying education marketization, which has “created a policy context where schools...are held accountable for how many students reach particular benchmark levels, regardless of disparities between different groups of students (based on factors such as social class, gender, and ethnic origin” (Gillborn, 1997, p. 350). This deracialisation celebrates overarching multiculturalism and demographics, only providing a surface level mention of difference in support of all citizens sharing the American dream or larger color-blind commonalities. Standardized tests, the product of educational marketization and the push for accountability, assume that every child comes from equal footing. Children of color and poor children are continually scoring in the lowest quartiles of testing with the proffered solution of further literacy and math remediation and the removal of science and social studies.

A common qualitative research criticism of Critical Discourse Analysis is that it relies too heavily on existing texts or policies rather than naturalistic settings (Rogers et al., 2005). This is a valid point for many types of qualitative research, but for the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that discourse (via policy, media, and written text) is the official means and ways of crafting and implementing educational policy. For this purposes of this research, it would be futile and a missed opportunity to create a proposed study to observe policy players in their natural setting and wait for them to discuss education policy or to interview them on their ideological stance and educational beliefs. Educational and public discourse regarding educational policy exists largely in and through discourse, leaving rich textual and media data that reveal power

structures and intentions far better than interviews, ethnographies, surveys, or other quantitative or qualitative approaches.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a good fit for my ideological stance – CDA “sees itself not as a dispassionate and objective social science, but as engaged and committed; a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships” (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). I do not believe that any researcher can be unbiased or that the scientific method provides the researcher with an all-encompassing blanket of neutrality or objectivity. Critical Discourse Analysis is a method that allows a researcher to interpret discourse through a critical lens, in the vein of rejecting the positivist research tradition. Discourse is difficult to measure, and I believe that researcher objectivity and impartiality is next to impossible to realistically achieve.

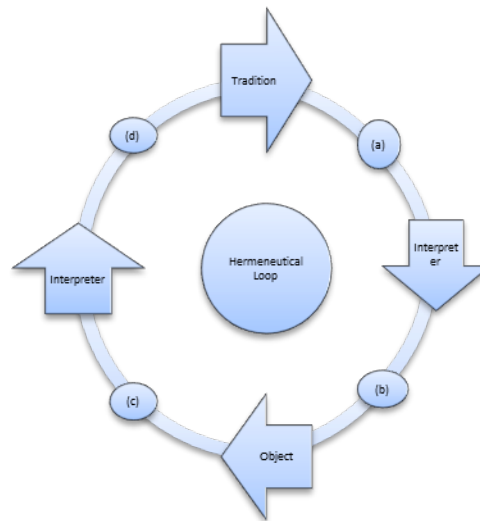
Another common criticism of Critical Discourse Analysis is that the bias of the researcher bleeds into the interpretation of the data (Rogers et al., 2005; Schegloff, 1997). This is a tenet of CDA, which rejects deterministic positivist approaches to research. Research, particularly studying discourse, simply cannot be neutral, as it spoken and produced by human beings with positionalities, biases, and ideologies. Discourse goes beyond words and lexical semantics; it also includes the interpretation of the discourse, or hermeneutics (Gallagher, 1993). Words, statements, research, and policies are not created in a vacuum and released without intention, as repressed meaning always exists within language. Meaning exists both within and outside of language. Hermeneutics of education take into account the power dynamics and structures in the discourse created and how it is absorbed and understood by individuals and the public. “What the public is



often exposed to is based on the interests of those who have the power to control the message and its interpretation” (Goldstein, 2011, p. 545).

Hermeneutics of education also consider the pre-existing beliefs and experiences of individuals and how their biases and lenses filter their interpretation. This can be best demonstrated by this adapted hermeneutical loop (Figure 1, below) based on the work of Gallagher (1993), which is informed by the works of Heidegger and Gadamer. As explained by Gallagher:

In this figure, the anterior operation of tradition (a) constrains (conditions, suggests) the fore-conceptions (b) which the interpreter employs to interpret that which requires interpretation (the object, or an interlocutor). The feedback (c), or alternatively, the interlocutor’s response in a conversation, will motivate a new projection of meaning. Thus, the relations (b) and (c) represent the hermeneutical circle... . In the process of interpretation, the interpreter’s relation to a particular tradition can change (d). (Gallagher, 1993, pp 106-107)



*Figure 1: Hermeneutical Loop*

The hermeneutical loop is vital in understanding the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. The following demonstrates a single hermeneutical loop of the NMTEACH system implementation:

1. The Effective Teaching Task Force, led by Secretary Designate Hanna Skandera, meets in Summer 2011, following in the Tradition of previous educational task forces. They published their findings in August 2011.
2. The Secretary Skandera-led New Mexico Public Education Department acts as the Interpreter of the findings and creates the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System (Object).
3. The NMPED rolls out a 1-year pilot study of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System while the system is reviewed by the public (Interpreter). The NMPED modifies some details of the system.
4. The NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System changes educational Tradition in New Mexico and becomes institutionalized. Further changes continue this hermeneutical loop.

Regardless of interpretation, the NMPED and Secretary Skandera remain the foremost Pedagogic Authorities in the state, as they are the legitimate extension of the US Department of Education.

### **Aims**

The aim of this proposed dissertation is not bound in creating or adding to an existing discourse theory, but rather to critically analyze the mirroring discourse between ANAR and the Final Report and Recommendations of the New Mexico Teaching Task

Force. The NM Public Education Department has devolved into a small group of powerful individuals that cultivate and stringently maintain the top-down approach with education. Their actions are enacted by both regulation and law and any groups or individuals that go against their decisions are viewed as opponents. A salient example of an ostracized individual is the treatment of Kathy Korte, an Albuquerque Public Schools board member whose actions and experiences will be explored in this research. The NMPED are the top knowledge holders, and they hold the vast majority of power in determining the education received by children, the teachers in front of those children, and the management of the public schools.

Another aim of this research is its ultimate dissemination of findings. I hope that teachers, particularly novice teachers, become more literate from this research in the Freireian sense of the word by being able “to read the word and the world.” Education policy in New Mexico has been created and implemented through a powerful legislative hierarchy far-removed from their lived daily experience. The vast majority of New Mexican teachers does not have the contextual and historical understanding of shifts stemming from ANAR but live out its daily legacy in their classrooms. Undergraduate teacher education core coursework focuses on the technical and philosophical aspects of teaching but do not address the driving forces of power, privilege, race, and class. This perpetuates the color-blind ideology that ignores the identities of students that these teacher candidates will soon be charged with educating. By perpetuating the status quo, the divide between teacher education and the real world further divides.

I believe that ANAR created a tradition of top-down educational reform that has repeatedly marginalized the profession of teaching and created harmful stereotypes that

are perpetuated through harmful policy. My hope is that this dissertation reveals the hierarchies of power that will allow teachers, communities, and students to refuse or be critical of further standardization, assessments, and violent discourse. I hope that a more respectful, loving, and holistic view of education and teachers can give rise to greater agency and educative autonomy. I hope that teachers in New Mexico can become more literate in understanding not only the ecosystem of their classroom, but of all society.

### **Methods**

In order to unpack the discourse and interpretation of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System, I aim to answer the following questions through Critical Discourse Analysis and establishing hermeneutical understanding:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How does it embody a historical shift in educational policy discourse? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?
2. In what ways has the national public discourse on education policy since *A Nation at Risk* emerged embody similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?
3. As a specific current example, how does the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of *A Nation at Risk* re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

### **Text Analysis**

A Critical Discourse Analysis following Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) eight principles of theory of CDA will be conducted. These principles are that:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems;

- 2) Power relations are discursive;
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture;
- 4) Discourse does ideological work;
- 5) Discourse is historical;
- 6) The link between text and society is mediated;
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory;
- 8) Discourse is a form of social action. (pp. 271-279)

Utilizing this framework, the power structures, rhetoric, and discursive strategies of the NMPED and U. S. Department of Education will surface.

In addition to critically analyzing ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations, I will also conduct a cross search for themes and patterns within national and New Mexico state-specific public discourse. I will search for identical writing structures, rhetoric, word selections, phrases, and ideological stances through words. This method will allow me to determine subtle similarities and differences between the seminal pieces.

### **Contextual and Hermeneutic Understanding**

Discourse, as previously established, goes far beyond selected words. Speakers, in-groups and out-groups, and power are embedded in discourse. It is vital that the context and interpretation of selected data are explored. The contextual and hermeneutic understanding will be established through the extensive research of the players of ANAR, the TTF, and the current NM Public Education Department. In addition, it is fundamental to build understanding of who and what gains the most from mandating systems such as NMTEACH and reproducing the discourse of ANAR. The Pedagogic

Authorities in New Mexico strategically exclude the public, educational experts, and critical questioning of their policies and mandates while maintaining their stature and standing.

### **Coding**

The sample texts (detailed in the next section) will initially be read and deductive and inductive coding schemes will emerge as the sample is critically analyzed during following readings. While it is anticipated that the war-like discourse and evocative rhetoric of ANAR will be reproduced in NMTEACH and public discourse, there is an exploratory element lacking when determining coding schemes prior to analyzing the data. An initial coding expectation would be the four major critiques and recommendations of ANAR: Time, Content, Teaching, and Expectations. These four themes are likely interwoven in all federal and state educational policy since, but it is important to provide space for the data and allow coding schemes to emerge.

### **Sample**

The sample will initially consist of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), the New Mexico Teaching Task Force Final Report and Recommendations (NMPED, 2011), the Public Education Department Report to the Legislative Finance Committee (2012) and documents released by the NMPED surrounding the launch and implementation of NMTEACH. Sampling will not be random, but intentional selection of discourse that directly pertains to the research questions.

The sample will also include ten pieces of public texts on educational policy spanning from 1983-present in addition to ten pieces of discourse regarding the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. Samples will be selected with the following

guidelines: 1) the text is publicly shared or formally published (online or print); 2) an adult is the author of the text; 3) the name of the author or affiliated group of the text is entirely released; and 4) the text pertains to national or New Mexican education trends. This sample is intentionally small out of hundreds of thousands of published pieces for the sake of manageability.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be collected through various means. The seminal pieces of this study (ANAR and the findings of the New Mexico Teaching Task Force) are available online. Public textual pieces will be collected through digital means. Collected data will solely consist of analyzed discourse.

These textual pieces, all written or published by adults, are vital in understanding which groups or individuals support or promote the evaluation system, their position in the hierarchy of power, and the rhetoric or discourse reproduced within. These ten selected sample pieces will be gleaned from news articles, opinion editorials, news broadcasts, Facebook pages, public blogs, or other publicly published text.

### **Data Analysis**

A Critical Discourse Analysis will be used in analyzing the data, specifically looking to answer the three research questions proposed. Research results will be organized by research questions. Each of the three research topics will be answered fully and separated by the following sections: 1) Discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*; 2) Reproduction of ANAR's discursive strategies in national public discourse towards teachers and education; and 3) Alignment of ANAR and NMTEACH and the re-discoursing of symbolic violence towards teachers.

New Mexico educational policy has continually been consumed by the students, staff, and general public in New Mexico, but seldom critically analyzed by educational researchers. There is currently a rich public discourse emerging around the current educational climate, government control, and educational policy in New Mexico. For the first time, there is a massive response to the policy makers and the mandates signed into law and practice. Additionally, this dissertation aspires to be written in a way that the general public can understand as well as inspire those on the receiving end to be more critical and participatory in the state and federal government that decides on their educative behalf.

### **Timeline**

The estimated completion of the data analysis and interpretation phases of my dissertation will follow the estimated timeline below:

- Establish key data sets by **May 20, 2016**
- Analyze data by **June 16, 2016**
- Summarize Interpretations/Findings by **September 15, 2016**
- Defend Dissertation by approximately **November 30, 2016**
- Expected Graduation on **December 15, 2016**



#### **Chapter 4: “Something is Seriously Remiss in our Educational System”**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the Critical Discourse Analysis and results of *A Nation at Risk* (ANAR) and ten pieces of national educational discourse, addressing the following dissertation research questions:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?
2. In what ways has the national discourse on educational policy since ANAR emerged embodied similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?

#### **Themes of *A Nation at Risk***

The discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk* is undisputed. As previously mentioned in the literature review (yet worth reviewing again), Berliner and Biddle (1995) outline the major differences in approach taken by ANAR:

The bashing of public education has long been a popular indoor sport in America, but never before had criticism of education appeared that

- was sponsored by a secretary of education in our national government;
- was prepared by such a prestigious committee;
- was endorsed by a president of the United States;
- made such explicit charges about a supposed recent, tragic decline of American education—charges said to be confirmed by both longitudinal and comparative studies;
- asserted that because of this putative decline of education the nation was losing its leadership in industry, science, and innovation;

- assigned blame for said decline to inadequacies in teaching programs and inept educators; and
- packaged its messages in such flamboyant prose. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 139)

Upon critically analyzing the discourse of *A Nation at Risk*, eleven major themes emerged through inductive and deductive coding, guided by Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) eight principles of theory of CDA. These principles are that:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems;
- 2) Power relations are discursive;
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture;
- 4) Discourse does ideological work;
- 5) Discourse is historical;
- 6) The link between text and society is mediated;
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory;
- 8) Discourse is a form of social action. (pp. 271-279)

The eleven themes of ANAR are listed in the sub-headings below with a description of each. Additionally, these themes are individually presented in Appendix A with three textual examples for each theme.

### **War, Dominance, and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority**

The theme of war, dominance, and the establishment of Pedagogic Authority is the cornerstone and legacy of the commission report. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, the publication of ANAR was directly tied to the fight for the legitimacy and institutional permanence of the US Department of Education. Phrases like “the

educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people” (1983, p. 9) best demonstrate the evocative discourse of ANAR. The rising tide displays a threatening inevitability of fate while the mediocrity represents the loss and inevitable stripping away of security and greatness. This statement, located in the first paragraph of the report, is the memorable sentence of ANAR. It is suggestive, it is literary, and it is a declaration of war. While the reader does not know who the perpetrator of mediocrity is, America must defend itself in order to maintain prominence.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education deeply embeds itself as a purveyor of fear, spreading a deficit-grounded myth that enabled decades of educational reform in the name of maintaining America’s greatness in the global marketplace and the eyes of American citizens. As noted by Bourdieu and Passeron, the desperate urgency that Secretary T. H. Bell felt and employed in upholding the US Department of Education may have contributed to the discourse utilized in not only maintaining the department in ANAR, but ensuring its dominant position as the foremost Pedagogic Authority:

The monopoly of the dominant cultural legitimacy is always the object of competition between institutions or agents. It follows from this that the imposition of a cultural orthodoxy corresponds to a particular form of the structure of the field of competition, whose particularity becomes fully apparent only when compared with other possible forms such as eclecticism and syncretism, the academic answer to the problems raised by competition for legitimacy in the intellectual or artistic field and competition between the values

and ideologies of different fractions of the dominant classes. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p. 22)

While Bourdieu and Passeron's interpretation may not represent the personal guiding ideology of Secretary Bell, the strategic use of discourse and the power struggle to keep the department alive inadvertently trumped all competing educational experts and left his department standing as the utmost leader in US education. ANAR calls it "essential...for government at all levels to affirm its responsibility for nurturing the Nation's intellectual capital" (1983, p. 17). They later state their belief that the

Federal Government's role includes several functions of national consequence that States and localities are unlikely to be able to meet: protecting constitutional and civil rights for students and school personnel; collecting data, statistics, and information about education generally; supporting curriculum improvement and research on teaching, learning and the management of schools; supporting teacher training in areas of critical shortage or key national needs; and providing student financial assistance and research and graduate training (p. 25).

The Federal Government has the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education. It should also help fund and support efforts to protect and promote that interest. It must provide the national leadership to ensure that the Nation's public and private resources are marshaled to address the issues discussed in this report (p. 26).

Never before had the federal government assumed such a stance, let alone asserted that they were the only player that could manage the extreme responsibility of all public American schooling. They posited themselves as not only the defenders of students' civil

rights, but as the ultimate depository and analyzer of student data and records, the center of educational research and the rightful disperser of federal educational funds. This grasp for power was unprecedented in education. Education was always a function of individual states, but by claiming Pedagogic Authority, the US Department of Education posited themselves as the ultimate decision maker in streamlining education, creating standards and benchmarks for excellence, and disseminating knowledge (Barrett, 2006; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Olson, 2010).

### **Low Expectations**

Low academic expectations is the second major theme to emerge from ANAR. According to ANAR, “[o]ur society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them” (ANAR, 1983, p. 7). This statement is a blow to not only society, but more so onto educators. According to ANAR, low expectations of society, teachers and school districts appear to have permeated the very minds of American youth and stilted national progress. Americans have given up on themselves and their country. The remedy to low expectations is not only having higher expectations, but to “expect schools to have genuinely high standards” (p. 14). This call for greater standardization is an important cornerstone of federal and state educational requirements mandated through policy since 1983. The push for high expectations introduced annual student testing, scripted curricula for schools, and ultimately, the de-skilling of educators.

The lamenting of lack of vision and low expectations for the “basic purposes of schooling” (p. 7), is a thinly-veiled call for a back-to-basics return to a standard, homogenized curriculum heavily grounded in reading, math, and writing. As discussed

in Chapter 2, this was a key component of the Reagan education platform of 1980 (Barrett, 2009; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Ehrman, 1995; Ehrman, 2006; Hewitt, 2008; Neshoba Democrat, 2007; Olson, 2010) as well as the neo-conservative call for educational reform. This call for a back-to-basics return is strategic in that it does not call out the progressive multi-cultural programs and bilingual classroom efforts of the 1960s and 1970s, but it deliberately devalues these important programs as the extraneous curriculum holding our students, and *defacto* society, back from previous eras and levels of greatness.

Low expectations became a pervasive answer for poor performance, from the macro-level of the entire American economy to the micro-level of a classroom student. Low expectations lament the sliding laziness of our society, and strategically place the responsibility for success on individuals rather than the system. ANAR unmistakably believes that expecting more from students and families, regardless of educational or aspirational opportunities available, will naturally lead to significant societal advances and a different lived reality for many Americans. It blames the “rising tide of mediocrity” on the dispositional traits of ‘unsuccessful’ Americans – laziness, low personal goals, and undemanding stakeholders.

### **Nationalism, Patriotism, and American Exceptionalism**

ANAR ingeniously unites the call for educational reform as an attribute of a proud patriotic citizen. It calls for every American citizen to wake up to the imminent threat of slipping success and hold educators and schools to higher accountability for the continued dominance and prosperity of the United States. This theme of patriotism, nationalism and American exceptionalism is inseparably linked to the theme of war and

dominance. Education becomes a strategic weapon to combat encroaching foreign dominance and prosperity, and a domestic source of pride or distress. Throughout the piece, there are repeated references to the previous glory of America and the urgent desire to maintain its greatness in the face of economic and educational challenges. The report instills patriotic intimidation with statements like:

Citizens also know in their bones that the safety of the United States depends principally on the wit, skill, and spirit of a self-confident people, today and tomorrow. It is, therefore, essential—especially in a period of long-term decline in educational achievement—for government at all levels to affirm its responsibility for nurturing the Nation’s intellectual capital. (p. 17)

This “knowing” is a supposition that all true citizens think alike in matters of national safety, and by being patriotic, should allow the government to not only intervene in education, but claim full responsibility. This statement demonstrates how exquisite the discourse of ANAR is—it seamlessly ties patriotism and nationalistic pride with further educational standardization and the case for federal power over education.

In this major theme, ANAR quotes Ronald Reagan while appealing for public support of educational reform: “This public awareness—and I hope public action—is long overdue....This country was built on American respect for education...Our challenge now is to create a resurgence of that thirst for education that typifies our Nation’s history” (p. 16). This is fundamentally untrue. America was not built on the foundation of educational respect or a thirst for education. While some citizens in the colonies did receive some parochial schooling, education for colonialists remained as luxurious as it had been in their home countries. Europeans did not flee their home

countries from a lack of educational respect, villages and cities in Africa were not torn apart by the slave trade in the name of education, and Native American tribes were not decimated for education. This statement skillfully ignores the reality of our nation's history and instead attempts to unite Americans behind education reform. The sense of American Exceptionalism and nationalistic patriotism is an important theme, as it represents the emergence of the neoconservative movement in the United States. The report links patriotism and pride in country to unilateral support of the federal government's education reform efforts.

### **Economic Impact of Education**

ANAR links public education to the economic prosperity of America and its ability to continue to compete internationally in a global economy. In conjunction with several other themes (namely War, Dominance and Establishment of Pedagogic Authority and Decline, Erosion and the Decent into Chaos), the Economic Impact of Education places the very financial security of the United States squarely on the shoulders of K-12 education. For example:

We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors.

We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products, but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops.

America's position in the world may have once been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer. (1983, p. 10)

It is true that American schools are charged with reproducing the American workforce within a global economy, however, it is folly to write that America's economic position



in the world is no longer secure—whether in 1983 or in 2016. America remains the economic, military, and cultural superpower that other competing countries aspire to be.

Regardless of ANAR's assertion, this theme is an indicator of the neoconservative educational call for reform. ANAR makes the claim that if education is improved through reform measures, the economy will improve and continue to dominate internationally. To ANAR, a better more standardized education ensures a better economy. ANAR invites the participation and expertise of economists, businesses, philanthropic foundations, and other economic stakeholders into education. Education becomes the means to combat the ills of society.

#### **False Equality, Color-Blind Ideology and/or Deracialisation of Educational Policy**

The fourth major theme to emerge from the Critical Discourse Analysis of *A Nation at Risk* is the recurrence of color-blind ideology as defined by Bonilla-Silva (2006) and the deracialisation of educational policy as described by Gillborn (1994). ANAR repeatedly uses color-blind ideology to speak of equal educational opportunity. When describing the need for education in the United States in 1983, there is a lack of grounded reality that permeates throughout the entire piece. One of the most glaring examples of this is found on page 11, where they write,

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and the spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure

gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.

This statement is ignorant of the lived experience of all individuals of color, women, all marginalized groups, and the poor. The above statement might be true were it not prefaced with the “promise first made on this continent,” which is only true for white men that were not indentured. This statement surmises that every person in American history had the same level of access and opportunity. This statement is unequivocally false and willfully ignorant. This paragraph broadly and deliberately white-washes centuries of genocide, encroachment, slavery, inequality, injustice, and all progressive movements towards equality. This revisionist history encourages meritocracy and squarely links non-attainment with amount of effort. Equality, educational and otherwise, was not present at the founding of this country, by 1983, or even today.

Another example of this lack of grounded reality and color-blind ideology is found on page 21, where the commission writes:

We must demand the best effort and performance from all students, whether they are gifted or less able, affluent or disadvantaged, whether destined for college, the farm or industry. Our recommendations are based on the beliefs that everyone can learn, that everyone is born with an urge to learn which can be nurtured, that a solid high school education is within the reach of virtually all, and that life-long learning will equip people with the skills required for new careers and for citizenship.

This statement is an excellent example of the deracialisation of educational policy that Gillborn (1994) writes of. While it is true that every human being has equal faculties,

ANAR entirely removes the reality of racial and class inequalities in opportunity and educational achievement. It instead replaces these disparate lived realities with a generic version of an American child that can personally overcome all obstacles in their path with the winning combination of hard work, dedication, and commitment to learning. ANAR states that educators and the general public must “demand the best effort and performance from all students,” which on the surface makes sense. Many classroom teachers may underestimate the ability of their students, particularly in poor communities of color. However, it places the onus of student achievement on these students without any mention of the institutional, historical, or racial oppression these students are facing. This is a strategic move that further propagates American meritocracy.

The report uses the following quote, “I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion” (1983, p.10). This quote is from the second president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. This inclusion is undoubtedly intentional, as it is the only public figure other than President Reagan to receive a direct quote. It is worth noting that Jefferson was writing of a certain type of citizen, a white male citizen, the only type of citizen in his worldview capable and deserving of enlightenment and citizenry.

As already mentioned, ANAR employs a one-size-fits-all approach to the American student. Embedded in these quotes is the belief that an affluent White student attending the private Spence School in New York City has the same educational and aspirational opportunities as a Black public school student on the South Side of Chicago

or a Navajo student living in the residential program at Ft. Wingate High School. Each of these children confronts a different lived reality, a different familial history, different opportunities, and an entirely different educational context. While the one-size-fits-all approach works in creating broad requirements and policy, it negates the challenges and intersectionality of the children they are created for.

### **Decline, Erosion, and the Descent into Chaos**

A cornerstone of ANAR is the major theme of American decline, erosion, and the descent into chaos due to the American educational system. It paints an apocalyptic portrait of 1983 that will extend far and irreversibly into the future if the current path is not corrected, and corrected quickly. In combination with the first theme of War, Dominance, and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority, this theme is one of the more colorful examples of evocative discourse in portraying America in hazardous danger.

We are confident that America can address this risk. If the tasks we set forth are initiated now and our recommendations are fully realized over the next several years, we can expect reform of our Nation's schools, colleges, and universities.

This would also reverse the current declining trend—a trend that stems more from weakness of purpose, confusion of vision, underuse of talent, and lack of leadership, than from conditions beyond our control. (p. 15)

This quote exemplifies how the neoconservative movement wanted to step away from the previous decades of progressive social and education movements. This quote shares that the winning formula for national success is explicitly following the recommendations of the report. By following the recommendations, not only would schools and higher education be transformed, but the very direction of the country would be reversed. This

call for standardization will put America back on the path to greatness and step away from causes and curricula that will lead to further erosion of society.

### **Functionalism, Structuralism, and Franchisement**

ANAR operates as a tool of the neoconservative wave of the 1980's, buoyed by the belief that the educational system is broken and in desperate need of systemic change. ANAR provides targeted recommendations for greater standardization and accountability using discourse such as, "For our country to function..." (p. 10), "Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials..." (p. 10), and "It is our conviction that the essential raw materials needed to reform our educational system are waiting to be mobilized through effective leadership" (p. 15). As demonstrated by this language, education is no longer a philosophy, a pedagogy, or a method, but rather a outcomes-based industry waiting to be tapped.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education, as based on these excerpts, views the country as an organism that must be able to function. According to ANAR, the major inhibitor of this organism and technological innovation is subpar public education experience. The system is broken, and American students are desperately waiting to be taught and inspired. Without the intervention of the federal government, American education is doomed. By adding more inputs, like yearly assessments or teacher evaluation systems, the product will be more standardized and successful. The system will better operate with a better output.

### **Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and/or the Artificial Support of Teachers**

The explicit anti-teacher rhetoric of ANAR is fascinating because of the numerous instances where it vacillates between appearing pro- and anti-teacher. Initially

the reader is encouraged to “avoid the unproductive tendency of some to search for scapegoats among the victims, such as the beleaguered teachers” (p. 13), yet only nine pages later, the reader is told that teachers are:

- Dumb – “Too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students” (p. 20).
- Unqualified to teach their subject – “Half of the newly employed mathematics, science, and English teachers are not qualified to teach these subjects; fewer than one-third of US high schools offer physics taught by qualified teachers” (p. 20).
- Underprepared by their teacher preparation program – “Teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement” (p. 20)
- Not teaching study skills (p. 19)
- Not effectively managing classroom time (p. 19)

It is difficult to relegate these deficiencies to anyone aside from the ‘beleaguered’ teachers. After all, they have just been painted as underqualified, intellectually deficient, underprepared, and misusing classroom time and instruction. Historically speaking, teachers have always been the object of criticism as agents of the state, with schools receiving huge percentages of federal and state tax dollars, but never had teachers been so lambasted by the federal government itself. ANAR does not provide any other alternative of who to place the blame of educational deficiency on.

The question must be asked: why does ANAR appear to defend teachers only to tear them down? This admiration of teachers is a societal norm. Teachers, like the clergy (Britzman, 2003; Lortie, 1975), are one of the few professions that can stem from an altruistic personal calling. Like the clergy or other service professions like firefighters

and nurses, it is important to praise the sacrifice and dedication required in these roles before attempting to critique them. Teachers do work that many other college-educated individuals would refuse to do, with small salaries and with great emotional investment. While the National Commission on Excellence in Education may laud the willingness of teachers to show up every day in a low-paying and low-status profession, they are explicit in their collective belief that teachers and what they are teaching are holding the country back.

### **Deficit View**

ANAR effectively separates citizens from the ‘haves’ to the ‘have-nots.’ ‘Haves’ are citizens that have correctly contributed to the success of the country by having “strong character,” “a deep respect for intelligence, achievement, and learning, and the skills needed to use them; for setting goals; and for disciplined work” (p. 26). Individuals who do not have these qualities (the ‘have-nots’) are described in the report as “idlers” that will be “effectively disenfranchised” (p. 10). This is a natural way for the National Commission on Excellence in Education to explain why some are successful in the American school system, and how other groups are not.

The major theme of the deficit view and the separation of the have and have-nots could likely be drawn down racial, economic, and ability lines. While ANAR does not explicitly name different cultural groups as either successful or unsuccessful, it is easy to read between the lines to discover who the authentic members of “The Learning Society” are and are not. ANAR laments that the “functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent” but only uses this statistic to titillate rather than problem-solve (p. 11). The report does not question why the same groups of American citizens

perpetually end up at the top of society, but rather encourages the reader to blame stratification on work ethic and character.

ANAR makes the mistake of linking character to levels of school success and contributions to the United States. While formal schooling and credentialing are nearly universally required for postsecondary jobs in the present day, the golden years that ANAR repeatedly alludes to typically did not require extensive credentialing. Even in 2016, many prominent inventors and businesspeople have admitted to struggling when they were students in public schools. There is little research supporting the claim that all successful individuals share “a deep respect for intelligence, achievement, and learning, and the skills needed to use them; for setting goals; and for disciplined work” (p. 26).

### **Neoconservative Call for Reform**

As a whole, ANAR is a neoconservative call for educational reform. Within the document, the commission makes many targeted recommendations that align with neoconservative educational priorities – a return to the basics of education, greater accountability measures, and streamlining educational standards. ANAR invites the business community, the American public, and the technology community to become more involved in demanding a greater educational output through educational reform.

The commission writes,

We firmly believe that a movement of America’s schools in the direction called for by our recommendations will prepare these children for far more effective lives in a far stronger America. Our present plight did not appear overnight, and the responsibility of our current situation is widespread. Reform of our



educational system will take time and unwavering commitment. It will require equally widespread, energetic, and dedicated action. (p. 27)

ANAR creates an apocalyptic version of American reality that has devolved from the greatness of the founding fathers (p. 10) to a society rife with mediocrity as well as economic and academic failure. This is important as it conveys the mindset of the neoconservative constituency in the early Reagan years (Apple, 2001; Ehrman, 1996). After decades of progressive education reforms valuing multiculturalism and multilingualism, a justification for the return to cultural dominance and a back-to-basics curriculum is logical. Neoconservatives felt threatened, and a sweeping call for reform of mandated public education made sense to impact the next generation of Americans. ANAR relegates the government's social, systemic and institutional responsibility for American prosperity and security while ensuring that "the school must be all things to all people" (Goodlad, 1990, p. 25).

### **Desirable Student Outcomes, Correct Dispositions of Success, and Common Sense**

Michael Apple explains that a key strategy of the 1980's neoconservative movement success was by appealing to and utilizing common-sense. "The rightward turn has been the result of the successful struggle by the right to form a broad-based alliance. This new alliance has been so successful in part because it has been able to win the battle over common-sense. (Apple, 2001, p.37) This common-sense is thematically omnipresent with ANAR, by praising the Western ideals of hard work, self-reliance, the American Dream, and with implied intuition of citizens. ANAR writes extensively from the perspective of the patriotic citizen:

Citizens know intuitively what some of the best economists have shown in their research, that education is one of the chief engines of a society's material well-being. They know, too, that education is the common bond of a pluralistic society and helps tie us to other cultures around the globe. Citizens also know in their bones that the safety of the United States depends principally on the wit, skill, and spirit of a self-confident people, today and tomorrow. (p. 17)

In addition to describing the instinctive knowledge of patriotic citizens, ANAR outlines the attributes and desired dispositions of all American students and parents. It ignores the disparate lived experience between American students. Instead, it focuses attention on what conservatives typically describe as the key to success in America – hard work, dedication and high expectations. In the section immediately preceding ANAR's final word, there is a section entitled "A Word to Parents and Students" (p. 26).

To Students:

You forfeit your chance for life at its fullest when you withhold your best effort in learning. When you give only the minimum to learning, you receive only the minimum in return. Even with your parents' best example and your teachers' best efforts, in the end it is your work that determines how much and how well you learn. When you work to your full capacity, you can hope to attain the knowledge and skills that will enable you to create your future and control your destiny. If you do not, you will have your future thrust upon you by others. Take hold of your life, apply your gifts and talents, work with dedication and self-discipline. Have high expectations for yourself and convert every challenge into an opportunity. (p. 27)

This line of rhetoric puts the onus for individual success on each individual, ignoring the reality that “[e]ducation reproduces inequality by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure” (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 114).

### **Recurring ANAR Discursive Strategies**

As noted by Chilton and Schäffner (1997) based on the work of Searle (1969), “Among many attempts at classifying speech acts, Searle usefully distinguished the following, which can be seen to have direct relevance to political discourse: *representatives* (truth claims), *directives* (commands, requests), *commissives* (promises, threats), *expressives* (praising, blaming), *declaratives* (proclaiming a constitution, announcing an election, declaring war). Speech acts can only be effectively performed under certain conditions (felicity conditions) which in the case of politically relevant speech acts may include complex conditions such as the power or status of the speaker, institutional location, holding of an election, and the style of language used” (p. 216). This interpretation of speech acts is particularly useful in the analysis of political discourse, spoken or written.

Within ANAR, the writers of the commission report repeatedly employ each of Searle’s speech acts. *Representatives*, or truth claims, are used throughout the entire document without a single reference to actual data or evidence. As noted by Chilton and Schäffner (1997), “Conservative policy is presented by simple statements and claims, often claims to the truth.... No evidence is given and the references, especially for ‘making’ and ‘more,’ are undecidable for the hearers (p. 219). The following are a small sample of the innumerable uncited *representatives* sprinkled throughout ANAR:

- We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament (1983, p. 9).
- Many 17-year-olds do not possess the “higher order” intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps (p. 11).
- The citizen is dismayed at a steady 15-year decline in industrial productivity, as one great American industry after another falls to world competition (p. 17).

These *representatives* created a new narrative of American education that heralded the arrival of the neoconservative call for educational reform. It effectively positioned the US Department of Education as the Pedagogic Authority in the United States by declaring an educational emergency that only they could fix through greater accountability measures. These representatives have been largely accepted by the general public, with the notable exception of some educational researchers and educators. In all public national discourse examined, these *representatives*, love them or hate them, appear over and over again. American education has yet to move on from ANAR, but instead spirals further into the hermeneutical loop created by ANAR with every policy, opinion piece, news article, or frustrated letter of resignation written in response to this call for educational reform.

These accountability measures are initially introduced through the *directives* embedded in ANAR. These largely reside in the recommendations of the report for the

four major findings – content, expectations, time, and teaching. Each *directive* calls for greater standardization and accountability measures. Examples of ANAR *directives* are as follows:

- We recommend that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science. (p. 21)
- Persons preparing to teach should be required to meet high educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline. Colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs should be judged on how well their graduates meet these criteria. (p. 24)

ANAR strategically utilizes *commissives* to threaten the feeling of national security to the American public. ANAR repeatedly and strategically utilizes the theme of decline, erosion and descent into chaos to further establish the sense of urgency in creating and implementing educational reform. These *commissives* are strategically inclusive to the dominant culture and strategically excludes the lived experiences of marginalized citizens. Some examples of *commissives* in ANAR are below:

- History is not kind to idlers. The time is long past when American's destiny was assured simply by an abundance of natural resources and inexhaustible human enthusiasm, and by our relative isolation from the malignant problems of older civilizations. The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined,

well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors. We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops. America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer. (p. 10)

- Each generation of American has outstripped its parents in education, in literacy, and in economic attainment. For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents. (p. 12)

These bleak threats to the future of American children contribute to the great sense of urgency and impatience that education reformers have championed for three decades. These *commissives* are extremely effective in creating an atmosphere of fear in economic and national security, driving the push for greater educational accountability in return for safety.

ANAR utilizes *expressives* largely in the major theme of anti-teacher rhetoric and the artificial support of teachers. ANAR, and subsequent educational policy and opinion pieces, have used a bipolar approach of praising and thanking teachers for their dedication and hard work, yet decry the low professional standards and apparent lack of high expectations. Examples of ANAR *expressives* are below:

- This unity, however, can be achieved only if we avoid the unproductive tendency of some to search for scapegoats among the victims, such as the beleaguered teachers. (1983, p. 13)

- The Commission found that not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers exists in key fields. (p. 20)

*Expressives* demonstrate the polarity in America's opinion on the profession of teaching (Britzman, 2003). On one hand, teachers are praised as diligent workers that make a daily difference in the lives of our youth. On the other hand, teachers are lazy and stupid clock-counters waiting for retirement. Further analysis of this dichotomy is found in the Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and Artificial Support of Teachers theme of ANAR and subsequent public educational discourse.

*Declaratives* are the greatest triumph of ANAR. These statements are the evocative, war-like discourse that caught the attention of the general public, legislators, businesspeople, and educators. Some examples of *declaratives* of ANAR are below:

- Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.

What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. (1983, p. 9)

- This report, the result of 18 months of study, seeks to generate reform of our educational system in fundamental ways and to renew the nation's commitment to schools and colleges of high quality throughout the length and breadth of our land. (p. 9)

Make no mistake; these *declaratives* are a justification for an overhaul of the American education system and the movement towards education standardization, high-stakes testing, and greater accountability measures.

### **Analysis of National Educational Discourse**

#### **Recurring ANAR Themes**

The following table provides the title, type of discourse, and recurring ANAR themes for eleven pieces of selected national public discourse. Each check mark under thematic element represents evidence of this theme embedded in the discourse. These selected discourse examples span both the chronological gaps between ANAR and the present as well as the ideological gap between neoconservative to neoliberal approaches to education. These pieces were chosen with the guidance of Wodak (1989), who chose seven pieces of different discourse material to analyze anti-Semitism in the Austrian media. Searches were conducted for:

1. Government and/or official documents
2. Statements and perspectives from teachers/educators
3. Perspectives of education historians
4. Reporting by the US media on ANAR



5. Reporting from the US Department of Education or rebuttals
6. Outside media perspectives or reporting on ANAR
7. Statements/Interviews of politicians or officials

As a reminder, the theme does not simply imply the sub-textual theme of a written discourse, but rather the explicit and evocative discourse of ANAR. These themes, again, are as follows:

1. War, Dominance, and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority
2. Low Expectations
3. Nationalism/Patriotism/American Exceptionalism
4. Economic Impact of Education
5. False Equality/Color-Blind Ideology/Deracialisation of Educational Policy
6. American Decline/Erosion/Descent into Chaos
7. Functionalism/Structuralism/Franchisement
8. Artificial Support of Teachers/Anti-Teacher Rhetoric
9. Deficit View
10. Neoconservative Call for Reform
11. Disposition of Success, Moral Instruction, Common Sense

Title of Discourse, Year	Pub Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A Nation at a Loss, 2008	Opinion	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Page											
ANAR: How Gifted Low-Income Kids are Left Behind, 2016	Blog				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Failing Teachers, 2014	Blog	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Why We Must Fire Bad Teachers, 2010	News Article	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Letter to Bernie Sanders: The TRUTH About Why The Schools Failed, 2016	Opinion Page	✓			✓				✓		✓	✓
Letter from disgusted teacher: 'I quit', 2012	Public Letter	✓				✓			✓		✓	✓
Education at Risk: Fallout from a Flawed Report, 2007	Blog/Community Post	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
George Bush: 'Every One of our Children Deserves a First-Rate School', 1988	News Article	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A nation 'truly' at risk, 1993	Magazine Article	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
A Nation at Risk: This Time for Real, 2010	Blog	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Stop Humiliating Teachers, 2016	Opinion Page	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Table 1: Recurring ANAR Themes in National Public Discourse

These public discourses represent a sample spanning three decades. It is important to note that these pieces vary in support of the neoconservative reform efforts of the Reagan administration to the outright refusal of the findings of ANAR and every succeeding federal educational policy. Critics and proponents alike continue to write unceasingly and continuously around the eleven major themes of ANAR. Regardless of the stance and political positioning of the author, the truth remains that ANAR continues to be re-discoursed through policy, ideology, and argument. ANAR created a paradigm shift under felicitous conditions that the United States has yet to emerge from.

Like September 11<sup>th</sup> or other significant historical events that changed the national narrative or represent a paradigm shift, *A Nation at Risk* is an event that requires commemoration. Beginning in the early years after the publication and now occurring every five to ten years, a slew of articles, some analyzed for national public discourse, measure the elements of progress against the years since ANAR changed the educational paradigm. Titles like “*A Nation at Risk: This Time for Real*,” “*A Nation at a Loss*,” “*Education at Risk: Fallout from a Flawed Report*,” and “*A Nation ‘Truly’ at Risk*” repurpose the title itself to demonstrate the real and present version of educational danger we are now working in.

Aside from titles, authors of examined public discourse land squarely between two camps: those who believe that ineffective teachers are the root of educational problems (Thomas, 2010; Wai & Worrell, 2016; Walker, 1988) and those that believe the findings of ANAR and following educational policy to be inherently flawed and anti-teacher (Ansary, 2007; Denby, 2016; Fiske, 2008; Labrasciano, 2014; Olsen, 2010; Schwartz, 2016; Strauss, 2012; Tanner, 1993). The initial group accepts the findings of ANAR and repeat the findings in statements like:

The relative decline of American education at the elementary- and high-school levels has long been a national embarrassment as well as a threat to the nation’s future. Once upon a time, American students tested better than any other students in the world...

Yet in recent years researchers have discovered something that may seem obvious, but for many reasons was overlooked or denied. What really makes a difference, what matters more than the class size or the textbook, the teaching

method or the technology, or even the curriculum, is the quality of the teacher.

(Thomas, 2010, para. 1-2)

This statement (which is only the first few paragraphs of a multi-page news article) not only mirrors the discourse of ANAR itself, but it also includes numerous major themes of ANAR. War and Dominance, the Descent into Chaos, the Neoconservative Call for Reform, Anti-Teacher Rhetoric, Common Sense, and Color-Blind Ideology are all conflated in this small sample. It accepts the missing research of ANAR and builds upon the myth that ANAR created. This news piece was written nearly three decades after ANAR was published, but it is clear that ANAR provided the blueprint for discourse and rhetoric.

This apparent blueprint is also evident in the opposition's camp. From the national discourse pieces analyzed, ANAR set the discursive tone and educational policy agenda. These national discourse pieces decry the result of educational reform but do not offer a different approach. These eight pieces instead focus on how the problems in education are only on the side of policy and standardization mandates, with no solutions proffered other than eliminating high-stakes testing and being nicer to teachers. The Sandia Report, a federal research piece never published by the U.S. Department of Energy, is mentioned in four articles. The Sandia Report found that education outcomes in 1983 were consistent with previous generations. Throughout the eleven pieces of public educational discourse Searle's (1969) *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declaratives* were repeatedly utilized.

## **The War Against Teachers**

As previously mentioned, a major theme that emerged while conducting a CDA of *A Nation at Risk* is the artificial support of teachers and the anti-teacher rhetoric embedded within. ANAR makes seven explicit recommendations for the profession of teaching, which are summarized as the following:

- 1) Teachers must be required to meet high educational standards, demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline (p. 24).
- 2) Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones improved or terminated (p. 24).
- 3) Teachers should work on an 11-month contract (p. 25).
- 4) Career ladders should exist to “distinguish among the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teacher” (p. 25).
- 5) Alternative teaching programs should exist to attract the best and brightest into teaching, regardless of teacher training (p. 25).
- 6) The teaching profession should be incentivized to attract better teaching candidates (p. 25).
- 7) Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary years (p. 25).

These seven seemingly innocuous recommendations changed the profession of teaching within a decade. Since 1983, nearly all of these recommendations have come to fruition, as seen below:

- 1) Undergraduate teaching programs have been under increasing scrutiny and standardization. Teacher education programs regularly screen for disposition in their admissions process.
- 2) Outcomes-based state teacher evaluations were linked to federal dollars in *Race to the Top*.
- 3) Many school systems still utilize the 9-month contract for educators, but year-round schooling is becoming more popular, particularly for low-income communities with failing schools.
- 4) 3-tiered licensure systems and pay schedules have been promoted by the Holmes Group (1986) and enacted by many states, including New Mexico.
- 5) There are still critical teaching shortages in math and science across the country. Many states have lessened requirements or implemented university alternative licensure programs to help bring teachers into the classroom.
- 6) Teaching largely remains un-incentivized.
- 7) While there are inevitably outliers, master teachers are rarely invited to assist in designing university teacher preparation programs. Design largely belongs to university faculty, who may or may not be former teachers—let alone master teachers.

Subsequent educational policy that emerged from ANAR is largely punitive.

While the push for greater accountability and marketization of education stems with

ANAR, NCLB became the first federal policy that required every state to adopt accountability systems in order to receive vital federal education funding. NCLB:

is grounded in three flawed assumptions: the first is that standardized tests really measure significant learning by students. The second is that punishing schools and teachers will result in improved learning. The third is that schools and teachers, alone, are accountable for the success or failure of their students. (Tye, Tye, & Tye, 2010, p. 33).

These flawed assumptions, fundamentally grounded in deracialised educational policy where all children are an identical prototype, assumes that every child can and will perform equitably if teachers simply do their job with high expectations. It's an unwinnable situation. While every child may have the same aptitude or desire to learn, it is nearly impossible for a child that is growing up within an inherently racist society, with biased and narrow curriculum, and in generational poverty to perform at the same level as more affluent and white children. The opportunities and challenges are disparate, and no level of teacher commitment can eradicate poverty or racism. Teachers working with students of color or impoverished students have been entirely set up to fail, and conscientious teachers may take this strategic failure as a personal failure.

Neoconservative proponents of the standards-movement advocate that student test data is a tool that should drive instruction. In theory, this sounds great. Teachers should use student test data to drive instruction. However, data now determines teacher effectiveness, teacher job security, and ultimately student life outcome.

## **Symbolic Violence to Actual Violence**

Across the United States, teachers have not reacted to greater accountability and standardization identically. For some, the symbolic violence of the media and overseeing bureaucracy has transitioned to a physical response. Many teachers self-report feeling stressed, anxious, burned-out, abused, or even experience mental breakdowns while under ever-increasing professional demands (Labrasciano, 2014). One teacher explained that he decided to leave the profession after increasing demands and de-skilling “in order to preserve my sanity, my family, and the forward movement of our lives, I have no other choice” (Strauss, 2012, para. 3). One veteran teacher wrote the following poem in frustration:

As teachers, we’ve become numb.

We do what we’re told, and believe we have no choice.

Literacy coaches. “Reading police.” District administrators visit, to find fault.

*Do it—or else.*

We’re tired.

Getting burned out.

Lost our voice.

We older teachers who know what’s better have given in. Put our wonderful

exciting thematic lesson units away into cupboards.

Stopped voicing our concerns and ideas, since no one listens

—except a few at lunch who knew what it was like

when eyes sparkled and hearts glowed because learning was so real,



and there wasn't a test lurking to steal their self-esteem nearly  
every  
single  
day.

(Tye, Tye, & Tye, 2010, p. 36)

This feeling of helplessness is widespread, with teachers from California to Illinois to Florida to North Carolina expressing fear, anxiety, and sometimes making the decision to end their lives because of greater accountability measures. In one case, a teacher left a suicide note filled with her frustrations in teaching (Schlikerman, 2012). A California teacher decided to end her life in her classroom and her body was found by her first-period students (Murphy, 2015). Yet another ended his life after being publicly classified as an ineffective educator in the *LA Times* (Lovett, 2010).

Teachers, in the eyes of the state, administrators, and the corporate publishing houses are not seen as individuals with something to offer, but rather as workers who produce a product—test scores. By producing scripted curriculums, the confidence and trust of teachers to produce relevant, creative lesson plans is stripped away. By monitoring the implementation of the scripted curriculums, the focus shifts from observing authentic instruction to ensuring that the teachers are doing the bare minimum—following standardized directions. This de-skilling of teachers is the direct actualization of Friere's banking method of education (1993/1970).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In summary, eleven major themes have emerged through a Critical Discourse Analysis of ANAR. These themes are:

1. War, Dominance, and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority
2. Low Expectations
3. Nationalism/Patriotism/American Exceptionalism
4. Economic Impact of Education
5. False Equality/Color-Blind Ideology/Deracialisation of Educational Policy
6. American Decline/Erosion/Descent into Chaos
7. Functionalism/Structuralism/Franchisement
8. Artificial Support of Teachers/Anti-Teacher Rhetoric
9. Deficit View
10. Neoconservative Call for Reform
11. Disposition of Success, Moral Instruction, Desirable Outcomes of Students

This chapter sought to answer the first two research questions:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?
2. In what ways has the national discourse on educational policy since ANAR emerged embodied similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?

As presented in this chapter, ANAR is American education's most influential piece of discourse. ANAR has set the tone and aims of education reform in the past three decades since publication. The major discursive strategies utilizing Searle's (1969) Speech Acts—*representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declaratives* were found to be substantive in the success of ANAR and demonstrate the discursive significance of ANAR. These discursive strategies have shaped the national educational

policies since the public release of ANAR 1983 as well as legitimized greater scrutiny of educators. From this legitimization, teachers became scapegoats for the ills of American society, namely poverty. Upon this analysis of ANAR, a further ten pieces of national public discourse in education were analyzed in search of the re-discoursing and symbolic violence of ANAR.

Now that ANAR and ten pieces of national discourse surrounding education and teaching have been analyzed, the next chapter will analyze mirroring trends and discourse on the state level (New Mexico) rather than the federal level. Chapter 5 will focus on the Final Report and Recommendations of the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force (which includes the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System) as well as ten pieces of public discourse surrounding this particular political project. Additionally, the transition from symbolic violence to physical violence in the war against teachers will be explored on the state level.

## **Chapter 5: The Connections between *A Nation at Risk* and Current New Mexico Policy**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the Critical Discourse Analysis and results of *A Nation at Risk* (ANAR), the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System and ten pieces of New Mexico public discourse, addressing the following dissertation research question:

3. As a specific current example, how does the discourse of ANAR align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of ANAR re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

To remind the reader, the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System is a byproduct of the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force's Final Report and Recommendations of 2011. The NMTEACH system was introduced in a 2012-2013 pilot study then implemented statewide by SY2013-14. Similar to ANAR, the quickly created recommendations of the New Mexico task force created long-standing and deep ramifications for New Mexican educators. The published August 2011 recommendations of the task force relied on a subset of "scientific research" that aligned with the neoconservative administration's position, which allowed for the rapid rise of several state-mandated initiatives implemented by the New Mexico Public Education Department in a relatively short amount of time—NMTEACH, a new school grading system, and principal evaluation system (New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force, 2011). As previously mentioned, NMTEACH is designed to measure teacher effectiveness by collecting student achievement data through a Values-Added Model (VAM) formula (50% of the formula), observations (25%), and various other measures (25%), which

include parent surveys, teacher attendance, student surveys, and graduation rates. In order to answer the question above, a Critical Discourse Analysis following Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) eight principles of theory of CDA will be conducted.

### **Major Themes of the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force: Final Report and Recommendations**

The most important document in answering the third research question of this dissertation is the 2011 New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force (TTF) Final Report and Recommendations, which initially justified the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. Like *A Nation at Risk*, this document was created by a commission led by the leader of the education cabinet, then-Secretary Designate Hanna Skandera. The fifteen members of the commission included teachers, union representatives, and administrators from across New Mexico. To complete its work, the Task Force, with support from Public Education Department staff, self-reported to have read and reviewed the latest research on teacher and school leader evaluations, compensation, observation protocols, professional development, licensure, advancement, and details related to the current New Mexico teacher and school leader evaluation system (New Mexico TTF, 2011, p. 10). Upon completing this research, the commission met ten times over the course of summer 2011 to meet with New Mexico education experts and then formed their final recommendations as a report.

This bellwether document outlines the major initiatives of Secretary Designate Skandera's platform and is flush with concerns, policy recommendations, and a strong call for widespread educational reform in New Mexico in the same vein of neoconservative recommendations. Upon critically analyzing the discourse of the Final

Report and Recommendations of the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force, seven major themes emerged through inductive and deductive coding, guided by Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) eight principles of theory of CDA. These principles are that:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems;
- 2) Power relations are discursive;
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture;
- 4) Discourse does ideological work;
- 5) Discourse is historical;
- 6) The link between text and society is mediated;
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory;
- 8) Discourse is a form of social action. (pp. 271-279)

Each of the seven major themes of the TTF report will be explored in the following sections (see Appendix B for textual examples of each theme).

### **Dominance and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the appointed office of Secretary of Education as well as the NM PED did not exist until 2003, when a New Mexico constitutional amendment changed the governance of public education from a state board of education to the secretary-led Public Education Department (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005). The long-established state board of education shifted to the newly-entitled Public Education Commission, in which ten elected commissioners advise the Secretary of Education as needed. The Secretary of Education is given *carte blanche* to select their own staff to maintain and operate the NM PED.

The New Mexico Public Education Department, established mid-way through the Bill Richardson administration, is a new department lacking institutional history or previous precedence. When Governor Martinez was elected in 2010, no time was lost in appointing Hanna Skandera as the Secretary Designate of Education. Skandera, following in the tradition of Secretary T.H. Bell in 1983, quickly assembled the New Mexico Teaching Task Force and published their findings by August 2011. It is clear throughout this Teaching Task Force document that Skandera set forth to claim Pedagogic Authority in New Mexico while also urgently shifting the purpose, priorities and responsibilities of the Public Education Department.

Aside from historical parallels with ANAR's claim for Pedagogic Authority through a commission report, the TFF Final Report and Recommendations also utilizes strategic use of discourse to claim educative power. The report's introduction is quick to link the initiatives of the TFF findings to the US Department of Education, providing federal credence to the purposes of their proposed teacher evaluation initiative:

While there is no silver bullet in education, research has clearly shown that one of the most important school-related factors influencing a child's academic achievement is the quality of his or her teacher (Sanders, 2003). President Obama and Secretary Duncan recognized the impact and prioritized teacher effectiveness as part of the Race to the Top competition. Further, multiple states are redesigning existing teacher and school leader evaluation systems to reflect the importance of student achievement. (Teaching Task Force, 2011, p. 9)

This quote justifies the policy recommendations of the TTF by linking it to Race to the Top ESEA reauthorization policies. It shares that other states are emphasizing

teacher effectiveness by creating teacher evaluation systems. This is intentional—it gives credibility to the recommendations of the TTF by making it appear to be endorsed by the utmost American Pedagogic Authority, the US Department of Education. This statement includes one reference, a 1996 study (noted within the report as 2003, but cited as 1996 in the references) that was released by the University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center. In addition to the dated research cited, the TTF proposes the natural extension of the NM PED authority into teacher accountability as inspired by the US Department of Education’s Race to the Top policy.

Like ANAR, the report claims that the Task Force and the NM PED is the foremost pedagogic authority. They claim to have conducted a thorough research study with no list of referenced research or studies supporting their claims:

...the Task Force, with support from Public Education Department staff, read and reviewed the latest research on teacher and school leader evaluations, compensation, observation protocols, professional development, licensure, advancement, and details related to the current New Mexico teacher and school leader evaluation system. (p. 10)

Without any cited references with this claim, the TTF and the NM PED appear to be all-knowing authorities of cutting-edge research and teacher accountability measures. An investigation of their attached list of thirty-one references reveals the following:

- No references originated from New Mexico aside from one from the NM PED. No New Mexico district-created materials or protocols for teacher evaluation or research studies were included.



- Two references stem from the NM PED’s Value-Added Model guru Dr. Peter Goldschmidt, Skandera’s Director of Accountability and Assessment from 2011-2014.
- Eleven references are included from national departments, foundations, think-tanks, and reform groups.

These scant and biased references demonstrate the slant of the TTF and NM PED in justifying their proposed actions. The intentional exclusion of New Mexican education researchers and school districts demonstrate the lack of belief in locally-sourced expertise.

One recommendation of the TTF is that “[t]eacher licensure and advancement through the licensure system should be based on teacher effectiveness (outputs) as evidenced by student growth, observations, and other clear, measurable standards. Licensure decisions should be directly tied to student growth as it is less subjective than current practices” (p. 34). Effectively, this is a claim for the NM PED to take more control in New Mexico on multiple unprecedented levels—licensure, records maintenance, and standardization. In addition to this claim, it also encourages the NM PED to take control over licensure decisions based on student test scores. This is a remarkable departure from previous education policy and authority in New Mexico, which allowed school districts to control all personnel decisions.

This large statewide recommendation for a streamlined mandated evaluation system is a recommendation that can only be fulfilled by the NM Public Education Department. The teacher effectiveness outputs are student test scores determined with a “value-added contribution [to] be calculated by PED staff” (p. 5) and “research-driven,

PED-approved measures for the remaining portion of a teacher’s evaluation” (p. 6), not school districts. By creating this type of system, the NM PED creates a state-wide demand for their overseeing agency and gives the PED the sole capability to interpret student test scores on behalf of local school districts.

### **Low Expectations**

Like *A Nation at Risk*, the TTF Final Report and Recommendations repeatedly implies that low educational expectations are holding a vise-like grip over the potential and future of New Mexico’s children. Within the report, the low expectations are attributed to one stakeholder in the lives of children: ineffective teachers. The TTF writes, “Studies have shown that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap” (p. 9). The implication is that ineffective teachers that propagate the gap in educational outcomes are currently teaching at-risk students in New Mexico. It is worth noting that the TTF does not mention the mindset or demographics of New Mexico’s teachers of “at-risk” students, where the majority of teachers in these low-performing schools do not match the demographic background of the students they teach.

In the Final Report and Recommendations, the TTF shares 2010 PED data, which states that a “sample of twenty-five percent of New Mexico’s teachers, 99.998 percent of these teachers received a rating of ‘meets competency’ on their evaluations. Yet we are not seeing proportional success in terms of New Mexico student achievement” (2011, p. 12). This statement implies that the low expectations of the operating evaluation system are harming New Mexico’s children, and the teacher evaluation system must be made more rigorous and outcome-based. This is a key rationale for the teacher evaluation

system in New Mexico and has been reiterated numerous times by both Governor Martinez and Secretary Skandera in various media.

It is important to note that the claim of 99% of New Mexico teachers earning the ‘meets competency’ on their evaluations has been disputed (Haussamen, 2015). When the stated NM PED study was requested for review by the National Education Association in 2015, they were unable to produce the study which was reportedly based on the pass-rate of Level I teachers aspiring to earn their Level II license with their dossier in a five-year window. The NM PED placed the onus of missing data on a former staff member of UNM that was working with the NM PED, who they claim took the data with them when they finished their work with the NM PED. Regardless of the current data location, the concern remains that this sky-high passage rate of 99.998% of teacher evaluation was not rooted in yearly Professional Development Plans with school principals, but instead in a much smaller and aspirational sample group of Level I teachers seeking to move up the professional ladder to a Level II pay raise. This number excludes all Pre-Level I teacher evaluations, all Level II teacher evaluations, and all Level III teacher evaluations and is wholly inaccurate.

### **Recurring Color-Blind Ideology and/or Deracialisation of Educational Policy**

For a state as racially diverse as New Mexico, the NM Teaching Task Force fails to explicitly name race throughout the Final Report and Recommendations. Instead, limited acknowledgement of rampant childhood poverty in New Mexico is liberally sprinkled throughout the report. For example:

- Delivering on the promise of an excellent teacher is the key to lifting New Mexico's students out of poverty and closing the achievement gap which doesn't do justice to our state (p. 4).
- Studies have shown that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap (p. 9).

These statements are excellent examples of the deracialisation of educational policy that Gillborn (1994) writes of, trickled down to the state level. It entirely removes the reality of racial inequalities in opportunity and educational achievement in New Mexico. It instead replaces these disparate lived realities of White, Black, Asian, Native, and Hispanic children with a generic version of an American child that, regardless of parental income, can personally overcome all obstacles in their path with an exemplary-rated teacher that is held accountable for their students' test scores.

New Mexico has the highest percentage of children growing up in poverty in the United States, 30% (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016). This means that one out of every three children in the state struggle on a daily basis for adequate food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016) found that white, non-Hispanic children in New Mexico have better outcomes in all 16 of their child well-being indicators (such as teenage birthrate, graduation rates, and parental income).

The intentional ignorance towards specific groups of students of color and children growing up in abject poverty is also evident in the reference list of the TTF's Final Report and Recommendations. Not one of the thirty-one references includes research on improving education for poor children or children of color or, as previously mentioned, research or initiatives stemming from New Mexican researchers or

communities. Simply put, the TTF report and the NM PED fails to recognize that their recommendations will operate within the vastly disparate landscape of New Mexico and which children these recommendations will benefit, aside from the faceless every-child, like *A Nation at Risk*.

### **Economic Ramifications of Education**

An interesting theme in the Final Report and Recommendations is the Economic Ramifications of Education. Like ANAR, corporations and businesses are considered an important stakeholder in education. For example, in an overview for teacher recruitment and retention, the commission writes that “[t]here are many issues to consider when addressing retention and recruitment, but most important to New Mexico business, community members, parents, students and educators is that of recruiting and retaining the best personnel from in and outside of New Mexico...” (p. 26). In this statement, New Mexico business is listed as the foremost benefactor of education before students, which demonstrates the strength of the belief that schools exist to serve create the next generation of the economy rather than the students themselves.

Beyond the inclusion of New Mexico businesses, education is linked as the “key to lifting New Mexico’s students out of poverty” (p. 4). While this sort of outcome could be linked to educational aspirations of graduating students in the long-term, it ignores the current reality of students growing up in abject poverty in New Mexico. Skandera’s predecessor, as mentioned in Chapter 2, implemented a breakfast-in-the-classroom for all New Mexico students, which provided many students with a second vital meal while at school. While Skandera did not eliminate this initiative, she instead equates greater standardization and outcomes-based education reform with eliminating poverty in New

Mexico. The TTF, like other neoconservative efforts, believes that education will single-handedly solve economic inequality in New Mexico, rather than non-education initiatives like mandating a higher minimum wage. The report does not include measures for supporting those living in poverty, but takes the long view of pure educational reform as the antidote for generational poverty.

The report also states that “[s]tate and federal dollars for professional development should be spent on the development of practices which demonstrate increases in student achievement” (p. 22). This demonstrates a commitment to the financial removal of district professional development funds to be seemingly better-utilized by the Pedagogic Authority on what they deem to require as the most effective use of funds, like a teacher evaluation system or a standardized assessment that will track student achievement. This statement shows the economic ramifications of education that go beyond the daily classroom experience. Education is a big business, and the NM PED wants to allocate and outsource funds to their approved achievement initiatives.

### **Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and/or the Artificial Support of Teachers**

The New Mexico Teaching Task Force Final Report and Recommendations is filled with examples of Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and Artificial Support of Teachers. The NMTEACH system is introduced initially in a positive manner lamenting that “many New Mexican teachers see the growth of students in the classroom, but work in a system that does not recognize or reward them for it” (New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force, 2011, p. 4). This statement posits that teachers go unrecognized and work relentlessly with no recognition, which mirrors *A Nation at Risk*. Like ANAR, it then

uses this artificial support of teachers to recommend further teacher accountability measures. The TTF states that:

the purpose of this report is to guide New Mexico in the development of a new teacher and school leader evaluation system that prioritizes student academic gains, recruits, recognizes, and retains ‘rock star’ teachers, and provides for transparency and accountability to stakeholders in the use of taxpayer dollars. (p. 9)

From this statement, one would expect that the proposed evaluation system operates in order to reward excellent teachers, however this is not the case. In fact, the TTF does not recommend a reward system for educators, but only their punitive recommendations for ineffective teachers.

The commission report further writes that they “believe that educators should be equipped with accurate and actionable data provided in a timely manner upon which they can improve the art and science of teaching and correspondingly prepare their students for success in college and career” (2011, p. 10). This statement appears to be a positive support of teachers, yet demonstrates how this rhetoric veils and introduces trickle-down high-stakes testing mandates and further tracking of student test results linked to their teachers for accountability measures. It means that students will take a single annual assessment that will determine the value of their teacher.

The report goes beyond the teacher evaluation through student testing to determining teacher compensation according to the test results. By linking teacher effectiveness to student test scores, the commission’s third recommendation is to “[r]estructure the current 3-tier salaries/shift funding to results tied to annual evaluations

and professional development plans” (p. 34). It notes that “three year teaching contracts should only be available to teachers earning an exemplary rating during the preceding three years,” (p. 35) which is justified by saying that “[a]dvancement through the 3-tiered licensure system can currently happen very quickly” (p. 34). TTF also notes that this advancement results in “large salary increases twice” (p. 34), thereby rewarding teachers for experience in the classroom rather than student test results or what the NM PED deems as teacher effectiveness.

Under the TTF recommendations of teacher evaluation, teachers will be rated and compensated according to student test scores. The tests that are used to determine student achievement are graded on a Bell-curve. Thereby, teachers in New Mexico would be hard-pressed to earn an exemplary rating on their teacher evaluation, which the TTF recommended as the singular way for teachers to move up on the teacher pay scale. Only a small percentage of New Mexico’s teachers would be eligible for a pay raise, regardless of how many years the teacher had been in service.

These recommendations further limit the already difficult-to-navigate New Mexico teacher compensation ladder. The beginning New Mexico teacher salary in 2011 on a Pre-Level I or Level I license was in the range of \$30,000 - \$32,000. Level II teachers could expect to earn \$40,000 after teaching at the Level I level for three full school years. Upon passing a professional dossier evaluation after an additional three years, a Level II teacher could rise to become a Level III teacher to begin earning \$50,000. While the \$10,000 jump to the next tier level is a considerable sum, it pales in comparison to neighboring states like Texas, where beginning teachers start out at



\$45,000 with annual pay increases along with financial educational incentives and a simplified pathway to administrative licensure.

### **Neoconservative Call for Reform**

As explored in Chapters 2 and 4, neo-conservative educational reform tends to operate under a sense of great urgency. In *A Nation at Risk*, the case was made that the nation's schools were failing the students within them, justifying a war on teachers and the Pedagogic Authority of the US Department of Education. This rhetoric is similarly employed in the Final Report and Recommendations of the TTF. In addition to the previous major themes of establishing the NM Public Department of Education as the Pedagogic Authority at the state level, the call for reform is repeatedly made. Early in the report, a justification for supporting the rapid implementation of proposed reforms is tied to being a caring, pro-student citizen:

The sense of urgency in this process is essential. Every school day, nearly 330,000 New Mexico students enter the classroom with the expectation their educational leaders are doing all they can to support them. To send the message that important teacher reforms can wait is to fail those children who won't get a second chance at an education. (p. 4)

As this statement transparently suggests, there is no time to waste in this call for reform. The suggested initiative must be implemented quickly, and those who attempt to stop or slow down the process are failing children. This is a coercive strategy heavily utilized by the neoconservative call for education reform.

Within the document, the TTF makes many targeted recommendations that align with neoconservative educational priorities –the use of VAM models in determining

student achievement, greater accountability measures, and further streamlining educational standards and assessment. A key difference between ANAR and the TTF is the further transparency of reform efforts in the TTF report. Unlike ANAR, the Final Report and Recommendations assumes that our New Mexico schools are already largely failing and that further accountability is the key in lifting educational outcomes.

**Desirable Student Outcomes, Correct Dispositions of Success, and Common Sense**

The final major theme of the Final Report and Recommendations revolve around correct dispositions of success, common sense, and desirable student outcomes. As previously outlined, education is viewed as the key lever in lifting New Mexico children out of poverty, but this theme does not end there. The NM PED creates the appropriate means to measure teacher effectiveness and successfully utilizes Apple's (2001) explanation of neoconservative common-sense in establishing policy.

As outlined in the TTF's Final Report and Recommendations, the NM PED is explained as the logical and natural owner of student and teacher records, stripping this responsibility from local school districts:

Record keeping and data collection by the PED would not only ensure that professional development is occurring in an efficient and approved manner, but it would also allow another layer of data to be utilized in analyzing student performance. The approved list for professional development activities should be a fluid one, with activities which do not translate into positive classroom performance being eliminated and new opportunities with proven performance added. Additionally, as professional development will be tied to annual

performance evaluations of educational personnel, accurate record keeping by the PED is necessary. (p. 24)

This common sense approach to explaining why PED is the natural owner of data and records is a clever and common approach in educational reform post-ANAR.

Additionally, the report uses common-sense discourse like the following examples to describe the TTF's recommended course of action (italics of common-sense phrases included for emphasis):

- New Mexico *should replace its overly simplistic* pass/fail evaluation system with five effectiveness levels (p. 5).
- Establishment of a Professional Development Committee by the PED to review research in the area of effective professional development and make recommendations on *allowable, research-driven, proven professional* development opportunities to be chosen by the state, districts, and administration (p. 6).
- While there is no silver bullet in education, *research has clearly shown* that one of the most important school-related factors influencing a child's academic achievement is the quality of his or her teacher (p. 9).
- A rigorous and comprehensive system will not only provide a holistic view of a teacher's *true impact* on their students, but also encourage flexibility and buy-in at the local and school level (p. 9).

These common-sense phrases encourage a natural agreement between the commission and the reader. There is no room for disagreement. These phrases will be further

explored in the next portion of analysis, the recurring discursive strategies between ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations.

### **Recurring ANAR Discursive Strategies**

As with the previous chapter and ANAR, each of Searle's speech acts is repeatedly employed by the writers of the commission report. *Representatives*, or truth claims, are used throughout the entire document without a single reference to actual data or evidence. As noted by Chilton and Schäffner (1997), "Conservative policy is presented by simple statements and claims, often claims to the truth.... No evidence is given and the references, especially for 'making' and 'more,' are undecidable for the hearers (p. 219). The following are a small sample of uncited *representatives* sprinkled throughout the Effective Teaching Task Force findings:

- Delivering on the promise of an excellent teacher is the key to lifting New Mexico's students out of poverty and closing the achievement gap which doesn't do justice to our state (p. 4).
- Studies have shown that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap (p. 9).
- On VAM: Given New Mexico's diverse student population, such a model also helps to control for demographic differences and level the playing field for teachers statewide. Consistent with Governor Martinez's Executive Order, we also believe that this component should account for fully 50 of a teacher's evaluation, and it is strongly tied to student outcomes.... For non-tested subjects and grades, other assessments (including PED-approved local assessments)

should be used to measure the value added by and individual teacher to student achievement. (p. 14)

- Record keeping and data collection by the PED would not only ensure that professional development is occurring in an efficient and approved manner, but it would also allow another layer of data to be utilized in analyzing student performance (p. 24).

These *representatives* have strategically created a new reality for New Mexican teachers, administrators, and students. It effectively positioned the NM PED and Secretary of Education as the Pedagogic Authority in New Mexico by declaring that the only way to fix New Mexico education and poverty is through greater teacher accountability measures. These representatives have been largely accepted by the general public, with the notable exception of New Mexico teacher unions, some legislators and educators. In the New Mexico discourse examined, these *representatives*, love them or hate them, appear over and over again. New Mexico public education spirals further into the hermeneutical loop created by the TTF Final Report and Recommendations with every New Mexican policy, opinion piece, news article, or frustrated letter of resignation written in response to this call for educational reform.

These accountability measures are initially introduced through the *directives*, or commands and requests, embedded in the Final Report and Recommendations of the Effective Teaching Task Force. These largely reside in the numerous recommendations of the report. Each *directive* calls for greater standardization and accountability measures. Examples of ANAR *directives* are as follows:

- Any redesigned teacher and school leader evaluation system must include multiple measures that prioritize student learning, as well as observations and other possible measures that effectively capture a true picture of teacher effectiveness. A rigorous and comprehensive system will not only provide a holistic view of a teacher’s true impact on their students, but also encourage flexibility and buy-in at the local and school level. (p. 9)

The TTF strategically utilizes *commissives*, or promises and threats, to urgency threaten the future and feeling of economic prosperity in New Mexico. The TTF repeatedly and strategically utilizes the themes of Low Expectations and Neoconservative Call for Reform to further establish the sense of urgency in creating and implementing new statewide educational reform. Some examples of *commissives* in the NM Teaching Task Force Final Report and Recommendations are below:

- The sense of urgency in this process is essential. Every school day, nearly 330,000 New Mexico students enter the classroom with the expectation their educational leaders are doing all they can to support them. To send the message that important teacher reforms can wait is to fail those children who won’t get a second chance at an education. (p. 4)
- While we recognize that time will be needed to identify, develop, and approve assessments in non-tested grades and subjects that may be used to measure the student achievement portion of a teacher’s evaluation, we note the inadequacy of our current teacher evaluation system in this respect. This shortcoming must be remedied immediately (p. 15).

These *commissives* are extremely effective in creating an atmosphere of urgency, driving the push for greater educational accountability in return for the betterment of New Mexico's economic future and education.

The New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force utilizes *expressives*, or praising and blaming, largely in the major theme of anti-teacher rhetoric and the artificial support of teachers. In the vein of ANAR and subsequent national educational policy, the Final Report and Recommendations utilize the bipolar approach of praising and thanking teachers for their dedication and hard work, yet decry the low professional standards, performance, and apparent lack of high expectations. Examples of Task Force *expressives* are below:

- The Task Force believes that there are many outstanding, effective, and hardworking teachers and school leaders throughout New Mexico, but the State does not have an effective system for recognizing and rewarding their achievements in the classroom. Further, the absence of an objective framework to fully and fairly assess teacher and school leader quality has resulted in the failure to effectively assess performance, in particular as it relates to measureable student achievement, and to reward excellence and establish real accountability. Any new evaluation framework to measure teachers and school leaders must better enable districts to address and improve school personnel policies concerning professional development, promotion, compensation, performance pay and tenure. (p. 9)
- The current teacher recognition process in New Mexico places emphasis on years of experience and credentials obtained. Members of the Task Force recognize

these factors are important; however, they fail to offer teachers any acknowledge (sic) of student achievement. Many New Mexico teachers see the growth of students in the classroom, but work in a system that does not recognize or reward them for it. The purpose of the Task Force was to find the most meaningful way to change this dynamic and place student achievement at the forefront of teacher excellence in order to change a system with ‘qualified’ teachers to classroom full of effective teachers. (p. 4)

These *expressives* demonstrate how educational policy recommendations can be framed as a reward system that ultimately veils the punitive objectives of the system. By praising good teachers and regretfully mentioning the lack of a reward system, the real aims of a teacher evaluation system are buried. Aside from critical shortage area incentives, the TTF does not make any recommendations for how to reward teachers. In the second passage, TFF writes that the system of qualified teachers must be switched to effective teachers. The quotation marks around “qualified” are a reference to NCLB, which required a highly-qualified teacher in every classroom, as based on teacher qualifications such as degree obtained, coursework credits earned, teacher assessments passed, and other credentials. With the NCLB requirement, New Mexico reported a highly-qualified teacher in every classroom to the federal government, but this did not create a noticeable impact on the classroom level. This lack of movement justified a blaming of results on previous failed reforms and the creation of a new reform measure.

*Declaratives*, like declaring war or announcing an election (for example), are a cornerstone of the TTF’s Final Report and Recommendations. These statements are the discourse that catches the attention of the general public, legislators, businesspeople, and



educators. These declaratives may also give credibility to the authors and aims of the report to determine Pedagogic Authority. Several examples of *declaratives* of the Final Report and Recommendations are below:

- The impact of an effective teacher has great value not only to the school, the district, and the state, but most importantly an effective teacher reaches a student who then becomes a beneficiary of a new world of possibilities. Delivering on the promise of an excellent teacher is the key to lifting New Mexico's students out of poverty and closing the achievement gap which doesn't do justice to our state. Therefore, no one can overstate the importance of an effective teacher. (p. 4)
- The Effective Teaching Task Force was formed by Executive Order in April 2011 with the purpose of delivering on the promise of recruiting, retaining and rewarding New Mexico's most effective teachers and school leaders. Over the course of 3 months, this 15 member Task Force representing teachers and school leaders across the state and with over 100 years of classroom experience, met 10 times for over 60 hours to deliver recommendations to Governor Martinez. (p. 4)

These *declaratives* strategically give rise to the establishment of a new teacher evaluation system as well as giving Pedagogic Authority to the NM PED through strategic inclusion of an Executive Order. The first statement declares that effective teachers the key lever to lifting students out of poverty, more than any other measure or intervention. By tying the report to a gubernatorial Executive Order, the findings are given credibility and authority. The justification of the Task Force's credentials posits the commission as exceedingly knowledgeable about New Mexico education, while their time spent as a commission demonstrates their dedication and professionalism.

## **Analysis of New Mexico Public Discourse**

The following table provides the title, type of discourse, and recurring ANAR themes for ten pieces of selected New Mexico public discourse surrounding education. As in the last chapter, these pieces were chosen with the guidance of Wodak (1989), who chose seven pieces of different discourse material to analyze anti-Semitism in the Austrian media. Searches were conducted for:

1. Government and/or official documents
2. Statements or perspectives from teachers/educators
3. New Mexico historians or education historians
4. Reporting in New Mexico on policy or teachers
5. Reporting from the NM PED or rebuttals from the PED
6. Outside media perspectives or reporting on NMTEACH
7. Statements/Interviews of politicians or officials

Each check mark under thematic element represents evidence of this theme embedded in the discourse. As a reminder, the theme does not simply imply the sub-textual theme of a written discourse, but rather the explicit and evocative discourse of ANAR. These themes, again, are as follows:

1. War, Dominance, and the Establishment of Pedagogic Authority
2. Low Expectations
3. Nationalism/Patriotism/American Exceptionalism
4. Economic Impact of Education
5. False Equality/Color-Blind Ideology/Deracialisation of Educational Policy
6. American Decline/Erosion/Descent into Chaos

7. Functionalism/Structuralism/Franchisement
8. Artificial Support of Teachers/Anti-Teacher Rhetoric
9. Deficit View
10. Neoconservative Call for Reform
11. Disposition of Success, Moral Instruction, Desirable Outcomes of Students

Title of Discourse, Year	Pub Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
New Mexico Teacher: Skandera is no Friend of Education, 2014	Public Testimony	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
A closer look at four New Mexico teachers' evaluations, 2015	News Article	✓	✓							✓	✓	
10/30/2015 Stand4KidsNM Status Update, 2015	Facebook Posting	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	
Boyd's testimony in teacher eval case: 'Get it right', 2015	News Article	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
New Mexico to Change its Teacher Evaluation System, But Not Really, 2016	Blog Post	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	
Exit exam proponents should answer questions, 2013	Opinion Page	✓			✓				✓		✓	
School board responds to Skandera's rebuke, 2016	News Article	✓					✓		✓		✓	✓
Hanna Skandera's Reforms Cause More than 'Discomfort', 2014	Blog	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

New Mexico Teachers Resist a State Official's Plan for Evaluating Them, 2013	News Article	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	
Virtual Schools Run By Corporations? Hanna Skandera's Vision for NM, 2013	Opinion Page	✓			✓	✓		✓			✓	
<i>NEA et.al. v. Hanna Skandera</i> , 2014	Public Lawsuit	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	

Table 2: Recurring ANAR Themes in New Mexico Public Discourse

Unlike the public discourse surrounding ANAR, published New Mexico public discourse around education are largely critical of the Martinez administration and the implemented reform efforts of the NM PED. Unlike ANAR criticism, the authors are in agreement that there are serious issues in New Mexico education; however, the authors do not agree with the governmental response and proposed solutions.

An example of this public discourse in New Mexico is below, which mirrors numerous themes (War/Dominance/Pedagogic Authority, Economic Ramifications of Education, Anti-Teacher Rhetoric, Call for Reform, False Equality) of the TTF Final Report and Recommendations:

Parents, teachers, and students—the people who live public education and are increasingly feeling the lashes of Skandera's initiatives every day—know that this isn't working and is harming our kids' future outlooks. And then there's Skandera, who refuses to talk to any of us directly, and instead uses public media to attempt to discredit us. That's not debate. Seeing that her budget calls for

increasing state control over education, rather than local district control, we can see that she doesn't want to or need to listen or debate. She's just there to control.

It won't work. We are on the side of right because we are on the side of kids.

Despite all of her feel-good language and talking points, Skandera has no idea what good education or strong learning looks like. She was trained and paid to do a job—rank our kids in preparation for a corporate workforce and slowly work to close our public schools and get rid of our public teachers. And it is an important fact that she has never been a classroom teacher.

Skandera's final point is that New Mexico should be worried since we are "at the bottom." There's one major factor that she will never talk about, regardless of the research and data put in front of her: we are on the top of the kids-living-in-poverty scale. According to a recent report, 68% of NM public school students are living in poverty. For a state education chief to call that an excuse for not getting great test scores shows just how short-sighted, naive, and unqualified she really is....

Not only should we worry about our kids, but also the economic stability of our schools and state, as Skandera hemorrhages millions of dollars of state funds to outside vendors and corporations. We don't need that and we can't afford it. We have all the resources we need right here. Let's educate our kids using the plentiful expertise and power we have as New Mexicans. (Nielsen, 2014, para. 6-8, 12)

It is important to note that regardless of this common criticism, Governor Martinez was re-elected in 2014, even with education being a key issue for her opponent.

## Maintaining the Hermeneutical Cycle

In January 2016, Teach For America held its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit in Washington, DC. Hanna Skandera was invited by the TFA Alumni team to join an hour-and-a-half long panel entitled “What Works and What Doesn’t in Education Policy?” (TFAEvents, 2016). A video recording of the panel is available online and shows Secretary Skandera in a position she is unaccustomed to in New Mexico—she is alone and vulnerable. Unlike her visits to New Mexico schools, legislative meetings, or meetings with constituents, she is not surrounded by her staff or legislative allies. It’s just herself representing New Mexico and the NM PED, along with two male panelists from different parts of the United States. On the panel, it is clear within the first half hour that she is not representing what works in education policy, but what does not work. Unlike her policy pieces or carefully curated, published opinion pieces, her responses at the summit event reveal her professional intentions, missteps, and plans for the future. In the first half hour, Secretary Skandera is asked, “Do you worry you design a school system that works really well for people like you?” She responded:

I can say I’ve been accused of that on multiple levels. I get to work in New Mexico and 60% of our kids are Hispanic, 12% are Native American, and I’m obviously, I’ve been called *Skandero* as my last name, but it’s Skandera, and I’m very white.

And I’ve been, you know, the question is, are you, do you really understand? Right?

And, I guess, uh, going to the core of why I do what I do, and why I believe we can do better and all of those things, absolutely. But, I do, I think part of the

conversation we should be having around the reform movement, the answer to your question... Yes, I believe we're the right people, we just need so many more.

And part of our charge in this moment is to look.

If we're running a race and we're carrying a baton, are we running in a way where we can pass the baton? And, or run alongside? And how many more runners are we bringing into the race? It's not, should I step out? It's how should I run and who am I running with, and how many more can we bring. And I think that, it's a, there's a tension there. And we're probably not walking it out perfectly, um, but I firmly believe that there's room for everyone, not just one person, or another because of whether it's race, color, or um, or economic status, um, I think that uh, we think it's part of our charge right now, and something we're challenged with.

And don't do it very well.

At the forty minute mark, the moderator asks Secretary Skandera if too much reform occurred too fast. She responds:

What's the context I'm in? I know we're talking about nationally, but I'm going New Mexico. Because when you ask that question, and what generation of reform am I in? There is a first generation, where you're probably breaking a lot of things cause you're changing systems. It's not comfortable, it's awkward, there's usually lots of battles, that might be a nice characterization, and then there's the embedding and the transition to the next generation. I think about states like Louisiana or Tennessee, DC, where there's a baseline and there's the implementation over time, et cetera. New Mexico, uh, I'm going uh, disagree based on the generation we're in.

New Mexico is a first generation.

We're 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in almost every student achievement measure. We have been for decades. So we can talk about slow, and process and I don't disagree there's a time and a place for determining that, but in New Mexico I fundamentally believe there is no, there is no room for wait. So yes, in the last six years we've changed standards, assessments, teacher evaluations, school grading, versus AYP, um, high school expectations for graduation that aren't 8<sup>th</sup> grade, cause they were, new teacher prep programs, new pay performance for teachers, you could down the list, the ecosystem around teachers, students, and school leaders. Go down the list and listen, it is *rocking the boat*. And at the end of the day, I fundamentally believe, not because it's been perfect, but the pace, we didn't have a choice on the pace.

Every little kiddo, that goes through, and we were sitting as a state going, ah, you know, there was no expectation.

We had to establish the bar and aim high. So I think there's a place and time around implementation and we implemented teacher evaluation in a single year. It was painful. Not gonna lie. But we also now have a baseline where we can support our teachers in ways we've never supported before. Yes, the local decision for hiring, firing et cetera is still at the local level, I fundamentally believe in that. But we had to have information to actually support. We didn't have that before on any, whether it was our students, our teachers, or our school leaders. And we did break a little glass and I don't have any regrets that there was



a breaking because we needed to break through and I fundamentally believe that is what is happening in New Mexico.

This illuminating discourse reveals the aims of the NMTEACH system. Skandera knew that she was going to be breaking the established education system and that it would be a painful process. But she also knew that she would be establishing a hermeneutical cycle in New Mexico with the NMTEACH system. This system, once put in place, becomes increasingly more difficult to break.

In early 2016, the NM PED unveiled changes to the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. These changes, largely the result of an NEA/AFT/ATF lawsuit against the NM PED is as follows:

- Provide a single plan that all districts and charters would use, providing greater uniformity.
- Simplify the model from 107 possible classifications to three.
- Move the summative evaluation delivery date from May 1 of each year to September.
- By moving to this date, the most recent standardized data will be available to teachers and principals within the evaluation cycle.
- Eliminate all assessments except for SBA/PARCC, End of Course exams, and DIBELS, resulting in a reduction in over-testing at the local level.
- The proposed improvements would go into effect this calendar year, with teachers being evaluated on the Steps system in Fall 2016 (Amrein-Beardsley, 2016).

These ‘changes’ demonstrate the deep level of embeddedness that Skandera referenced in her second answer at the TFA Summit. She knew that by getting the NMTEACH system

in place at all costs, it would become a normalized part of the New Mexico education landscape that might adjust, but not entirely change.

### **Symbolic Violence to Material Violence**

It is important to note that the symbolic violence, as Bourdieu prophesied, has turned into material violence in New Mexico. The discourse of the NM PED does not solely exist within an educational vacuum, but has increasingly been used to undermine, threaten, and destroy individuals and groups that speak against it. While it is difficult to summarize all cases of material violence against teachers stemming from NMTEACH, this study chooses to give a full picture of the power of material violence exerted by the NM PED and the Martinez administration.

A salient New Mexican example of this violence is the treatment of Kathy Korte, a former school board member of the Albuquerque Public Schools board, representing District 2. Korte initially ran for the position after becoming concerned for the education of her children, particularly with the testing requirements of public school students. Once elected, Korte began a Facebook and Twitter group called Stand4KidsNM, an anti-educational reform advocacy group that soon earned thousands of followers from parents and stakeholders concerned with the direction of education in New Mexico. From this platform, the group rallied parents and community members against the increasing testing mandates of the NM Public Education Department and the corporatization of education, providing detailed instructions on how to opt-out of the required End-of-Year PARCC examinations as well as publicly lambasting Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera. Additionally, Korte published several individual op-eds in the Albuquerque Journal calling for greater accountability towards the PARCC EOY exams and the removal of

end-of-course exams (Korte, 2013; Korte & Proseus, 2014). Her outspoken resistance to the NM PED mandates quickly caught the attention of Governor Susanna Martinez and Hanna Skandera.

Kathy Korte was fired from her part-time position as a community relations specialist at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center in July 2014. Her immediate boss called Korte into his office and shared that a “committee of leadership had met...and decided to terminate her...[he] said she could resign and leave on her own or be terminated and escorted off the premises” (Sandlin, 2015, para. 8). While Korte had earned good results on her annual performance reviews, she was fired by the Health Sciences Center because she called a NM state representative a traitor in an online forum. Korte filed a lawsuit against UNM claiming 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment violation and the case ultimately settled out of court in September 2015.

In January 2015, Kathy Korte’s husband Tim was placed on involuntary leave and was fired from his position as spokesman for Susana Martinez’ budget office, with his final day on February 7. While the official spokesman for Governor Martinez denied that the termination was linked to his wife, he did share that “Korte’s firing [wa]s part of a broader reorganization within the governor’s administration...” (Malone, 2016, para. 5). The timing of Tim Korte’s final day was auspicious, set to take place four days after Kathy Korte’s re-election bid to the Albuquerque Public Schools school board. Governor Susana Martinez became an outspoken supporter of Peggy Mueller-Aragon, Korte’s opponent, even donating \$15,000 to her campaign.

Although the governor has previously financially supported GOP legislative candidates, her decision to get personally involved in this year's APS board election was an uncommon move for a state chief executive.

In addition to financially backing Muller-Aragon's candidacy, Martinez also recorded an automated phone message for Muller-Aragon in the lead-up to the election. In the phone message, Martinez urged voters to vote for Muller-Aragon and criticized Kathy Korte, her opponent and a fierce critic of the governor's education initiatives. (Boyd, 2015, para. 4-5)

On February 3, Korte lost her bid for re-election to Peggy Mueller-Aragon in a contentious election. Mueller-Aragon, a retired teacher, tragically lost her daughter Amberlee Aragon in a single-car accident in January 2015. The family did not publish the time or location for the funeral in the posted and printed obituary. At the funeral, attendees claimed that Korte was placing election materials on their parked vehicles. That evening, KOB News interviewed Korte, who stated "I don't know how that assumption was even or could even be made except by somebody who had a very horrible warped mind" (James, 2015). She went on to say, "And I'm offended. And whoever did this, should be ashamed of themselves to take advantage of a family's grief over their daughter? To try to win an election? It's not worth it" (James, 2015).

While all of these events in Kathy Korte's life could be viewed as coincidental or the strategic master plan of the Martinez administration, it is clear to opponents what happens when you speak out against the governor or her administration—there will be consequences from their surveillance. Kathy Korte was confronted professionally,

personally, and financially, demonstrating the movement from symbolic violence through discourse and policy to physical violence against her person.

### **The War Against Teachers**

This physical violence is not reducible to the individual case of Kathy Korte, but has increasingly become the norm for the NM PED. A salient example of this violence is found within the parameters of the NMTEACH system. As previously discussed, the NMTEACH system attributes 50% of a teacher's effectiveness rating to a VAM-measure of student achievement, 25% to observations, and 25% to other measures. One of these 'other' measures includes teacher absences. Like so much of this system, it appears to be a common-sense approach to effectiveness—teachers need to be in the classroom working to be truly effective. However, the NMTEACH system goes beyond this common-sense to become a punitive and calculated move against teachers.

In New Mexico, teachers are allocated 10 sick days per year. However, under the NMTEACH system, if teachers use any of their sick days, it counts negatively towards their effectiveness evaluation. For example, if a teacher uses one sick day in their school year, it is not counted as  $1/180$  (with 180 being the number of school days) or  $179/180$  for their evaluation. Instead, it is calculated on a much smaller fraction of  $1/10$  (with 10 being the allowed number of sick days).

This violence has extended to the Las Cruces Public Schools Board, individuals, and teacher unions—the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Educators Association (NEA) and Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF). Each of these groups have been publicly admonished by either Secretary Skandera or Governor Martinez.

The Las Cruces Public Schools decided to utilize their local authority and remove the NMTEACH attendance scores when evaluating teacher effectiveness. In Spring 2015, the LCPS board sent a directive to their then-superintendent, Stan Rounds, informing him that they would no longer inform the NM PED about teacher absences. On January 26, 2016, Secretary Skandera sent a letter to the board. Skandera noted that she had been receiving complaints about the board for nearly a year. She then accused them of violating the Open Meetings Act and required the board to complete a training, requiring documentation from the New Mexico School Boards Association, within 60 days that is “specific to its roles and responsibilities [as a board] as well as training specific to the Open Meetings Act” (Skandera, 2016, para. 7). She writes that “the board has very specific responsibilities and has chosen to over-step its boundaries with regard to these responsibilities” (para.7). Skandera then writes that she will suspend the board if they do not follow-through on her directives, closing with a notation that the letter was copied to the Attorney General of New Mexico.

Interestingly, the letter was not immediately sent to the school board. Instead, the letter was sent to the then-president of the Las Cruces Greater Chamber of Commerce, Bill Allen, thus demonstrating the links between the NM PED’s initiatives and the business community (Herndon, 2016). When questioned about this link, NM PED spokesman Robert McEntire stated, “The Las Cruces Chamber has been an active partner in public education for decades, and the business leaders they represent have a substantial interest in how their local schools are being run” (Herndon, 2016, para. 9). In response, the vice-president of the National Education Association–New Mexico, Mary Parr-Sanchez, stated:

The Public Education Department has some nerve scolding our local school board. It's like 'The Empire Strikes Back'. Every time the board acts to support students, parents, and teachers, Hanna Skandera and the PED – the Death Star – start making accusations about them overstepping their authority. Why is the PED so well-versed in the day-to-day operations of the district? Could the superintendent be her rogue Jedi: Darth Vader? When the local-elected speak up against the powerful and politically appointed, the Empire strikes back. The 'force' is strong in this district and this school board, and we need to stand united with them for local control. (Willis, 2016, para. 16)

Though dramatic, this observation is important. The NM PED and Secretary Skandera publicly state that they encourage communication and local control, but this situation demonstrates that this support is artificial. They expect each school board, district administrator, and thus educator to fall in line and follow their directives. It is clear through this example what happens when local control is asserted.

It is interesting that Skandera accuses the LCPS board of overstepping their authority, when this has been a trademark of her tenure as Secretary of Education. As noted in the *NEA et. al. v. Hanna Skandera* (2014) court filing, numerous NM PED documents were published stating that the NM PED will not use the NMTEACH evaluation to fire a teacher or lessen their pay, and instead allows school districts to own all personnel decisions. However, this is untrue. As noted in the lawsuit, "The PED requires all teachers with an 'ineffective' rating to be placed on a professional growth plan, regardless of whether the summative report was accurate" (2014, p. 27). In New Mexico, the professional growth plan is the first step in a paper trail to dismiss a teacher.

“Furthermore, the PED intends to use the flawed evaluations to determine whether teacher licenses will be renewed and whether teachers can advance” between licensure levels (p. 27).

The NM PED seemingly does not embrace conflict. It does not encourage communication or collaboration with important stakeholders—whether community members, school districts, or legislators. It takes outside criticism as an attack and it violently defends itself from detractors at all costs, taking a scorched-earth approach to potential detractors. It seeks out collaborative ‘yes’ people and strategically excludes not only those who disagree, but even those who question their practices or approach.

The TTF was written in 2011, within the first few months of Secretary Hanna Skandera’s arrival to a state that she had never worked within. It is blatantly apparent throughout the TTF Final Report and Recommendations that the NM PED and Task Force were led by a person who ascribed to a one-size-fits-all and deracialised approach to education reform. Frankly, not much has changed from 2011 to 2016, aside from droves of teachers leaving the profession because of the effects of poor educational reform policy. New Mexico is still ranking last or in the bottom five in most national education indicators while childhood poverty rates increase every year (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016). High school graduation rates have not increased. Teachers are demoralized, unheard, frustrated, and dehumanized. With the looming \$500,000,000 budget shortfall affecting New Mexico in 2016, it is natural to wonder what the next step will be in education reform.



## Summary and Conclusions

This chapter found seven major recurring themes in the findings of the NM Teacher Task Force's Final Report and Recommendations (2011) that were re-discoursed from *A Nation at Risk*, specifically addressing this dissertation's third research question:

3. As a specific current example, how does the discourse of ANAR align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of ANAR re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

The Critical Discourse Analysis of this chapter has made it clear that the findings of the TTF Final Report and Recommendations align with the discourse and themes of ANAR. ANAR created a neoconservative blueprint for education policy and discourse that is heavily influential. The NM PED and the Martinez administration has built upon the symbolic violence of ANAR and transformed this symbolic violence of the War Against Teachers to a material violence. The reproduced themes in the TTF report were 1) Establishment of Pedagogic Authority; 2) Low Expectations; 3) Color-Blind Ideology and/or Deracialisation of Educational Policy; 4) Economic Ramifications of Education; 5) Artificial Support of Teachers and/or Anti-Teacher Rhetoric; 6) the Neoconservative Call for Reform; and 7) Desirable Student Outcomes, Correct Dispositions of Success, and Common Sense. In addition to these themes, an exploration in discursive strategies used within these themes was conducted. In the following chapter, these themes will be summarized to present this research study's final summary, implications, recommendations, and limitations.

## Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

This final chapter will discuss the findings, make recommendations, discuss implications, and conclude this research study. The following questions were addressed throughout this dissertation:

1. What is the discursive significance of *A Nation at Risk*? How does it embody a historical shift in educational policy discourse? How is it an example of symbolic violence, particularly as it pertains to teachers?
2. In what ways has the national public discourse on education policy since *A Nation at Risk* emerged embodied similar discursive strategies in their representations of teachers and education?
3. As a specific current example, how does the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* align with the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System? How is the symbolic violence of *A Nation at Risk* re-discoursed in the texts of this political project?

This dissertation was written with deep concern towards the current direction of New Mexican public education, particularly towards the actions of the New Mexico Public Education Department, led by Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera.

## Findings and Interpretations

### Mirrored Themes and Discourse

Like the fictional Horn of Gondor<sup>4</sup>, A Nation at Risk was a call to arms for the American public, calling for the American public to be deeply concerned and more involved with the state of American education. ANAR embodied a historical shift in educational policy discourse as well as the treatment of teachers by the media and educational policy. It legitimized the scapegoating of teachers, giving rise to the further deskilling of teachers, the marketization of education, and the push for outcomes-based education while stripping local educational control. ANAR set the educational policy agenda and tone for every subsequent US president while educators and other various educational stakeholders have been attempting to reclaim Pedagogic Authority ever since.

This research study found eleven recurring themes in ANAR and seven recurring themes throughout the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force Final Report and Recommendations. Between these two major commission findings, five major themes and two minor themes emerged from a cross-comparison of themes. The thematic comparisons were made to determine if the TTF Final Report and Recommendations mirrored ANAR's approach, discourse, ideology, and recommendations. There are not many previous research examples of examining the long-term effect of national discourse

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<sup>4</sup> In Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the steward of Gondor carries the Horn of Gondor. It is a large war horn that both rallies the kingdom of Gondor in a call to arms as well as intimidates the opposition.

on the state level, and as such, themes were gleaned through deductive and inductive coding (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006).

As presented in Chapters 4 and 5, the creators of these themes deliberately and repeatedly used Searle's (1969) Speech Acts of *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declaratives* as discursive strategies in making their major claims and recommendations. These speech acts are particularly persuasive with political texts. Each major theme is presented below with the interpretation of the theme. The two minor themes, Low Expectations and the Economic Ramifications of Education, will be rolled into the Theme Five: The Neoconservative Call for Reform, as they are important pillars of the neoconservative reform movement.

Four major themes of ANAR were not present in the findings of the TTF – 1) Patriotism, American Exceptionalism, and Nationalism; 2) Functionalism, Structuralism, Franchises; 3) Erosion, Decline, Descent into Chaos; and 4) Deficit View. These thematic differences may be due to the difference in audience – ANAR targeted the American public while the TTF appears to be focused on the education and governmental audience in New Mexico. The first theme is more nationally specific, which is a logical exclusion from a New Mexico report. The second theme of functionalism is not explicit in the findings of the TTF, but assumes buy-in by adding further layers of accountability measures and standardization through policy recommendations. The third theme of erosion and decline is unnecessary for the state that resides in the bottom of nearly every existing education metric. The fourth theme of explaining New Mexico's shortcomings with a deficit view would have been an unwise choice for the TTF to utilize, it was written with the understanding that New Mexico is already ranking at the bottom of

nearly every educational metric and any sorting of the haves- from the have-nots would have further polarized Secretary Skandera's initiatives.

The thematic, discursive, and rhetorical links between the two different commission reports represent the parallel approaches and ideological similarities between the two respective administrations. The blueprint of ANAR set the gold standard of how to make policy recommendations while engaging educators, the public, the media, and government.

### **Theme One: Establishment of Pedagogic Authority**

A major theme of both ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations is the claim for and establishment of Pedagogic Authority. Both ANAR and the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force were led by appointed leaders of the education cabinet, T.H. Bell and Hanna Skandera, respectively. Both of these leaders entered a newly-formed cabinet position and made major power-plays to establish the importance and dominance of their department. Early in their tenure as cabinet secretaries, they established commissions (under executive order) to explore the state of education. These commissions received a carefully curated collection of research and data, met several times with various experts, and quickly summarized their findings and recommendations for policy implementation.

The 2011 findings of the New Mexico Teaching Task Force served as the bellwether for subsequent New Mexico educational policy introduced by the NM PED. These findings, like ANAR and the US Department of Education, represent a shift in the claim for Pedagogic Authority within New Mexico. Throughout the preceding decades leading up to their findings, Pedagogic Authority within New Mexico was fairly fluid

between local school districts, the state legislature and the public education department (previously the elected office of Superintendent of Instruction). Indeed, a major component of the *NEA et. al. v. Hanna Skandera* (2014) lawsuit is over the over-stepping of the power claimed by the PED via the NMTEACH system.

Previous to the Martinez administration, the School Personnel Act of New Mexico mandated that the NM PED only “adopt criteria and minimum highly objective uniform statewide standards of evaluation for the annual performance evaluation of licensed school employees” while school districts “adopt policies, guidelines and procedures for the performance evaluation process of licensed school employees” (as cited in *NEA et.al v. Hanna Skandera*, 2015, p. 30). The positing of the NM PED as the utmost Pedagogic Authority in New Mexico goes directly against the 2003 educational reform changes to the state constitution, which states:

The legislature finds further that the public school governance structure needs to change to provide accountability from the bottom up instead of from the top down. Each school principal, with the help of school councils made up of parents and teachers, must be the instructional leader in the public school, motivating and holding accountable both teachers and students. Each local superintendent must function as the school district's chief executive officer and have responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the school district, including personnel and student disciplinary decisions. (as cited in *NEA et. al. v. Hanna Skandera*, 2015, p. 30)

Secretary Skandera and the New Mexico Public Education department knowingly and directly repudiate the New Mexico constitution and their introduced policies which reinforce their top-down approach to education. In the curated research presented to the

TTF, not a single reference surrounding education in New Mexico was utilized. The intentional exclusion of New Mexican education researchers and school districts demonstrate the lack of belief in locally-sourced expertise and the unfailing positioning of the NM PED as the holder of official education knowledge.

Why is Pedagogic Authority important? This power, in national and New Mexico education, is verified through legal means. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) write:

[t]he symbolic strength of a pedagogic agency is defined by its weight in the structure of the power relations and symbolic relations (the latter always expressing the former) between the agencies exerting an action of symbolic violence. This structure in turn expresses the power relations between the groups or classes making up the social formation in question. It is through the mediation of this effect of domination by the dominant PA [Pedagogic Authority] that the different PA's carried on within the different groups or classes objectively and indirectly collaborate in the dominance of the dominant classes (e.g. the inculcation by the dominated PAs of knowledges or styles whose value on the economic or symbolic market is defined by the dominant PA). (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 8)

To explain, Pedagogic Authority not only assumes the power of authority, but thereby also inherits the ability to punish or exert violence. This is particularly salient in the case of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System. Prior to this system implementation, hiring and firing decisions were solely up to individual New Mexico school districts – but no longer. In addition to the literal power, there are also the “knowledges or styles” that are defined and valued by the PA. The NM PED has established that student scores on an

annual test, interpreted through VAM-measures, constitute the lion's share of teacher effectiveness ratings and hiring/firing decisions for school districts and licensure decisions. These VAM-measures are calculated, maintained, and interpreted by the NM PED alone. This literal power could only be claimed by the Pedagogic Authority.

Secretary Skandera “call(s) on every educator, student, parent, community member and public servant to share in the responsibility for the success of our children and, ultimately, the future of the great state of New Mexico” (NM PED, 2016). This artificial plea for communication and collaboration is betrayed by the educative reality experienced by the stakeholders she lists. While stakeholders certainly feel the responsibility, policy and implementation is not only a trickle-down from the NM PED hierarchy, but a force feeding. As evidenced in both the TTF Final Report and Recommendations (2011) and the New Mexico Educator Equity Plan (2015), the NM PED creates public forums where they invite selected groups of New Mexican education stakeholders to the table under the guise of collaboration. The NM PED then interprets attendance at public forums as public endorsement of their proposed reforms.

Throughout the numerous public discourse pieces surrounding New Mexican education, repeated references to the NM PED and Secretary Skandera's claim for power is discussed. Some refer to the NM PED and Secretary Skandera as the Death Star (Willis, 2016), the powerful Star Wars dictatorship. As Nielsen (2014) writes, “Seeing that her budget calls for increasing state control over education, rather than local district control, we can see that she doesn't want to or need to listen or debate. She's just there to control” (para.7). The lack of communication or dialogue between education



stakeholders and the NM PED demonstrates the level of power and condescension they flex on a daily basis.

### **Theme Two: Common-Senseness of Education**

The second major theme that runs across ANAR and following educational policies and public discourse is the ‘common-senseness’ of findings and proposed solutions. It is important to note that this common-sense approach is not solely limited to education, but is also tied to the neoconservative political movement. As previously noted in Chapters 4 and 5, the common-sense approach to education is a powerful neoconservative tool that stemmed with ANAR and continued to spiral with federal and state education policy and discourse. Michael Apple (1990) has extensively written about the use of common sense in neoconservative educational reform:

Yet no matter how radical some of these proposed ‘reforms’ are and no matter how weak the empirical basis of their support, they have now redefined the terrain of debate of all things educational. After years of conservative attacks and mobilizations, it has become clear that ‘ideas that were once deemed fanciful, unworkable—or just plain extreme’ are now increasingly being seen as common-sense.

Tactically, the reconstruction of common-sense that has been accomplished has proven to be extremely effective. For example, clear discursive strategies are being employed here, ones that are characterized by ‘plain speaking’ and speaking in a language that ‘everyone can understand.’ (I do not wish to be wholly negative about this. The importance of these things is something many ‘progressive educators, including many writers on critical pedagogy, have yet to understand.)

These strategies also involve not only presenting one's own position as 'common-sense' but also tacitly implying that there is something of a conspiracy among one's opponents to deny the truth or to say only that which is 'fashionable.'...This is a powerful technique. First it assumes that there are no genuine arguments against the chosen position; any opposing views are thereby positioned as false, insincere or self-serving. Second the technique presents the speaker as someone brave or honest enough to speak the (previously) unspeakable. Hence the moral highground is assumed and opponents are further denigrated. (Apple, 1990, pp. 68-69)

This common-senseness is thematically omnipresent with ANAR, by praising the Western ideals of hard work, self-reliance, the American Dream, and with implied intuition of citizens. ANAR writes extensively from the perspective of the patriotic citizen:

Citizens know intuitively what some of the best economists have shown in their research, that education is one of the chief engines of a society's material well-being. They know, too, that education is the common bond of a pluralistic society and helps tie us to other cultures around the globe. Citizens also know in their bones that the safety of the United States depends principally on the wit, skill, and spirit of a self-confident people, today and tomorrow. (p. 17)

This type of common-senseness is still utilized today, from the introduction of new education policy to 2016 Republican nominee Donald Trump being lauded by supporters for his plain-speech and outside perspective on American politics.

The NM PED effectively utilizes ‘common-senseness’ in proposing their educational initiatives. For every year of the Martinez administration, various Republican representatives and senators have introduced a NM PED-endorsed mandatory third grade retention bill for all students that do not read at grade level (Nott, 2016). On the surface, this bill makes sense. Third graders need to be able to read in order to thrive in school and beyond. Third graders ought to be able to read before they move on to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. But like so many other educational policies, the means defeat the end. The measure of reading does not emerge from the professional decision of the classroom teacher, but instead is measured on a single standardized examination that quite literally determines the fate of an 8 or 9-year-old child. It was proposed that all students that did not score as proficient on new PARCC exam would be retained for an entire year of school. The NM PED, the foremost Pedagogical Authority of New Mexico, writes this annual proposal with no proposed additional funding for what would undoubtedly turn into a financial disaster necessitating the hiring of numerous teaching positions for displaced third graders. In 2015, only 25% of New Mexico’s third graders scored proficient or higher in reading on the PARCC examination. Opponents of the retention bill were labeled as supporters of social promotion, low educational standards, and the maintenance of New Mexico’s poor-performance status quo. The bill, reintroduced every year in the Martinez administration, has earned significant resistance on both sides of the aisle, yet continues to be annually promoted by the Governor and Secretary Skandera.

While both sides of the aisle in Santa Fe have largely rejected the third grade retention bill, the common-sense tactic is evident in the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations. Like so many

other education reform initiatives, the overall idea makes sense – teachers need to be evaluated so that they know where they need to improve. Many other professions that require college degrees and certification examinations require job performance evaluation, so the leap to educator evaluation (particularly when it is claimed that previous evaluations were ineffective) is natural for the general public, who receive regular performance reviews and evaluations. Districts should be able to make hiring and firing decisions, and student growth ought to be measured in some way. It is difficult to argue against these central ideas, which is precisely why the Martinez administration paints all opponents as supporters of teacher mediocrity, supporters of teacher tenure regardless of performance, and as maintainers of New Mexico’s dismal status quo. The Martinez administration holds fast to the belief that their suggested policies are what are best for New Mexico’s children, and that dissenters are in favor of protecting adults over children. This is not an uncommon approach specific to only the Martinez cabinet, this us-against-them mentality has become commonplace across the United States, as demonstrated repeatedly in national discourse.

### **Theme 3: Anti-Teacher Rhetoric and/or Artificial Support of Teachers**

Artificial support of teachers and anti-teacher rhetoric is a major theme throughout both ANAR and the TTF’s Final Report and Recommendations. The symbolic violence against teachers stemmed from *A Nation At Risk* and is re-discoursed in the Final Report and Recommendations as well as major federal education policy initiatives and public discourse. ANAR blamed American decline and erosion in business, security, and technology on the public schools, singling out the teaching professionals in front of children for the lion’s share of the blame.

ANAR's recommendations for teaching were "intended to improve the preparation of teachers or to make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession" (1983, p. 24). It further recommends that "salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated" (1983, p. 24). Subsequent national educational policy has not implemented an operating reward/encouragement schedule, yet NCLB introduced (as outlined in Chapter 2) detailed accountability measures towards teachers that increasingly deskilled them based on increasingly high-stakes student outcome measures on an annual basis.

This discourse between the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force findings and ANAR is reproduced nearly verbatim. The TTF writes,

The task force believes that there are many outstanding, effective, and hardworking teachers and school leaders throughout New Mexico, but the State does not have an effective system for recognizing and rewarding their achievements in the classroom. Further the absence of an objective framework to fully and fairly assess teacher and school leader quality has resulted in the failure to effectively assess performance, in particular as it relates to measureable student achievement, and to reward excellence and establish real accountability. (2011, p. 9)

This reproduction of mirroring discourse demonstrates how ANAR has permeated educational priorities and policy for over three decades. The TTF's main recommendation, the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System, is first introduced to

New Mexican public schools with the promise of rewarding teachers, just as ANAR did nearly thirty years earlier. Like the mythical Trojan Horse, the NMTEACH system is repeatedly justified as a way to reward “rock star teachers” (2011, p. 9). Yet, after years of operation under the helm of the NM PED, the horse has revealed itself to only operate punitively against teachers who earn ‘minimally effective’ or ‘ineffective’ ratings.

The most common discursive strategy employed in anti-teacher rhetoric and the artificial support of teachers between the two seminal documents is the use of Searle’s (1969) *expressives*, which Chilton and Schäffner (1997) explain is a political discourse strategy used to blame or praise. This is an effective strategy used by both policy makers and the public alike to best explain the bipolar national attitude towards teachers. This polarity between good/bad teacher has indelibly permeated the national public discourse. The following is from a national discourse piece analyzed in Chapter 4:

What really makes a difference, what matters more than the class size or the textbook, the teaching method or the technology, or even the curriculum, is the quality of the teacher. Much of the ability to teach is innate—an ability to inspire young minds as well as control unruly classrooms that some people instinctively possess (and some definitely do not)...In any case the research shows that within about five years, you can generally tell who is a good teacher and who is not. It is also true and unfortunate that often the weakest teachers are relegated to teaching the neediest students, poor minority kids in inner-city schools. For these children, teachers can be make or break....Although many teachers are caring and selfless, teaching in public schools has not always attracted the best and the brightest....One recent review of the evidence by McKinsey & Co., the

management consulting firm, showed that most schoolteachers are recruited from the bottom third of college-bound high-school students. At the same time, the teachers' unions have become more and more powerful....It is almost impossible to fire them. (Thomas, 2010, para. 4-6)

Thomas (2010) vacillates between the importance of the teacher and the classic Britzman stereotypes of nurturing and hard-working good teachers (2003, as detailed in Chapter 2) to the agitation and judgment of unionizing teachers that apparently emerge from the bottom of society. Unfortunately for Thomas, teacher effectiveness, or that 'innate' ability to teach, is unquantifiable. Education researchers have tried in vain for decades to decipher the intangible qualities of what makes an excellent teacher. Historically, excellent teachers were determined through extensive observation, student interviews, and parent input. The metrics used in the NMTEACH system are grounded in a single annual test score from each student in the classroom. The scores directly go to and remain in possession of the NM PED, where they are interpreted by the statistical VAM-measures to determine half of a teacher's evaluation score. While student performance should factor into teacher effectiveness, the methods and means used within New Mexico to glean student performance are inherently anti-teacher and lack transparency as well as personalization.

Thomas' opinion piece also reflects another disastrous trend in education policy and public discourse post-ANAR; it is not written by an educator. There is no other profession in American society that garners a similar deluge of criticism and recommendations for change than its public school teachers. So many are willing to proffer their advice on the inadequacies of American educators, but remain unwilling to

enter the classroom themselves. This trend doesn't remain contained in the symbolically violent world of American media, but extends itself to education policy writers and leaders of the Pedagogic Authority – the US Department of Education and the New Mexico Public Education Department. Neither former US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan nor New Mexico Secretary Hanna Skandera ever taught in the public schools, and the current US Secretary of Education John King Jr. (appointed in March 2016) taught in a Puerto Rican private school for one year before becoming a public charter school teacher, administrator, and co-founder in Boston. This lack of experience lends itself to the anti-teacher rhetoric and artificial support of teachers by asserting that the foremost leaders and experts of American education are charged with leading and monitoring teachers, yet never worked at the bottom of the professional ladder. It assumes that these political actors are too brilliant to be mere public school teachers and that their intelligence is better spent on instituting policies than living under them.

#### **Theme 4: Color-Blind Ideology and/or Deracialisation of Educational Policy**

Color-Blind Ideology and the Deracialisation of Educational Policy are deeply embedded in both ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations. As previously explained, policy that assumes that the one-size-fits-all approach to children in educational policy is an example of color-blind ideology, as defined by Bonilla-Silva (2006), where groups or individuals claim to see the character of a person rather than race or social status. This color-blind ideology is in fact racist by denying the viewed parties lived experiences in a racist society. Gillborn (1997) writes that the deracialisation of education policy is a global phenomenon accompanying education marketization, which has “created a policy context where schools...are held accountable for how many



students reach particular benchmark levels, regardless of disparities between different groups of students (based on factors such as social class, gender, and ethnic origin” (Gillborn, 1997, p. 350). This deracialisation celebrates overarching multiculturalism and demographic percentages, only providing a surface level mention of difference in support of all citizens sharing the American dream or larger color-blind commonalities.

Each commission’s findings are limited in lamenting the lack of educational and aspirational opportunity within America or New Mexico while making sweeping recommendations that will inequitably impact every community, school district, school, and student. ANAR and the TTF are both written under the assumption that every student in America has the same level of access and opportunity. This approach to education deliberately ignores centuries of encroachment, slavery, genocide, inequality, and injustice. The education policies that have emerged from the TTF and ANAR findings have centered on teachers as the key lever in solving systemic and institutional poverty at the state and national level. The findings of both commissions encourage meritocracy and directly links educational and financial non-attainment with personal effort.

ANAR legitimized the perpetuation of the one-size-fits-all education policy discourse and marketization in education approach, which has continued into the present at both the national and state level. These educational policies replace the disparate lived realities of White, Black, Native, Asian, and Hispanic children with a generic version of an American child that, regardless of parental income, can personally overcome all obstacles in their path with an exemplary-rated teacher that must be held accountable for their students’ annual test scores. Recommendations between the ANAR and the TTF

Final Report and Recommendations ignore the nuances of poverty, ability, and race in America. Instead, they are wide-reaching and center on an ideal “every-student” who, if they work hard enough with the right adults in front of them, will inevitably succeed in school and life.

This startling ignorance of the lived reality and experiences of New Mexican children trickles into teacher evaluation recommendations for NMTEACH. The system itself assumes that if what the PED deems an ‘effective’ teacher steps into a classroom of ELL students or impoverished students or Navajo students, they will inevitably be successful. This is simply impossible. How can a teacher that proves to be ‘effective’ with students in the Northeast Heights of Albuquerque be as equally successful in reaching children in Pueblo Pintado (let alone the nearly magical possibility of a teacher willing to make this geographical move to begin with)? Teachers *must* be grounded in the community context of the students they teach. Attitudes towards school, school attendance, parental income, attention in school, and student behavior are not one-size-fits-all, and these commission recommendations assume that every child is not only identical, but experiences schooling identically.

#### **Theme 5: The Neoconservative Call for Reform**

The neoconservative call for reform is omnipresent throughout ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations. Within ANAR, the commission makes many targeted recommendations that align with neoconservative educational priorities – a return to the basics of education, greater accountability measures, and streamlined educational standards. ANAR invites the business community, the American public, and the technology community to become more involved in demanding a greater educational

output through educational reform. Within the TTF Final Report and Recommendations, the commission makes many targeted recommendations that align with neoconservative educational priorities, such as the use of VAM models in determining student achievement, greater accountability measures, and further streamlining educational standards and assessment.

The neoconservative call for reform is deeply entrenched in maintaining and further expanding the reliance on Pedagogic Authority. As Apple (2001) prophesied:

Yet it is not only in such things as the control of legitimate knowledge where neoconservative impulses are seen. The idea of a strong state is also visible in the growth of the regulatory state as it concerns teachers. There has been a steadily growing change from ‘license autonomy’ to ‘regulated autonomy’ as teachers’ work is more highly standardized, rationalized, and ‘policed.’ Under conditions of licensed autonomy, once teachers are given the appropriate professional certification they are basically free—within limits—to act in their classrooms according to their judgment. Such a regime is based on trust in ‘professional discretion.’ Under the growing conditions of the regulated autonomy, teachers’ actions are now subject to much greater scrutiny in terms of process and outcomes. Indeed, some states in the United States not only have specified the content that teachers are to teach but also have regulated the only appropriate methods of teaching. Not following these specified ‘appropriate’ methods puts the teachers at risk of administrative sanctions. Such a regime of control is based not on trust, but on a deep suspicion of the motives and competence of teachers. For neoconservatives it is the equivalent of the notion of ‘producer capture’ that is

so powerful among neoliberals. For the former, however, it is not the market that will solve this problem, but a strong and interventionist state that will see to it that only 'legitimate' content and methods are taught. And this will be policed by statewide and national tests of both students and teachers. (Apple, 2001, p. 51)

This 2001 statement captures the trends in education from ANAR to NMTEACH. The NMTEACH system, as previously explored in Theme One, is a claim for dominance over teacher accountability in New Mexico. It further regulates and micromanages the profession while ensuring that all teachers experience a streamlined evaluation process, regardless of district input. When school districts or individuals do not adhere to the system prescribed, they are viewed and attacked as dissidents, as evidenced in Chapter 5's case of Albuquerque Public Schools board member Kathy Korte.

The call for reform is just as relevant in 2016 as in 1983. Donald Trump, the 2016 Republican presidential nominee, is promising to 1) abolish the US Department of Education and Common Core curriculum; 2) siphon federal Title I education dollars to the creation of school vouchers; and 3) tie merit pay to student test scores (Klein, 2016). As the reader may have noticed, two of these three platform ideas are directly correlated to Ronald Reagan's 1980 education agenda. Were Donald Trump tapping into the Christian constituency, a call for the return of prayer (Reagan's third education priority) in schools might be anticipated as well.

The NMTEACH system is portrayed by Secretary Skandera as a cutting-edge system that is grounded in the latest education research and methodology. This is untrue. The NMTEACH system (as well as the school grading system and proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> grade retention bills) utilizes methods that have been proven to be ineffective in different states,

yet the course remains unchanged. It is evident that these reform measures in New Mexico have failed greatly, with six years of supporting data. The NMTEACH system is capricious and scores are difficult to decipher. This is not unusual, and Skandera's bulldog approach is common in neoconservative approaches to education. These system failures are explained by program infidelity, lack of teacher buy-in and ineffective implementation.

**Minor Theme One: Low Expectations.** This theme is not a major theme on its own, as it is an approach repeatedly employed by both ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations as a rationale for educational reform. As explained by Apple (2001):

Among the policies being proposed under this ideological position are mandatory national and statewide curricula, national and statewide testing, a "return" to higher standards, a revivification of the "western tradition," patriotism, and conservative variants of character education. Yet underlying some of the neoconservative thrust in education in social policy in general is not only a call for "return." Behind it as well—and this is essential—is a fear of the "Other." This is expressed in its support for a standardized national curriculum, its attacks on bilingualism and multiculturalism, and its insistent call for raising standards. (p. 47)

It is far easier to blame the subpar educational outcomes of children on the adults that lead them than on deeper, systemic issues that might be holding children back in the classroom. The idea of educational reproduction is typically viewed as a betrayal to the well-established meritocracy of the American Dream. Typically, however, children

typically replicate, if not exceed (through educational stratification), the educational outcomes of their parents (with outliers in both directions).

**Minor Theme Two: Economic Ramifications of Education.** This minor theme is also an important aspect of the neoconservative call for reform, which strategically links educational reform with the business sector in both ANAR and the TTF Final Report and Recommendations. While there is a historical and logical link between the workforce and education, neoconservative educational policy and discourse have created a huge market for standardized education. For-profit businesses create federal and state government-mandated standardized tests, scripted curricula, and evaluation measures. Education has become a hugely profitable and expanding business, largely benefitting from further neoconservative calls for reform.

### **Implications**

The five major themes from conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis of ANAR and the New Mexico TTF's Final Report and Recommendations reveal several important implications. First, it is evident that the War Against Teachers is not only real, but became a normalized American practice in 1983. While the writers of ANAR mildly warned against scapegoating of teachers, they did not hesitate in pinpointing the numerous issues within the profession that they viewed as holding the country back from realizing its potential. Teachers, in their role as agents of the state, have been given ever-changing teaching standards to teach, scripted curricula to follow, and increasing certification requirements. Alongside these measures, education has become increasingly high-stakes, with teacher evaluations and school funding linked to annual student test

scores. Through measured policy suggestions in 1983, the current educational policies have trickled down from the federal level to state level.

Have educational outcomes greatly improved from the policies that have emerged since 1983? Largely, no. The United States, and New Mexico within it, still earns test scores that do not measure up to other first-world countries. Can the blame for this apparent failure be attributed solely to teacher effectiveness? Largely, no. While there will inevitably be a small proportion of any profession that does not perform at a professional level, the real problems in American education outcomes are due to racial and income inequality, systemic and institutional racism, and allowing Pedagogic Authority to go from the local level to the state and national level. This lop-sided societal inequality can be seen in the schools that are performing the worst—race and parental income are the largest predictor of student success and life outcomes, not teacher effectiveness. This has been repeatedly been found in educational research over the past century, and while I agree that this must be changed, it is a systemic issue, not an issue that can be solved with punitive education policy towards educators.

This War Against Teachers has shifted from the symbolic violence of the mass media and public discourse towards teachers towards real, material violence. Like a 17<sup>th</sup> century New England witch-hunt, so-called bad teachers have become the scapegoat for society's ills. These bad teachers, however, are largely determined to be bad through annual standardized test scores that are interpreted through invalid VAM-measures. While so-called bad teachers are weeded out of the profession, all other educators are subject to the same dehumanizing practices and accountability measures. Countless teachers have left the profession, experienced serious burn-out or health issues, and/or

fought fruitlessly against the system. The service profession of teaching is becoming increasingly unappealing, particularly within New Mexico, with few and far between pay increases that do not account for rising inflation costs or the rising cost of higher education. The profession is unsustainable, and while teaching has always experienced more than average levels of attrition, it is not attracting or retaining Skandera's so-called "rock-star teachers" but further alienating and marginalizing teachers.

The second implication of these five major themes is the omnipresence of the unstoppable neoconservative education agenda. Since 1983, education has become a big business that operates and creates policy with a great sense of urgency. A big take-away from this research is that not much has changed within thirty years. If we are to remain in the current structure of the American public education system, several changes must occur. Instead of focusing on quantitative VAM-measured student performance in the classroom, we must redirect our attention to the beliefs and backgrounds of not only teachers but administrators, teacher educators, politicians, businesspeople, and the American public. A paradigm shift must occur as in 1983. Unfortunately, major changes in education tend to take place only when a group or individual feels threatened. The trend in this research is that secretaries of education at the state and federal level not only assume responsibility of their respective departments but create legal mandates that they are the foremost Pedagogic Authority with little resistance.

The tide is shifting in New Mexico. Unlike the fall-out of *A Nation at Risk*, there is a lack of widespread support for Secretary Skandera's educational reform initiatives. At Teach For America's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit, Skandera stated that her "painful" reform efforts created a necessary "breakthrough" for New Mexico (TFAEvents, 2016).



Yet Secretary Skandera's initiatives have not performed as she promised they would. In 2016, New Mexico still ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in overall child well being (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016), 51<sup>st</sup> in school system quality ratings (WalletHub, 2016), 50<sup>th</sup> with high school dropout rates, and 50<sup>th</sup> with student reading scores (WalletHub, 2016). The Albuquerque Public Schools began school year 2016-2017 with over 100 teaching vacancies (Gregorczyk, 2016) and major New Mexican universities reported fewer teaching candidates entering their teacher education programs (New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee, 2016). In effect, her reforms have only decreased teacher morale, created a massive teaching shortage, and made career teaching more unappealing.

State legislators with professional backgrounds as teachers have put their name alongside New Mexico's teaching unions in a lawsuit to declare the NMTEACH system unconstitutional. The hermeneutical cycle of teacher evaluation via the NMTEACH system may be entirely removed. Upon the annual release of continually dismal graduation rates, student poverty percentages, and teaching vacancies, the NM PED's power of authority is being diminished. There is much at stake in the next gubernatorial and presidential election, as it is up to the next New Mexico Secretary of Education to change or continue this trickle-down spiral.

The third implication of this research is the lack of teacher advocacy. While there are champions of the profession, there are very few that are working within the system to change it. In New Mexico, the fear of speaking out is a legitimate fear. As detailed in Chapter 5, Kathy Korte was a concerned parent that wanted to effect change by running for the Albuquerque Public School board. When she spoke out against the mandates of the NM PED and the politics behind the scenes, both she and her husband lost their jobs,

she lost her next election (Governor Martinez personally donated \$15,000 to her opponent) and were slandered in the *Albuquerque Journal*, New Mexico's largest newspaper that often aligns with Governor Martinez. It is clear that individuals have a lot to lose by speaking out against these reforms, and teachers, who often are called to this work from an altruistic perspective, may feel that the benefits of educating children outweigh the dehumanizing mandates coming from the state.

The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association spearhead teacher advocacy against the NMTEACH system in New Mexico. These important unions represent thousands of teachers in New Mexico, yet their protests against the NM PED do not include every teacher that disagrees with the NMTEACH system. Many conservative and liberal teachers in New Mexico may disagree with the system, but never become involved with the union's efforts purely for political reasons. A non-partisan, non-affiliated coalition must be created with the sole focus of dismantling the system. This coalition can contain teachers, administrators, parents, school district officials, unions, community leaders, and members of higher education. In order to dismantle the system, an organized coalition that is just as organized as the NM PED must exist.

The final implication of this research is that education alone will not fix economic inequality. This is counter to the dominant narrative on education – many politicians, government officials, educators, parents and children believe that education is the key to economic mobility. This is an over-simplistic view that (rather effectively) can work on an individual basis, but does not work on a group basis (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Even if every American public school student received a streamlined,

rigorous education from a “highly effective” teacher and graduated from college, there would still be entire racial and economic groups rising to the top. This is because economic inequality and reproduction is a societal issue, not only an educational issue. Greater educational standardization and teacher evaluation systems are not going to fix unfair housing policies, income inequality, job markets, banking practices, generational poverty, access to educational opportunity, or individuals that believe that we need to “make America great again.” Some believe that schools are the answer for fixing this, but we must focus more on the individuals we are sending into the real world rather than on pre-packaged one-size-fits-all deracialised approaches to education. Ultimately, wealthy Americans do not send their children to public schools, and children that receive the most punitive of reform efforts are largely within Title I schools, thus reproducing the same stratification the policies claim to work against (Anyon, 1981).

American public schools, and particularly New Mexico schools, are scapegoated for a problem that is far beyond their scope of control. It is easy to become discouraged when looking at the enormity of the problem. Students, particularly students at Title I schools, are subject to mind numbing scripted curricula focused solely on math and reading. Students, particularly students at Title I schools, must receive an education that focuses on well-being, strategies for navigating within society, curricula that prepares them for any post-secondary choice that they make, and a better understanding of the world they live in and issues of society. It is only when students are conscious of these challenges that they can begin to confront and solve them.

## **Limitations**

This dissertation is only a slice of the past three decades of educational reform policy and how it trickles to the state level, as well as the public response to it. A lifetime could be spent in study of this particular repeated discourse and reform measures within only one state, let alone all fifty. This Critical Discourse Analysis is limited in scope – more documents, more media, and more policies could have been analyzed for a richer picture of how policy is re-discoursed, distributed, and interpreted.

Positionality is a major limitation in this research study. Although I have been privy to many educational experiences within New Mexico, I am only an observer to the major players in education. In this research, I was limited to remaining within the written and published discourse itself without the possibility of interviewing key players or classroom teachers. A reader that is experienced in New Mexico politics, a current classroom, or state-level education may read through this dissertation and think, “Oh, if she only knew” and believe these efforts to be sophomoric. Conversely, there may be readers that are inexperienced in reading about educational reform policy and may read in disbelief. Regardless of these limitations, this work is important and timely.

Additionally, it is clear from the title of this dissertation that my work would be a critical view of ANAR, the NM PED, and the efforts of Secretary Skandera. This bias towards my researcher lens may invalidate this entire work in the eyes of some researchers, even in education. However, this bias is a tenet of CDA, which rejects deterministic positivist approaches to research. Research, particularly studying discourse, simply cannot be neutral, as it spoken and produced by human beings with positionalities, biases, and ideologies. If anything, this research has demonstrated how biased

educational policy is. Words, statements, research, and policies are not created in a vacuum and released without intention, as repressed meaning always exists within language. Meaning exists both within and outside of language.

### **Researcher Reflections and Recommendations**

#### **Researcher Reflections**

Is it possible to undo three decades of national perception, stereotypes, educational policy, and billions of dollars in high-stakes accountability measures? Frankly, I am not sure. Researchers like Berliner and Biddle (1995), who decry the “manufactured crisis” in education, are largely ignored by the general population as defenders of the status quo or conspiracy theorists wearing tin-foil hats. The War Against Teachers effectively diverts attention from systemic issues of racial and income inequality and places the blame for economic and social reproduction on teachers. Many education stakeholders see teachers who implement social justice or anti-racist curriculum within their classroom as being ‘political,’ but do not acknowledge that teaching and education, by nature, are themselves deeply entrenched in politics and reproducing the same educational inequalities that have always existed in American schooling. The teaching of social justice is not seen as being academic, but what could be more so? If student teachers better understand their role in reproductionism, they may be more apt in fighting against the tide and engaging in critical discussions of race, gender, class, and education. Currently, “many novice teachers are unaware of the realities their students face, and the tools they, their families, and their communities need to succeed” (Westheimer & suurttamm, 2009, p. 590).

With the high numbers of White teachers in teacher education programs and the teaching workforce nationally, it seems to be a logical step to prepare White teachers to teach in a community that they did not grow up in. Many White teachers that enter communities with high levels of poverty and the implications of the poverty are startled and shocked at what they see. So, if the demographics of teachers are to stay the same through cultural hegemony in the United States, it would make sense to better prepare the White teachers for the realities that they will soon encounter on a daily basis. First, teachers need to explore race, class, and racism in their teacher education programs to get a better understanding of where they fall in the grand scheme of things. When student teachers are able to look at themselves objectively, they can then start to engage in conversations about race, gender, and experiences of members of groups that they are not a part of. Instead of being afraid of confronting minority students in their own classrooms due to fear of being racist or offensive, real understanding of different perspectives can emerge. “Elementary teachers may exhibit fear of teaching students of another race or fear making race and racism part of subject matter because they believe it is not age-appropriate or promotes racial separatism locally and threatens national unity” (Richert, Donahue, & LaBoskey, 2009, p. 644). By creating a critical cultural awareness of themselves, teachers can thus better lead a critical classroom, regardless of grade level. Excellent teachers already do this. They break down their biases and intuitively reflect on their positionality in American society. They talk to their students, the families of their students, and create meaningful relationships within the community they teach. They may not fit the mold of the perfect teacher, but they teach critical thinking to their students. Authenticity goes a long way with students, their families, and the community.

Some educational policies or schooling approaches seem to have made substantial and lasting differences in the lives of students, but these initiatives have either not gained attention in or not taken place in New Mexico. For better or for worse, New Mexico is often ignored or overlooked by high-spending education foundations (Kellogg Foundation, Gates Foundation, etc.) and educational movements (i.e. national charter school networks like KIPP and Building Excellent Schools). Increasingly, these groups are looking at branching into New Mexico with the support of the NM PED, regardless of established laws against charter management organizations that do not support their expansion.

Regardless of Pedagogic Authority, I do believe in the collective power of American citizens and the citizens of New Mexico. While New Mexicans did elect Governor Martinez twice, I believe that a concerted effort within New Mexico can stop the NM PED and Secretary of Education. A non-partisan, non-affiliated coalition could be formed with the sole purpose of dismantling the NMTEACH system and reclaiming the right for educational decision making at the local level. In order to succeed, this coalition must be as organized and strategic as the NM PED. Ideally, the failed NMTEACH system will be discontinued by the next gubernatorial administration. If a Democrat is elected in 2018, this elimination could occur or could possibly be eliminated if Hillary Clinton is elected in November 2016. However, it is important to note that even if this occurs and New Mexican school districts are given local authority to determine teacher evaluations, there is a strong likelihood that districts may continue the same system of evaluation in the absence of capacity to create a new system, although the

Los Alamos School District requested a waiver to develop their own alternative evaluation system in August 2016 (Los Alamos School District, 2016).

Regardless of the next New Mexico gubernatorial administration, the NM PED must be reduced to a supporting role. The trickle-down culture of the NM PED betrays the collaborative nature and profession of teaching. In the future, educational policy and initiatives must be introduced with deliberation, community input, and an understanding of nuance. This research will ideally contribute to the building of a coalition to stop the NMTEACH system and the over-reaching dominance of the NM PED and the New Mexico Secretary of Education.

When I imagine an ideal education, I imagine a more decentralized system with fewer required credentials and qualifications, rooted in mentoring and apprenticeship. I believe that students should be given a rigorous education in any profession or pathway that they choose. I do not believe that students should be educationally tracked within the public school system, which makes decisions on curricular choices for children based on race and class. If a child seeks to attend college or post-secondary training, every door should be opened to them, rather than being held back by institutional gatekeepers. Conversely, I do not believe that every child should be attending college. However, the choice should not be made by adults. They must be made by students and their families. I believe that the works of Ivan Illich and the idea of professional apprenticeship should be seriously considered as an alternative to the traditional K-College path; however, I am cognizant that this sort of suggestion would be salaciously devoured and exploited by the media. I am a person that has excelled in the current system of American schooling, so these recommendations are written from a perch of great privilege. This recommendation



goes against the very common-senseness of education and deification of higher education that ANAR and NMTEACH dwells within and promotes, and against the knee-jerk intuition of the accountability movement. Is it possible to meaningfully change the Gordian knot that the current education milieu dwells within? I do not know.

I believe that the educational stratification hurdles in place for educators detract many excellent teacher candidates. In the past, elementary teachers were not required to have a college degree or take teacher examinations. The deskilling of educators while raising credentialing requirements is a seemingly unstoppable trend in education. At the University of New Mexico, the College of Education recently decided to lower the coursework requirements for its undergraduate education programs, while the NM PED has added additional teacher examinations for licensure. While UNM's choice may help students in the short-term, it further betrays the teaching profession by perpetuating the harmful stereotype that only low-achievers become educators and perpetuates the need for novice teachers to rely on prepackaged curricula.

Throughout this dissertation process, I have held the following quote near and dear:

Those who choose to in such a project only the effect of a political bias or temperamental irredentism will not fail to suggest that one has to be blind to the self-evidence of common sense to seek to grasp the social functions of pedagogic violence and to constitute symbolic violence as a form of social violence at the very time when the withering-away of the most authoritarian mode of imposition and the abandonment of the crudest techniques of coercion would seem more than ever to justify optimistic faith in the moralization of history by the sheer effects of

technical progress and economic growth. That would be to ignore the sociological question of the social conditions which must be fulfilled before it becomes possible to state scientifically the social functions of an institutions: it is no accident that the moment of transition from ruthless methods of imposition to the more subtle methods is doubtless the most favourable moment for bringing to light the objective truth of that imposition. The social conditions which require the transmission of power and privileges to take, more than in any other society, the indirect paths of academic consecration, or which prevent pedagogic violence from manifesting itself as the social violence it objectively is, are also the conditions which make it possible to state explicitly the objective truth of pedagogic action, whatever the degree of harshness of its methods. If 'there is no science but of the hidden', it is clear why sociology is allied with the historical forces in which, in every epoch, oblige the truth of power relations to come into the open, if only by forcing them to mask themselves yet further. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p. xxi)

The moment is upon New Mexico. Secretary Skandera's reforms have a proven track record of immense cost and immense failure. It is time for a paradigm shift in New Mexico; however, it is important to remember that the majority of New Mexico's voters not only elected Governor Martinez, but knowingly re-elected her for a second term with full knowledge that Secretary Skandera was a package deal. Though many educators disagree with the initiatives introduced by Secretary Skandera (even within my own family), they continue to vote Republican rather than cross the party line. Education is not compartmentalized, but rather another extension of the state.

This work, like any research study that employs the scientific method or statistics, is inherently biased. As a New Mexican teacher, I saw the trickle-down of federal and New Mexican educational policy and as a non-profit director, I observed slices of the behind-the-scenes tactics of the NM PED to achieve their desired outcomes at all costs. As a person that has directly benefitted from some of the recommendations of ANAR (alternative licensing, specifically), as a result of this research, some of my perspectives on educational reform have shifted from positive to negative and vice versa. There are many tensions in addressing educational equity, and I am not sure which approach is best in untangling the knot. Regardless of approach, I am convinced that teachers must be better equipped with a contextual and historical understanding of the communities and children they will teach, as well as a multi-dimensional understanding of education and education policy.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

While the NMTEACH system further marginalizes the profession of teaching and punitively measures educators, the New Mexico Public Education Department is not a singular example of educational authority run amok. Similar teacher-razing systems have been enacted across the United States with varying degrees of success. Governor Martinez and Secretary Skandera are not particularly unique political actors, and share many common political goals and policy initiatives as government officials in many other states. A recommendation for further research would be for other states to research how their state policies re-discourse ANAR and the neoconservative agenda for educational reform.

How can this hermeneutical cycle be broken? At this juncture, I am unsure if it is possible. In national educational policy, it appears that the only solution is a time machine. This could be different at the state level. As previously discussed the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, in conjunction with several progressive legislators, filed a lawsuit against the NM PED in 2014 (National Education Association et. al. v. Hanna Skandera, 2014). As of this writing, the verdict has yet to be determined. Optimistically, the case could dismantle the NMTEACH system and determine that the NM PED has overstepped their constitutional jurisdiction by proclaiming themselves the Pedagogic Authority that determines teacher evaluation criteria. This alone will not break the hermeneutical cycle; this will require a shift in ideological leadership at the state level or a wide-scale rejection by teachers.

### **Researcher Recommendations**

The largest recommendation of this study is to strip the Pedagogic Authority from the New Mexico Public Education Department and the power of the New Mexico Secretary of Education and return to the 2003 vision of the NM PED in the New Mexico constitution. This version envisioned a department that existed solely to support New Mexico educators and cultivate grassroots level initiatives. New Mexico is the best state in the nation, and the leaders must believe that greatness already exists and can be further grown. The idea that a one-size-fits-all approach can work within New Mexico runs counter to the state's identity, history, context, and demographics. As previously mentioned, a non-partisan unaffiliated coalition of concerned stakeholders should form to end the current hermeneutical spiral of the NMTEACH system.

If we are to remain within the same limited system that we currently exist in, there are several things that the NM PED and New Mexico Legislature can do in addition to dismantling the NMTEACH system:

- The NM PED must begin to operate as they were constitutionally conceived - as an entity to support school districts and teachers, rather than as an overseeing entity that creates and punitively enforces policy.
- The next Secretary of Education in New Mexico must have classroom experience within the State of New Mexico.
- Colleges of education should prioritize student teacher placement in Title I schools and do more than simply encourage students to work in low-income communities.
- K-12 teachers, administrators, parents, and community members must feel able and empowered to speak critically against NM PED without personal or professional retribution, as conflict is a natural and necessary component to growth on both sides.
- The NM PED should revert from the 3-tiered salary schedule that was put in place in 2003 and shift to a similar pay schedule as neighboring Texas, where teachers start at \$45,000. New Mexico bleeds teachers to our neighboring states (particularly in New Mexico towns near state borders), who all pay substantially more. A common argument is that New Mexico teachers are rewarded for their time and experience in the role, but the state is making a losing investment by bleeding talent.

- The pay schedule of teachers must annually increase with rates of inflation. Between 2003 and 2013, the pay rate for Level I teachers did not increase, while the cost of living, the cost of food, and the cost of higher education exponentially increased. Teaching must be a vocation that allows its practitioners to pay off or forgive student loans.
- Pay increases could stem from the district or state with the removal of expensive curricula and/or standardized tests, also creating more capacity for educators to teach content in classrooms rather than using classroom time for conducting mandated assessments.
- In New Mexico, a traditionally certified teacher must teach for a minimum of 6 years before being allowed to pursue an administrative license. An alternatively certified teacher must teach for a minimum of 7 years. Neighboring states also offer teachers leadership ladders, where teachers can begin to pursue administrative licenses after 2 years of teaching. This must change – self-motivated leaders will either leave the state or the teaching profession when they no longer feel pathways for advancement exists.
- Colleges of education within New Mexico should no longer operate as traditional cash-cows for universities and be required to subsidize more high-profile graduate schools. These typically high-enrollment programs should be able to keep their tuition revenue to build more challenging and innovative community-based programs of study.

- Recruitment of teachers of color, faculty of color, and local talent should be at the forefront of New Mexico colleges of education.
- Colleges of education within New Mexico should employ instructors or professors with recent K-12 classroom experience and/or require teacher education professors to have classroom experience in the communities they profess in.
- Colleges of education within New Mexico should strengthen their curricula by requiring more hours in upper-division coursework while also requiring critical studies in education and history of education over multiple semesters. Graduates must have a solid grounding in the historical context of teaching within New Mexico and the United States as well as an understanding of the system they are becoming change agents of.

Additionally, this dissertation can be condensed into a chapter to be required reading in future education courses to demonstrate how educational policy was created, influenced, implemented, and maintained in New Mexico. A key aspect of critical consciousness is the ability to understand the context of the world we are living within, and this research can enable new teachers to have a better understanding of their future profession. While some media representations of teaching have focused on the bleak nature of the profession, this research can explain the origins of the educational policies that shape the lived reality of New Mexico teachers. In turn, this research may inspire other educators to become more involved with creating, resisting, or understanding policy.

## Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 6 concludes this research study. The aim of this dissertation was to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of *A Nation at Risk* and discover how it embodied a historical shift in educational policy discourse, and how national discourse and the current NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System aligns with and re-discourses ANAR. This Critical Discourse Analysis has demonstrated on both the national and state level of New Mexico how *A Nation at Risk* set the agenda of education reform and created a type of discourse that has been re-discoursed in both the public education discourse and educational policy.

The past three decades of educational reform and policy have created a War Against Teachers, from the federal to the state level. While the stated intentions of policy pieces have had altruistic roots or different intentions, what has ultimately emerged is a symbolically violent war against the profession of teaching, which has dehumanized generations of teachers. Teachers have become the scapegoat of all of the ills of public education, while businesses have greatly profited from the marketization of education and the deskilling of teachers.

The findings produced five major recurring themes between ANAR, national and state discourse, and NMTEACH (as referenced in the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force): 1) The Establishment of Pedagogic Authority; 2) The Common-Senseness of Education; 3) Anti-Teacher Actions and the Artificial Support of Teachers; 4) Deracialisation of Educational Policy and Color-Blind Ideology; and 5) The Movement from Symbolic to Physical Violence. This research has uncovered how both public discourse and NMTEACH not only re-discourse the symbolic violence of ANAR, but



how the thematic elements of ANAR are continually reproduced under the guise of “cutting-edge” educational research and policy. This hermeneutical and reproductive cycle must be broken in New Mexico and nationally while a new educational paradigm must emerge.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: ANAR Themes and Textual Examples

Category	Textual Example
War and dominance, PA	
WDPA1	Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world (p. 9).
WDPA2	If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war (p. 9).
WDPA3	Americans like to think of this Nation as the preeminent country for generating the great ideas and material benefits for all mankind (p. 17).
Low expectations and the need for high expectations	
LE1	Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them (p. 9).
LE2	What lies behind this emerging national sense of frustration can be described as both a dimming of personal expectations and the fear of losing a shared vision of America (p. 13).
LE3	These standards far exceed the strictest high school graduation requirements of any State today, and they also exceed the admission standards of all but a handful of our most selective colleges and universities (p. 17).
Nationalism/ patriotism/ American exceptionalism /meritocracy	
NP1	The persistent and authentic American dream that superior performance can raise one's state in life and shape one's own future (p. 16).

<p>NP2</p> <p>NP3</p> <p>NP4</p>	<p>Citizens also know in their bones that the safety of the United States depends principally on the wit, skill, and spirit of a self-confident people, today and tomorrow (p. 17).</p> <p>We are the inheritors of a past that gives us every reason to believe that we will succeed (p. 26).</p> <p>Even with your parents’ best example and your teachers’ best efforts, in the end it is <i>your</i> work that determines how much and how well you learn. When you work to your full capacity, you can hope to attain the knowledge and skills that will enable you to create your future and control your destiny. If you do not, you will have your future thrust upon you by others. Take hold of your life, apply your gifts and talents, work with dedication and self-discipline (p. 27).</p>
<p>Economic impact of education</p>	
<p>EI1</p> <p>EI2</p> <p>EI3</p>	<p>Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading writing, spelling, and computation (p. 12).</p> <p>Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier (p. 10).</p> <p>This predicament becomes more acute as the knowledge base continues its rapid expansion, the number of traditional jobs shrinks, and new jobs demand greater sophistication and preparation (p. 13).</p>
<p>Color-blind ideology, false equality</p>	
<p>CBI1</p> <p>CBI2</p>	<p>All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost (p. 9).</p> <p>We do not believe that a public commitment to excellence and educational reform must be made at the expense of a strong public commitment to the equitable treatment of our diverse population (p. 14).</p>

CBI3	Nevertheless, there remains a common expectation: We must demand the best effort and performance from all students, whether they are gifted or less able, affluent or disadvantaged, whether destined for college, the farm, or industry (p. 21).
Decline and erosion, the descent into chaos	
DE1	For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents (p. 12).
DE2	More and more young people emerge from high school ready neither for college nor for work (p. 13).
DE3	And the ideal of academic excellence as the primary goal of schooling seems to be fading across the board in American education (p. 15).
Functionalism/ structuralism	
FS1	For our country to function, citizens must be able to reach some common understandings on complex issues, often on short notice and on the basis of conflicting or incomplete evidence (p. 10).
FS2	[E]ducation is one of the chief engines of society's material well-being (p. 17).
FS3	It is our conviction that the essential raw materials needed to reform our educational system are waiting to be mobilized through effective leadership (p. 15).
Anti-teacher rhetoric and the artificial support of teachers	
ATR1	This unity, however, can be achieved only if we avoid the unproductive tendency of some to search for scapegoats among the victims, such as the beleaguered teachers (p. 13).
	The Commission found that not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation

ATR2	<p>programs need substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers exists in key fields (p. 20).</p> <p>Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated (p. 24).</p>
ATR3	
Deficit views	
DV1  DV  DV3	<p>History is not kind to idlers (p. 10).</p> <p>The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised (p. 10).</p> <p>In contrast to the ideal of the Learning Society, however, we find that for too many people education means doing the minimum work necessary for the moment, then coasting through life on what may have been learning in its first quarter (p. 15).</p>
A call for reform	
CR1  CR2  CR3	<p>This movement is but a start on what we believe is a larger and more educationally encompassing need to improve teaching and learning in fields such as English, history, geography, economics, and foreign languages. We believe this movement must be broadened and directed toward reform and excellence throughout education (p. 13).</p> <p>Reform of our educational system will take time and unwavering commitment. It will require equally widespread, energetic, and dedicated action (p. 27).</p> <p>We firmly believe that a movement of America's schools in the direction called for our recommendations will prepare these children for far more effective lives in a far stronger America (p. 27).</p>
Disposition of success, proper moral instruction, and desirable	

student outcomes	
DS1	<p>We define expectations in terms of the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills school and college graduates should possess. They also refer to the time, hard work, behavior, self-discipline, and motivation that are essential for high student achievement (p. 18).</p> <p>Have high expectations for yourself and convert every challenge into an opportunity ( p. 27).</p>
DS2	<p>Excellence characterizes a <i>school</i> or <i>college</i> that sets high expectations and goals for all learners, then tries in every way possible to help students reach them. Excellence characterizes a <i>society</i> that has adopted these policies, for it will then be prepared through the education and skill of its people to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Our Nation’s people and its schools and colleges must be committed to achieving excellence in all these senses (p. 14).</p>
DS3	

**Appendix B: Recurring ANAR Themes in the New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force’s Final Report and Recommendations**

Category	Textual Example
War and dominance, Pedagogic Authority	
WD1	In fact, our teachers are our biggest “change agents” when it comes to improved student achievement (p. 12).
WD2	Districts must weight observations at 25%, though they should retain local flexibility concerning the observation protocols (with PED approval). Districts should also have autonomy (with PED approval) to select “other measures” to be used for the remaining 25% of the evaluation (pgs. 13-14).
WD3	Consistent with Governor Martinez’s Executive Order, we also believe that this component should account for fully 50% of a teacher’s evaluation, as it is strongly tied to student outcomes.
WD4	To complete its work, the Task Force, with support from Public Education Department staff, read and reviewed the latest research on teacher and school leader evaluations, compensation, observation protocols, professional development, licensure, advancement, and details related to the current New Mexico teacher and school leader evaluation system (p. 10).
WD5	Record keeping and data collection by the PED would not only ensure that professional development is occurring in an efficient and approved manner, but it would also allow another layer of data to be utilized in analyzing student performance. The approved list for professional development activities should be a fluid one, with activities which do not translate into positive classroom performance being eliminated and new opportunities with proven performance added. Additionally, as professional development will be tied to annual performance evaluations of educational personnel, accurate record keeping by the PED is necessary. (p. 24)
Low expectations and the need for high	

expectations	
LE1	New Mexico should replace its overly simplistic pass/fail teacher evaluation system with five effectiveness levels (p. 13).
LE2	Studies have shown that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap (p. 9).
LE3	State and federal dollars for professional development should be spent on the development of practices which demonstrate increases in student achievement (p. 22).
Economic impact of education	
EI1	Currently a substantial investment of the states professional development is directed toward support of dossier and portfolio requirements for level III licensure. ... State and federal dollars for professional development should be spent on the development of practices which demonstrate increases in student achievement (p. 22).
EI2	“[t]here are many issues to consider when addressing retention and recruitment, but most important to New Mexico business, community members, parents, students and educators is that of recruiting and retaining the best personnel from in and outside of New Mexico...” (p. 26).
EI3	Delivering on the promise of an excellent teacher is the key to lifting New Mexico’s students out of poverty” (p. 4).
Color-blind ideology, false equality	
CBI1	Delivering on the promise of an excellent teacher is the key to lifting New Mexico’s students out of poverty and closing the achievement gap which doesn’t do justice to our state (p. 4).
CBI2	There are many issues to consider when addressing retention and recruitment, but most important to New Mexico business, community members, parents, students and educators is that of recruiting and retaining the best personnel from in and outside of New Mexico to provide the very best possible education for our students (p. 26).



CBI3	Studies have shown that if we give the most at-risk students the most effective teachers, we could close the achievement gap (p. 9).
Anti-teacher rhetoric and the artificial support of teachers	
ATR1	Many New Mexico teachers see the growth of students in the classroom, but work in a system that does not recognize or reward them for it.
ATR2	The purpose of this report is to guide New Mexico in the development of a new teacher and school leader evaluation system that prioritizes student academic gains, recruit, recognizes, and retains “rock star” teachers, and provides for transparency and accountability to stakeholders in the use of taxpayer dollars (p.9).
ATR3	The Task Force believes that there are many outstanding, effective, and hardworking teachers and school leaders throughout New Mexico, but the State does not have an effective system for recognizing and rewarding their achievements in the classroom (p. 9).  A robust compensation system is needed to reward effective teachers (p. 37).
ATR4	
A call for reform	
CR1	The current teacher recognition process in New Mexico places emphasis on years of experience and credentials obtained (p. 4).
CR2	The sense of urgency in this process is essential.... To send the message that important teacher reforms can wait is to fail those children who won't get a second chance at education (p. 4).  ...we note the inadequacy of our current teacher evaluation system....This shortcoming must be remedied immediately (p. 15).
CR3	There is evidence however that reform-oriented professional development has a positive relationship to classroom practice and student achievement (p. 22).

CR4	
Desirable Student Outcomes, Correct Dispositions of Success, and Common Sense	
<p data-bbox="280 573 354 604">CS 1</p> <p data-bbox="280 930 354 961">CS 2</p> <p data-bbox="280 1297 354 1329">CS 3</p>	<p data-bbox="503 573 1438 783">“The committee would develop procedures for identification and approval of professional development activities as well as identify specific professional skills and knowledge that are necessary for effective educators; both at the administrative and teaching level, and approve opportunities for the enhancement of these identified skills and knowledge” (p. 22).</p> <p data-bbox="503 856 1438 1077">“Research has clearly demonstrated the importance of the teacher in the classroom and the importance of leadership in each school (Rivkin, Hanusek, &amp; Kain, 2005). In fact, our teachers are our biggest ‘change agents’ when it comes to improved student achievement. When it comes to student learning, the difference between an average teacher and an exemplary teacher is noteworthy” (p. 12).</p> <p data-bbox="503 1150 1438 1518">Record keeping and data collection by the PED would not only ensure that professional development is occurring in an efficient and approved manner, but it would also allow another layer of data to be utilized in analyzing student performance. The approved list for professional development activities should be a fluid one, with activities which do not translate into positive classroom performance being eliminated and new opportunities with proven performance added. Additionally, as professional development will be tied to annual performance evaluations of educational personnel, accurate record keeping by the PED is necessary. (p. 24)</p>