Student Voice in Education Policy:

Understanding student participation in state-level K-12 education policy making

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to students who have fought or continue to fight to change their community using the power of their voice, and to students who will join them in the future. I am committed to always supporting your fight.

Abstract

Purpose: K-12 education systems are expected to prepare students to participate in society, but education leaders often neglect to ask students how policy decisions affect their learning. Educators have begun to incorporate student voice in classroom, school, and district decision making. However, students are still an untapped resource in statewide K-12 policy change. One reason may be that there is no clear understanding of how students may participate. The purpose of this study is to examine how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 decision making.

Research Methods/Approach: This study employs a qualitative case study and utilizes document analysis, observations, and interviews with students and adults participating in two statewide student voice efforts.

Findings: Students are able to participate in and advocate for policy reform adoption in the K-12 policy process. Statewide student voice efforts are generally structured to include the following components: (a) power shifts, (b) shared practices, (c) adult supports, and (d) student relationships. Within these structures, students participate in the policy making process by (a) identifying a problem and policy solution, (b) assessing social, political, and economic capital available to move a policy forward, (c) building a coalition for support and to gain access to additional resources, and (d) engage in grassroots and grasstops advocacy. Students utilize their status to gain power in the grassroots arena; however, this status also decreases their power in the grasstops arena.

Conclusions and Implications: This study reveals the importance of providing a structured space for students to access support from peers and adults when engaging in student voice efforts. It also demonstrates the importance of shifting different aspects of power within student voice efforts to ensure that efforts do not become homogeneous and representative of a particular student voice. Finally, it shows the ways in which students harness their own power and access the power of others to engage in the policy process.

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Chapter One: Introduction

It has long been held that the primary purpose for U.S. public education is preparing and equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and understandings to participate in society (Goodlad & McMannon, 1997). However, the dominant culture of schooling over the past two centuries has evolved in a way that privileges adult values and voices (Bragg, 2007). This culture has been reinforced by the increased focus on "results-based" accountability that has grown in education since the 1980s (Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Malen & Vincent Cochran, 2015). Students have been seen "almost entirely as objects of reform" and their voices have been absent from education decision making (Levin, 2000, p. 155).

The concept of "student voice, or a student role in education decision making and change efforts" has emerged in the 21st century as a more student-centered strategy for education reform (Mitra, 2004, p. 651; Conner, 2015). Due to several shifts in our understanding of youth and changes in the dynamics of schools (Murphy, 2017), there is a growing belief among educators[1] that "students can contribute a valuable perspective on education" (Spires et al., 2008, p. 497) as they are "the experts on their own perception and experiences as learners" (Oldfather, 1995, p. 131). Further, scholars find that "students of all ages show a remarkable capacity to discuss their learning and to recommend improvements in considered and insightful ways" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 7; Raudenbush & Jean, 2014). Guided by these two understandings, educators are

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[1] An educator refers to any adult working in the education field, such as teachers, principals, superintendents, administrators, or school board members.

beginning to alter the culture in schooling by creating school communities that incorporate student voice in classroom, school, or district decision making (Rudduck et al., 1996; Murphy, 2017). For example, teachers are increasingly asking student to participate in lesson planning, school administrators are collaborating with students to improve the school environment, and districts are establishing advisory boards where students work with leaders to address policy concerns (Mitra, 2014; Conner, 2015; Murphy, 2017). However, to this day, students are still a largely untapped resource when it comes to education reform, especially in statewide K-12 education policy change (Smyth, 2006; Pekrul & Levin, 2007; Conner et al., 2016).

Although there is considerable evidence suggesting that policymakers have traditionally been unconcerned and inattentive to student perspectives, student voice efforts at the district and state-level are continuing to emerge (Beishuizen et al., 2001; Smyth, 2006; Crosnoe, 2011; Conner et al., 2016). As examples, many school districts are forming student advisory boards for the superintendent and there are currently three statewide student voice efforts endeavoring to influence state-level education decision making in California, Kentucky, and Oregon. In these state-level efforts, students strive to collectively participate in the education policy-making processes at the state legislature.

There is a clear comprehension of how student voice manifests and influences classroom and school-level decision making (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Murphy, 2017). However, there is a limited understanding of student voice at the state-level as policymakers and practitioners have not fully viewed

students as agents, or policy actors, in this arena (Crosnoe, 2011). Therefore, *the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making*.

Conception of Student Voice

Before embarking on this study, I must first define and clarify the concept of student voice. Scholars concerned with student voice note that there is no single definition of the term "student voice" (Cooker-Sather, 2006b; Conner et al., 2015). The term covers a range of space on "the continuums of individualism to collectivism and from passive to active expression" as scholars develop understandings for the concept from multiple perspectives (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 3). The term is often used synonymously with student participation, student perspective, student eyes, student representation, active citizenship, youth leadership, and youth empowerment (Mitra, 2014; Murphy, 2017). There is consensus that the term is used to describe a particular effort or action taken to include student experiences in decision making. Ultimately, each scholar in this realm provides his or her own definition of student voice.

Although there is no one definition of student voice, scholars generally assert that an effort or action to incorporate student voice should include the following four criteria (Mager & Nowak, 2012; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Conner et al., 2015; Murphy, 2017). First, all students must be able to participate in sharing their experiences. The effort cannot limit participation to students selected by educators or other students, as these selected students tend to be those that often have the opportunity to share their

voice. Efforts must enable all students, particularly those that are not often able to share their voice, to share their experiences. Second, students should be involved in some way in their educational setting's collective decision-making processes. This means that educators must actively create space for students to participate in the processes. Third, there must be an open dialogue between students and other decision-makers. Decision-makers include any individual or group participating in the processes. Fourth, students must not simply be present during the processes, but must be meaningfully engaged. Decision-makers must listen to the experiences and thoughts of students and include students in the conversation. Therefore, student voice is not "one-off consultations and simple forms of pupil participation such as answering questions or taking part in activities," and requires a purposeful effort by decision-makers to engage students in the decision-making processes (Mager & Nowak, 2012, p. 40). These four criteria are extremely broad qualifications and almost any effort that engages students in a meaningful way could be considered student voice.

While student voice can exist in an educational setting outside of a group effort, for example, a student individually sitting with educators to discuss his/her experience and perspectives, it typically exists in collective forms to ensure that many voices are participating in the decision-making processes; i.e. the first criterion noted in the previous paragraph (Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001). Therefore, for this study, I only consider student voice efforts where students collaborate to share experiences and participate in education decision-making processes. These students can come together organically or be brought together through a structured means. Further, they can occur both inside and

outside an education setting; however, they must be dedicated to influencing education policy (Mitra, 2009, 2014).

These criteria and understandings are traditionally used to identify student voice in schools and districts, and I believe they are also relevant in comprehending how student voice can be defined at the state-level. Although state-level decision-making processes are divergent from schools and districts, they still require the active engagement and participation of multiple actors to reflect accurately the citizenry's views and needs (Barber, 1984; Kingdon, 1995). Therefore, following Mitra's (2009) comprehension of student voice, *I define student voice as the ways in which all students have opportunities to participate in and influence the education decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers*. These student voice opportunities can occur in multiple forms and levels of government, and with many different actors, such as students, educators, parents, community members, and legislators, participating in the education decision-making processes.

In addition to my definition, I identify several criteria that an effort must meet to qualify as student voice. Student voice opportunities cannot be exclusive to certain students, such as students chosen based on an application, and all students must have the ability to participate, particularly historically marginalized students (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).[2] Student influence and participation in decision making should also strive to

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[2] Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) identified the following groups as historically marginalized: people of color, poor, working class, women, transgender, genderqueer, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, two spirit, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, and other non-

include diverse voices, perspectives, and expressions to ensure that decisions are not made based on one voice, perspective, or expression. Finally, students must not only be peripherally be aware of decision making, but must also participate in and influence decision making. For example, I would not qualify students who serve as representatives on school boards but never have an opportunity to speak at meetings or contribute to policy as student voice. If students collectively worked with school board representatives on district and school policies, then I would consider it student voice.

I must further clarify the ability for students to influence decision making as my study focuses on student voice at the state-level. Student influence in decision making is more difficult to identify at the state-level as legislators as other policy actors, such as the state board of education, may not directly collaborate with constituents to pass or enact a policy. Therefore, I use the following three criteria to understand whether or not students have influence in decision making at the state level.

First, students participating in a student voice effort collectively decide to support a particular policy independent of adult desires, e.g. an adult did not coach them to support a policy, but the students followed an independent process to lend their support. This criterion is essential, as students involved in the effort must feel that they independently made the decision to lend support. Without this criterion, students do not have decision-making power entering the policy process and, therefore, their voices may simply be tokens or decorations to show support (Hart, 2008).

Christian groups, people with disabilities, immigrants (perceived), and indigenous peoples.

Second, a student voice effort is able to participate and integrate into the policy process and decision-makers consider their voices. This includes meeting with interest groups supporting their cause, meeting with legislators to rally support for their cause, speaking at legislative committee hearings, and so on. Just like any group attempting to participate in the policy process, a student voice effort may not necessarily receive support from legislators or other policy actors for their policy change. However, their ability to participate in the process will assist in showing whether they have influence in the process.

Finally, a student voice effort cannot be associated only with a single policy. This aspect is particularly imperative when considering student voice in state-level K-12 education policy, as one-off consultations in working groups on specific policies may be more prevalent in this arena than genuine efforts to engage students in the process (Hart, 1992; 2008). A student voice effort must instead strive to ensure that students continuously participate in the decision-making processes even after the first policy or bill the students were advocating for is no longer in the policy stream (Kingdon, 1995). This continuous engagement with decision-making ensures that students were not simply participating in one-off consultations but are actively engaging with the policy-making process overtime (Conner et al., 2016).

Role of Adults in Student Voice. As students are not traditionally involved in education policy decision making, adults play a role in student voice efforts to facilitate participation. Adults work with students to (a) build student-adult partnerships within the community in which the student voice effort exists, (b) buffer the student voice effort

from administrative bureaucracy that may derail participation, (c) provide trainings around topics or skills students identify as necessary, and (d) build bridges with intermediary organizations for resource assistance (Mitra, 2007a). Based on my conception of student voice, adults working within student voice efforts cannot maintain the traditionally adult-youth hierarchical relationship where adults hold much of the power, but must empower students to lead and make their own choices in the effort (Cook-Sather, 2006b; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Mitra, 2014; Conner et al., 2016).

Therefore, adults working within student voice efforts typically act as servant leaders who share power, put the needs of followers first, and help develop followers (Dennis et al., 2010; Greenleaf, 2002). Students exist in the follower role initially as the student voice effort develops due to the traditional adult-youth hierarchical relationship. Adults working within student voice efforts are focused on the needs of the students and ensuring they have the resources necessary to participate in education policy decision-making. They empower students to serve as leaders within the student voice effort to guide group discussions, collaborations, and decisions. Adults automatically respond to any concerns raised by first listening to the students and then strive to empower the students to overcome identified problems, only offering assistance when directly requested (Greenleaf, 2002). Outside of these efforts, adults serve the students by building relationships with schools, districts, intermediary organizations, and the community when students do not already have connections in order to facilitate future student participation in decision making. Ultimately, by acting as servant leaders, adults overcome the traditional adult-youth hierarchical relationship and empower students to

lead the student voice effort.

Student Voice and Power. The concept of student voice is rooted in ideas of empowerment and collaboration; however, scholars researching student voice rarely discuss the role of power in advancing or mitigating these ideas (Taylor & Robinson, 2009; Conner, 2015). I believe that it is imperative to clarify my conceptualization of power, as shifting power to students is an essential component of enabling student participation in and influence decision making. I make the fundamental assumption that power is influence or an ability to shape events (Pfeffer, 1981). Student voice efforts possess and execute power through their ability to participate in and influence decision making.

According to my understanding, there are two forms of power that exist for student voice efforts: (a) personal power and (b) positional power. Personal power, or social influence, is an individual's or group's influence in a particular situation (French & Raven, 1959). For example, an individual in the workplace is well liked, so his/her opinions on matters hold a lot of influence. Positional power, or social power, is an individual's or group's ability to influence a situation based on a positional relationship to those involved in a situation. For example, a supervisor asks employees to increase production and employees increase production.

In student voice efforts, positional power exists in the hierarchical relationships that are traditionally present between adults and students. Adults, such as educators and policymakers, working with student voice effort must diminish their positional power to enable students to participate in decision making in a greater capacity. As positional

power is mitigated, students gain a greater capacity to use developed personal power to collaborate alongside adults with the same amount of influence. As students are able to use their personal power and gain more influence, they feel more ownership toward decision being made and, consequently, increased ownership and sense of belonging in their K-12 education environment (Lippitt, 1939; Mager & Nowak, 2012)

Along with personal and positional power, student voice efforts are also influenced by social order power relationships. Operating from a critical lens, I believe that student voice efforts reproduce social order power relationships, which affects the ability for some students to participate in discussions and activities (Conner et al., 2016). Bourdieu (1977; 1986) argues that individuals develop a set of dispositions (or habitus) based on their experiences, which reproduce and accept the current social order, and these dispositions influence an individual's perceived power and relationships with others. Social, cultural, and economic (discussed further in Chapter Two) all play an important role in these power relationships as those with capital that is privileged by society are perceived to possess more power. Within a student voice effort, I assert that students enter with a set of dispositions that may have an impact on their influence, or ability to participate, in the group as the effort reproduces social order power relationships. Therefore, students and adults working with the students must be mindful to mitigate these social order power relationships to empower all students, especially historically marginalized students, to participate with the same amount of influence.

Critique of the Term Student Voice. As noted at the beginning of this section, scholars use the term student voice to discuss opportunities in which students have the

ability to participate in education decision making (Mitra, 2014). However, there are two major limitations to the term student voice, particularly in the way I define it. First, the term student voice connotes that there is only one monolithic student voice, which is problematic because there are many different student voices within a classroom, school, district, and state and students often have diverse ways in which they express their voice, such as through writing, music, discussions, or speeches. Further, while a student voice effort relies on collective student collaboration and participation in decision making, individual students within the effort may disagree on certain positions or policies. As with any organization, it is imperative that students collectively work through dissension and toward compromise to maintain student belief and participation in efforts (Jones, 2012). A compromise may entail students within the effort advocate for multiple policies or decisions, such as one group advocating for smaller class sizes and another group working toward increasing civics education. Currently, scholarship surrounding student voice efforts has not directly addressed concerns of difference occurring between students. Due to the monolithic nature of the term student voice, it may be more useful to utilize the term "students' voices" as it denotes that there are multiple student voices within an effort that may diverge from one another on mode of expression and position.

Second, the use of the word voice may imply that students are passively expressing themselves, but not explicitly taking action in the decision-making processes. However, following my definition, student voice efforts are more about students actively participating in decision-making processes through actions such as research, outreach, collaboration, and advocacy. Student voice efforts strive to ensure that students are not

simply "objects of reform" absent from education decision making, but are able to influence and participate in decisions that change in their educational environment (Levin, 2000, p. 155). Therefore, it may be more appropriate to use the term "students' empowered" to highlight the newly sought role students are striving to take in decision making. However, for this study, I will use the term student voice, as this is the term predominantly utilized by scholars researching this topic (Cook-Sather, 2006; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Taylor & Robinson, 2009; Mitra 2014; Conner et al., 2015).

Additional Study Definitions

I set a clear boundary around how I qualify student voice efforts for this study. I am only considering student voice efforts where students collectively strive to participate in and influence K-12 education policy decision making. I define a student as an individual who attends or previously attended (graduates or dropouts) an educational institution and school environment, including non-traditionally schooling environments, such as home-schooling. I define an education policy broadly as any principle of action proposed or adopted within a statewide governing body that is meant to produce a change in a state's K-12 education practices, such as changes to standards, curriculum, school governance, and so on. There are many policies that directly affect educational environments, such as gun control, houselessness, or health care, but I am not considering policies in these arenas because they cannot be directly controlled within the bounds of education. Further, students can and do have a voice outside of their schooling for a number of different causes; however, for this study, I am only concerned with their participation in K-12 education policy decision making. Finally, I define participation in

the policy-making processes as any engagement to advance a specific policy forward.

This can include, but is not limited to, writing opinion pieces for local newspapers,

testifying before committee hearings, meeting with legislators, conducting surveys,

attending rallies or protests, and using social media to raise public understanding.

Summary and Study Importance

I assert that student voice efforts are a more student-centered strategy for

education reform as adults are not simply representing students in decision making, but

students themselves are using their voice to influence and participate in decision making

(Barber, 1984). I define and clarify the concept of student voice as a collective and

inclusive effort that strives to provide all students with opportunities to directly

participate in and influence K-12 education decision-making processes. I stress that while

there are understandings for how student voice influences classroom and school-level

decision making, there are limited comprehensions for how student voice influences

state-level K-12 education decision making (Crosnoe, 2011; Fielding & Moss, 2011;

Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Murphy, 2017). Therefore, through this study, I aim

to understand the foundational question of how students, through student voice efforts,

collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12

education policy decision making.

In this study, I strive to answer my foundational question through five smaller

inquiries: (a) how are statewide student voice efforts structured? (b) how do diverse

factors influence student participation in student voice efforts? (c) how are differentials in

power, particularly social order power dynamics, within an effort associated with student

participation? (d) how do students, through student voice efforts, participate in the K-12 education policy process? and (e) how do students perceive their experience in the K-12 education policy process? As noted, there is scant scholarship addressing these questions, especially the question concerning influences of power relationships within and outside student voice efforts. Providing understandings for these questions is particularly important and timely as student voice efforts continue to grow outside of class and school-level educational environments (Murphy, 2017).

Exploring the ways students collectively participate in and influence state-level K-12 decision making is likely to shed insight into how (if at all) students can become policy actors at the state-level where many education decisions are made (Fowler, 2013). Students serving as policy actors have the potential to positively affect a state's education environment as well as student socio-emotional and civic development. As shown in previous scholarship, discussed in Chapter Two, student voice can positively influence school educational environments and, more importantly, student individual self-esteem, sense of agency, democratic skills, and civic participation (Mager & Nowak, 2012; Mitra, 2014). This study does not directly consider whether these positive outcomes continue at the state-level, it instead attempts to tackle the foundational question of whether students can collectively participate in and influence state-level K-12 education policy decision making through student voice efforts. Future studies can build upon this query.

The remainder of this study is laid out as follows. In Chapter Two, I explore the literature on K-12 education decision making and the public policy-making processes, which underlie my understanding of how student voice may manifest itself in state-level

education policy. I also present my conceptual framework for this study, which is built upon two models: (a) how students participate in statewide student voice efforts and (b) how students influence policy change through student voice efforts.

In Chapter Three, I present my research questions and discuss methodologies that I utilize. This study is a qualitative collective case study where I look at high school student participation in student voice efforts as well as K-12 education state-level policy-making across two cases: (a) Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team in Kentucky and (b) Oregon Student Voice in Oregon (Creswell, 2013). Data for each case was restricted to a specific period. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (SVT), the period was November 2015 to November 2017. For Oregon Student Voice (OSV), the period was August 2016 to December 2018. These periods cover the activities and structures that took place within each student voice effort in the year before and after they engaged in state-level policy-making activities. As organizations are constantly evolving, structures or activities of SVT or OSV may have changed since data collection. This study does not account for these changes.

In Chapter Four, I provide background on Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I provide the history behind how these efforts came to be and grew overtime in Kentucky and Oregon, respectively. I also share key information on how these efforts are structured and how students participate.

In Chapters Five and Six, I discuss and analyze how students participate in student voice efforts by comparing and contrasting practices of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I specifically focus on how effort

design, student and adult relationships, power structures, and outside forces have an influence on student participation in effort activities. Findings from these chapters provide insights into how student voice efforts are structured and the factors that influence student participation, including differentials in power.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, I discuss and analyze how students influence and experience the state-level policy-making process by comparing and contrasting activities of the two student voice efforts I am studying. I highlight how effort focus, political environment, and availability of social, economic, and political capital are associated with each effort's ability to engage with the state legislative body. Findings offer understandings into how students navigate the policy process through student voice efforts. They also provide insights into how they perceive their experience.

In Chapter Nine, I summarize my conclusions. I also offer implications for policymakers, students, administrators, teachers, and parents striving to include student voice in education decision making.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I review the literature on student voice in K-12 education decision making and the public policy-making processes to develop an understanding for how student voice can intersect with state-level education policy decision making. This review is structured as follows. First, I cover the literature on student voice in K-12 education decision making. This literature includes: (a) the growth of student voice, (b) the stages of student voice efforts, (c) the components affecting the success of these efforts, and (d) the impact of student voice. Second, I discuss the literature on the public policy-making process and how it can enhance our understanding of student voice in student-level K-12 education policy decision making. The theories examined relate to (a) problem identification and agenda setting, (b) models for issue consideration and policy adoption, and (c) factors that impact the policy process, such as context and available capital. This literature is intended to provide a conception of how student voice may be manifested in and influence state-level education policy. Following the literature review, I provide a conceptual framework for how I believe student voice will manifest itself in the state-level education policy process at the end of this section.

Student Voice in K-12 Education Decision Making

The bulk of the student voice in K-12 education decision-making literature deals with (a) the growth of student voice, (b) the stages of student voice efforts, (c) the components affecting the success of these efforts, and (d) the impact of student voice. This research provides a framework to better comprehend how student voice efforts take shape and how decision-makers in classrooms and schools support these efforts. It further

provides insights into how student voice is represented in education policy design and implementation. Works cities in this section only deal with student voice in K-12 education decision making. Research in this area is mostly limited to classroom and school-level student voice efforts, but these findings offer understandings for how efforts may evolve at the state-level.

Scholarship surrounding student voice is a developing field as much of the research published in this area occurred in the 21st century. There are nine authors at the forefront of this work: Cook-Sather, Corbett, Fielding, Flutter, Mitra, Quaglia, Rudduck, Soohoo, and Wilson (Murphy, 2017). There is scholarly consensus around the growth of student voice; however, scholars differ on the stages of student voice efforts, the components affecting their success, and the influence student voice has on students, educators, and the school environment. These divergences can be attributed to the context used in conducting their research rather than the use of different epistemological stances or methodological approaches.

A majority of student voice scholars use a constructivist lens, striving to understand and to reconstruct the role of student voice based on individuals' and organizations' lived experiences, when approaching their work (Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Cook-Sather, 2006a; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Murphy, 2017). Further, each study is conducted in a democratic country, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, or Australia, that views education as essential for fostering the development of democratic citizens. Finally, most utilize qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, to

conduct their research. Several scholars have also implemented quantitative surveys to corroborate their qualitative findings (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Quaglia & Corso, 2014).

However, as scholars are studying different student voice efforts in different educational settings, each proposes divergent insights into the stages of student voice and the impacts of student voice efforts. Flutter and Rudduck (2004), Lodge (2005), Cook-Sather (2006b), Quaglia and Corso (2014), and Murphy (2017) analyzed student voice efforts where adults actively listen to students and incorporate student experiences into school-level decision making. In these efforts, adults act as representatives for students in decision-making processes. Conversely, Fielding (2004), Bragg (2007) and Mitra (2014) examined student voice efforts where students utilize their voice to influence and act as decision-makers. In these efforts, students collaborate with adults to make decisions, or students solely make the decision and adults enforce them.

Insights from these scholars do not necessarily contradict one another. Further, when considered together, their work is inclusive of many different educational settings, such as urban and rural districts, communities of divergent socio-economic statuses, and diverse and homogenous student bodies. Ultimately, they provide a comprehensive understanding of how student voice is represented in K-12 education decision making. In this section, I strive to synthesize these scholars' research to construct a theoretical understanding for how student voice could be represented in state-level education policy decision making. I discuss the following: (a) the growth of student voice from historical perspectives of the student to contemporary understandings, (b) the stages of student

voice efforts, (c) the components affecting the success of these efforts, and (d) the impact of student voice on students, educators, and the educational environment.

Growth of Student Voice. In the last quarter of the 20th century, our understandings of the student in democratic countries evolved in such ways that have encouraged the inclusion of student voice into K-12 education decision making (Murphy, 2017). However, during the previous two centuries, the dominant culture of schooling existed in a manner that privileged adult values and voices (Bragg, 2007). As schools are nested in larger society, they developed in manners that paid little attention to student voices, as children were often viewed as incompetent and incomplete (Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001; Holloway & Valentine, 2004). Schools were seen as a place where educators give students knowledge and students receive the knowledge (Holloway & Valentine, 2004). Students, as children, were considered objects of reform whose voices were not meant to be heard (Levin, 2000; Lodge, 2005). Further, the lens of school reform during this time "ignored students' definitions of their roles and experiences" and focused instead on educator accountability and instruction (Corbett & Wilson, 1995, p. 16; Cook-Sather & Shultz, 2001). The literature suggested that over the past three decades, there were two major factors that contributed to alterations in these views and the incorporation of student voice in education decision making: (a) modifications in our comprehension of the student and (b) changes in the dynamics of schooling (Murphy, 2017).

Contemporary Understandings of the Student. The first factor evolved as the larger social forces surrounding schools in democratic countries began no longer to see

students as passive subjects within social structures, and instead acknowledged them as "being active in shaping their social identities and as competent members of society" (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003, p. 3). There has been a cultural shift from "an adult-centric, infantilizing, and disempowering set of attitudes" towards students (Cook-Sather, 2006b, p. 372) to a "discernable recognition of the important role that young persons play" in their education (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 6). Reinforcing this cultural shift, Holloway and Valentine (2004), using historical analyses to assess case studies of children's geographic roots and development around the world, asserted that when societies view students as competent social actors, "they enable students to construct accounts of their lives in their own terms" and this status contributes to their participation in broader society, especially in educational settings (p. 10). Much of this change can be attributed to a growing emphasis on democratic learning in schools along with increasing evidence-based research that students have important contributions to make to their educational setting (Soohoo, 1993; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Lodge, 2005; Murphy, 2017).

Contributing to this shift in understanding students, Fielding, Flutter, and Fielding (with assistance from Bragg) conducted several qualitative comprehensive, multi-year studies analyzing student participation in curriculum decision making and teacher evaluation in primary and secondary education environments across the United Kingdom (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Bragg, 2007). They each argued that increasing student voice in schools is essential for creating citizens that participate in democratic society; therefore, their studies focused on schools that utilize student voice as part of their classroom and school improvement efforts.

Within each of their analyses, these scholars found that students of all ages

"demonstrated the capacity to comment constructively and intelligently" on their

classroom curriculum and instruction (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 48).

Additionally, they concluded that "children as young as nine or ten" can offer

improvement-focused feedback to educators (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 7; Riley &

Docking, 2004). Corroborating these findings, Neito and Henderson (1994) argued that

this ability to offer insightful feedback should come "as no surprise when we consider

that students spend more time in schools than anybody else except teachers" (p. 398-

399). Due to these evolving understandings of students, these scholars asserted that

educators must recognize students' "social maturity and experience by giving them

responsibilities and opportunities to share in decision making" (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000,

p. 82).

Dynamics of Schooling. The second factor influencing the growth of student

voice concerned three changes in the dynamics of schooling: (a) development of client-

focus and marketization in education, (b) renewed focus on schools as places to educate

democratic citizens, and (c) shifts in learning and teaching from delivering knowledge to

creating knowledge (Murphy, 2017). Client-focused and marketization in education grew

as Conservatives in democratic countries strove to use market forces to identify

underperforming schools to improve (Lodge, 2005). Programs that encouraged parental

and student voice, such as school choice or charter schools, encouraged school

administrators to see students as clients and consumers of education (Rudduck, 2007).

This client and market focus pushed forward the concept that "young people are valuable,

knowledgeable, important informants, and customers" (Bragg, 2007, p. 665). Researchers found that administrators must provide space for students to share their voice in order to ensure the school is meeting the needs of their customers.

During this same period, scholars also identified that there was a renewed focus on establishing schools as "communities of participants" or "democratic communities" where civic education was paramount and students could experience democracy (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). There was a common belief in democratic countries that education is "about preparation for participation in work, economic, social and family life" (Lodge, 2005, p. 124). Scholars argued that students cannot learn to behave democratically in environments that do not give them an opportunity to experience democracy (Apple & Beane, 1999; Lodge, 2005). Therefore, there was a movement toward turning schools into communities where there is a shift in the student-educator relationship from one that is "tightly hierarchical to one that is more collaborative" (Rudduck, 2007, p. 587). In this new school community, teachers provided students with opportunities to make choices in the classroom ranging from learning goals they would like to achieve to activities that they would enjoy completing. These adjustments were oftentimes limited by the requirements and standards provided by the local district and state education agencies. However, even limited student opportunity to make decisions in the classroom increased student ability to participate democratically in educational environments as students and educators work together to make decisions and resolve conflicts.

Finally, a change in our understanding of learning and teaching occurred where teachers moved from delivering knowledge to helping students create knowledge

(Murphy, 2000). This new form of constructivist learning "requires a more active student role in school" (Levin, 2000, p. 157) where "teachers must listen to students' perspectives" and incorporate these perspectives into their teaching (Cook-Sather & Shultz, 2001, p. 6). This change enabled students to begin sharing their voice more systematically in schools, through regularly sharing their experiences and providing feedback to their teachers, and allowed educators to see students as "deeply knowledgably about themselves, classrooms, and schooling" (Storz, 2008). These three shifts in the dynamics of schooling influenced the growth of student voice by encouraging schools to create a space for students to share their experiences and perspectives.

Critique. As shown in this section, scholars overwhelmingly agreed that two factors contributed to the growth of student voice in education: (a) a cultural shift in our understanding of the student from passive actor to competent participant able to comment on their experiences; and (b) changes in the dynamics of schooling where marketization, civic education, and constructivist learning flourished (Lodge, 2005; Murphy, 2017). However, several questions remain unanswered by the scholars exploring how incorporating student voice became more accepted by educators. First, it remains unclear whether educators altered their understanding of the student before or after they created a space for students to share their voice and have it heard. If educators must first change their views on students before enabling them to share their voice, then this greatly influences how a student voice initiative can develop in an educational setting as educators would first need to change their views in order to support the development of a

student voice effort.

Second, scholars paid little attention to how the marketization of education has also caused an increased focus on "results-based" accountability and the use of business principles to run schools (Natale & Doran, 2012). These practices often directly conflict with enhancing civic education and constructivist learning in schools as these practices often require educators to establish specific curriculum standards and learning goals, leaving limited room for students to use their voice to influence decision making (Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Mitra & Gross, 2009). Ultimately, it is clear that incorporating student voice into education decision making has grown over the past three decades. Addressing the two discussed concerns could help us better understand the educational environments that are most hospitable to these initiatives (Mitra, 2014). In the next section, I discuss the different forms that student voice can take and the diverse stages in which educators enable student voice to influence education decision making.

Stages of Student Voice. Student voice initiatives occurred in a number of different forms and venues (Conner, 2015; Murphy, 2017). These initiatives evolved in classroom and school settings; however, in some more progressive districts, they appeared at the district level (Mager & Nowak, 2012). In a comprehensive review of the student voice literature, Mager and Nowak (2012) identified five main forms in which student voice can exist in educational settings: (a) student councils or other student representative bodies, (b) temporary school working groups, (c) class decision-making groups, (d) school decision-making groups, and (e) other decision-making environments (Levin, 2000; Lodge, 2005; Mitra 2008). The fifth form encompassed district-level

advisory councils, working groups, or other efforts to include students in education

decision making (Conner et al., 2016). There is limited research on the fifth form of

student voice. The structure of and venue in which student voice efforts grew depended

greatly on the educational environment and intended purpose, such as whether the effort

was meant to address broader issues or specific policies (Bragg, 2007). Currently, there is

scant research on how the form an initiative takes may influence students' abilities to

contribute to education decision-making processes. Therefore, it is unclear whether form

matters for student participation in an effort.

Conversely, there is substantial research on how the stage in which adults allow

student voice efforts to evolve influences students' abilities to participate in education

decision-making processes (Mager & Nowak, 2012). Student voice efforts developed and

evolved in diverse stages. A stage refers to the extent to which adults enable students to

participate in the decision-making processes. These stages range from students not

participating in decision making to students leading decision making. Scholars identified

divergent models for the stages based on the student voice efforts in which they study.

Below, I summarize and critique the commonly identified models and their stages.

Foundational Models. First, it is necessary to understand the theoretical

foundations from which these stages of student voice developed. Hart (1992, 2008)

constructed a "ladder of youth participation," which depicts increasing stages of student

power and cooperation between children and adults that should be considered when

engaging youth. This ladder has eight stages: (1) manipulation, (2) decoration, (3)

tokenism, (4) assigned but uninformed, (5) consulted and informed, (6) adult-initiated,

shared decisions with youth, (7) youth-initiated and directed, and (8) youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. Hart (1992) asserted that stages one through three are forms of non-participation where adults engage youth, but are not truly interested in including them in decision-making processes. Stages four through eight are increasing forms of participation where youth re engaged in decision-making processes. Hart argued that youth should determine the stage in which they would like to be involved in an initiative and the decision-making processes, but conditions should be optimized to enable every youth to participate "at the highest level of his or her competence, interest, and motivation" (p. 11).

Providing an alternative to Hart's (1992) ladder, Shier (2001) provided a new model for youth participation in decision making. This model eliminated Hart's non-participation stages and focuses more on the different ways adults engage youth in processes. Shier identified five levels of participation: "(1) youth are listened to; (2) youth are supported in expressing their views; (3) youth's views are taken into account; (4) youth are involved in decision-making processes, but do not share power and responsibility with adults in decision making; and (5) youth share power and responsibility for decision making" (p. 110). Shier then provided questions for organizations to consider at each level when striving to move to the next level and increase youth participation. Like Hart, Shier noted that "individuals and organizations may have differing degrees of commitment to the process of youth empowerment" and these must be considered when engaging youth (p. 110).

Together, Hart's (1992) and Shier's (2001) models provided a foundation from

which scholars studying student voice initiatives developed their stages of student participation in education decision making. Like Hart's and Shier's models, the stages of the student voice models build upon each other and students become more engaged in decision making as the stages increase. There are two distinct models that were developed based on the student voice initiatives researched. Flutter and Rudduck (2004), Lodge (2005), Cook-Sather (2006b), Quaglia and Corso (2014), and Murphy (2017) analyzed student voice efforts where adults actively listen to students and incorporate student experiences into decision making. These scholars align more closely with Shier's (2001) model. Fielding (2004), Bragg (2007) and Mitra and Gross (2009) examined student voice efforts where students utilize their voice to influence and act as decision-makers. These scholars are more similar to Hart's (1992) model. None of the models developed by these scholars incorporate Hart's levels of non-participation. In the following, I discuss and critique the two prominent student voice models.

Listening Model. For the first model, I deduced four stages of student voice from the works of Flutter and Rudduck (2004), Lodge (2005), Cook-Sather (2006b), Pope and Joslin (2011), Quaglia and Corso (2014), and Murphy (2017), whose research initiatives focused on adults listening to students. Each of these scholars referred to similar stages of student voice, but used slightly different terminology to describe them. Broadly, these scholars identified these stages: (1) eliciting the student perspectives, (2) listening to voices and watching the visuals students provide; (3) understanding student perspectives through open dialogue; and (4) responding to student needs. Student voice efforts could move between these stages depending on the degree to which active involvement of

students is deemed desirable or possible, and the reason why adults want to involve students (Lodge, 2005). I call this student voice model "the listening model" as it focuses more on adults listening to students.

In the first stage, adults ask students for their perspective; however, they may not use the provided information to inform decision making. These student voice efforts often serve to address adults' needs and not those of students (Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001). In this stage, student voices are more tokens and decorations. The second stage requires adults to clearly listen and "acknowledge that students have been heard" by attending to the students as they are sharing their perspective (Quaglia & Corso, 2014, p. 3). These efforts require adults to create a specific space where students share their voice, and adults listen to their perspective to guide their decision making. In this stage, adults provide students with acknowledgement that they understand and hear the shared experiences. In the third stage, adults gain a better understanding of the student perspective by having an open dialogue with students about issues that matter to them (Lodge, 2005). Unlike previous stages, this stage involves both adults and students engaging in dialogue. Through open conversations, students feel that their voice was not simply being heard, but instead feel like it was influencing education decision making (Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001; Cook-Sather, 2006b). Finally, the fourth stage entails that adults take action to address feedback gathered from students through open dialogue (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Quaglia & Corso, 2014). This stage is different from the previous stage as it requires that adults take clear action to address student needs based on the discussions had between adults and students, e.g. a direct link can be drawn

between student feedback and action taken.

Decision-Making Model. Mitra and Gross (2009) developed the second student voice model. This model was similar to the work of Fielding (2004), Bragg (2007), and later Conner (2015), who focused on how students conduct research in an educational setting to influence decision making and develop similar stages. This model stemmed from student voice efforts where students participate directly in decision making. There are three stages to this model: (1) being heard, (2) collaborating with adults, and (3) students as leaders (Mitra, 2006a; Mitra and Gross, 2009). Similar to the listening model, student voice efforts can move between stages based on the active involvement of students and the underlying purpose why adults want to involve students (Fielding, 2004). Movement between stages can go forward or backyard depending on how students are engaged in a particular activity or decision. This model also considers the reason why students want to be involved. I call this student voice model "the decision-making model" as it focuses on students participating in the decision-making process.

In this model, the first stage is comparable to the second stage of the listening model where adults are actively listening to student perspectives to guide their decision making. These student voice efforts subscribe to the foundational belief that students possess unique knowledge and perspectives about their school that adults cannot understand without a partnership with students (Levin, 2000; Fielding 2004). The second stage in this model is similar to a combination of the third and fourth stages of the listening model; however, in this model, both adults and students are collaborating in decision making. In this stage, students share their experiences with adults and the two

parties actively collaborate to take clear action in addressing student needs. In these efforts, adults provide students with meaningful attention toward the issues that matter most to them (Bragg, 2007). The last stage in this model is relatively new in student voice and is not addressed in the listening model. At this stage, students share in the leadership of the student voice initiative and guide adults through decision making (Mitra and Gross, 2009). By actively participating in decision making, students serve as both a source of criticism as well as an avenue for change within schools (Mitra, 2007b).

Critique. Both the listening model and the decision-making model provide important insights into the stages in which student voice efforts evolve. For the purposes of this study, I align more closely with the decision-making model as it more aptly represents my definition of student voice where students have influence on decision making. According to my understanding, stages two and three of this model more accurately capture the intent of student voice efforts to serve as a more democratic strategy for education reform. In these stages, students are exercising their democratic rights and responsibilities by actively influencing and participating in decisions that affect their lives. Student voice efforts representing the listening model only allow students to play a limited role in decision making as adults ultimately make the final choice on whether or not their perspective will be incorporated. This is not representative of the strong democracy that Barbers (1984) champions, where every actor can participate in decision making.

While providing essential insights into student voice, both models fail to capture the more nuanced stages of Hart's (1992) youth participation ladder, specifically the

differences between efforts that are (1) adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth, (2) youth-initiated and directed, and (3) youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. These differences are important to consider as they may influence how a student voice effort evolves and the influence it has on decision making. Further, as discussed later in this section, it could affect the impacts the effort has on the students, such as increased agency, belonging, or academic achievement. Further research on differences between these efforts is essential to fully understand how student voice influences decision making.

Additionally, scholars provided limited attention to how responsibility for decisions affects student voice models. Students are rarely (if at all) provided with decision-making authority in educational settings. Even when students are collaborating with adults, the final decision for policy change lies with the adults that administer the policy. It could be insinuated that adults utilizing the listening model and stage one of the decision-making model desire to maintain responsibility for decisions. However, it is unclear how adults share responsibility for decisions in stages two and three of the decision-making model where students collaborate with adults.

Finally, there has been substantial research dedicated toward understanding the listening model and stages one and two of the decision-making model. However, there is limited research dedicated to comprehending stage three of the decision-making model where students act as leaders and collaborative decision-makers with adults (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Additional research is necessary on this stage to fully comprehend how these student voice efforts evolve and influence decision-making.

Components Affecting Success of Student Voice. Scholars researching student voice identified several components that must be present for a student voice effort to take shape and influence decision making in an educational environment. Broadly, these components can be sorted into three categories: (a) efforts must identify and overcome barriers that may prevent student voice from growing; (b) efforts must overturn traditional adult-student roles to ensure student experiences and perspectives are forefront; and (c) efforts must create and solidify structures and practices so that students know how to engage in activities. As much of the scholarship surrounding student voice focused on collaborative student-adult efforts, a majority of these components specifically relate to these types of student voice activities. However, Mitra (2014) also found that many of these components are applicable to student-led student voice efforts. In the following section, I discuss the components scholars identify as essential for a collaborative or student-led effort to be successful.

Identify and overcome barriers. There are many barriers to creating and maintaining a student voice effort (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014). These barriers vary depending on the effort's model, stage, context, purpose, and group. In establishing student voice, scholars found it is important to consider four concerns: (a) whether the climate is appropriate in terms of trust and openness, (b) why you are including student voices, (c) which students voices are represented, and (d) who might feel at risk as a result of introducing student voice (Levin, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck, 2007; Mitra, 2014). Answering these questions enables adults and students to be more equipped to identify and overcome barriers.

One of the barriers identified by researchers was the gap between adult and student perspectives on schooling and the risk associated with overcoming this gap (Levin, 2000). Not all adults are open to including student voice in the conversation, and these adults are more openly defensive and hostile toward students (Oldfather, 1995; Mitra, 2008a; 2009). Other adults are eager to listen to students, but reluctant to take their opinions and plans for change seriously. This reluctance may be because they perceive the students' opinions as too idealistic or that they are concerned with who will ultimately be held responsible for the decision if it does not achieve intended outcomes. However, through growth in mutual understanding and receptiveness, adults and students begin to realize that they have similar reactions to policies and practices, and can work together to make reforms (Holdsworth, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). To bridge differing perspectives, it is helpful to move into an informal environment where educators and students can identify with one another as individuals instead of stereotypes (Mitra, 2014).

Another important barrier identified by researchers was creating an inclusive environment where multiple student perspectives can be heard (Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001). Student voice efforts should be inclusive of all students, particularly historically marginalized students, to credibly represent their experiences and perspectives (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). It is imperative that self-assured and articulate students do not dominate conversations (Rudduck et al., 1996; McIntyre et al., 2005; Conner et al., 2016). In particular, student voice efforts should not be focused on developing the voices and skills of a few students in elected or appointed positions (Holdsworth, 2000). While

adults often more readily hear these students, they do not represent all students, and decision produced out of these conversations are not reflective of the needs of all students (Holdsworth, 2000). It is often the silent, or silenced, students who find learning in school uncongenial, who disengage, and whose voices need to be heard by adults (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Rudduck, 2007). Student voice efforts should value the perspectives and experiences of all students in order to properly enable all students to influence decision making.

Finally, student voice efforts, particularly those that are student-led, need to break into the decision-making conversation in order for student to participate (Mitra, 2014). Students find it comfortable to discuss their perspectives and experiences in schools, but it sometimes is uncomfortable to construct plans to address concerns (Rudduck, 2007). However, it is imperative that students go beyond identification of concerns and to think about the concrete action or actions that can be taken to address them (Mitra, 2014). Adults sometimes have to guide this process in order to ensure students feel comfortable and safe as this may be the first-time students are engaging with adults in decision making.

Overturn traditional adult-student roles. Student voice efforts require a shift in power and influence from traditional adult-student roles to ensure the work credibly depicts student perspectives and experiences (Cook-Sather, 2006a; Fielding, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014). Students need to see that they have power and influence over decision making in order to feel a part of the process (Cook-Sather, 2006a; Fielding, 2004). Therefore, adults and students strive to create an environment that

promotes shared authority, collective responsibility, and individual members' abilities and contributions (Cook-Sather, 2006b; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). This contradicts the traditional adult-student roles, where adults hold power over students (Oldfather, 1995). A change in these roles can only occur through appropriate guidance and coaching by adults (Camino, 2000; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006).

In launching a student voice effort, adults possess the power and the responsibility due to the traditional adult-student relationship (Beaudoin, 2005; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). It is essential that during the effort's first meetings, adults navigate the process of creating a partnership where students feel empowered. Adults and students learn how to communicate effectively and work together in more equitable ways, particularly as adults relinquish some power and work to build trust with students (Mitra, 2008b). This partnership is developed through (a) inviting students to speak without judgment, (b) empathizing with their experiences, (c) sharing group leadership responsibilities, and (d) ultimately, for decision-making model stage 3 efforts, allowing youth to take charge of group discussions, processes, and activities (Mitra, 2006a; 2008a). Without particular attention paid to shifting the power and building relationships, student voice efforts can easily become tokenism (Fielding, 2004).

In these collaborative or student-led student voice efforts, adults serve as coaches, advisors, and advocates for the student voice initiative (Beaudoin, 2005; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Pekrul & Levin, 2007; Mitra, 2008b). Adults push the group to think about how to move forward with their activities. Particularly for decision-making model stage 3 efforts, adults do not take charge, but instead provide scaffolding opportunities

for students to model adult roles (Costello et al., 2000; Connor, 2015). Students watch

adults perform tasks and gradually assume responsibility for the tasks themselves. Adults

also teach students how to interact with other adults so that they can be heard. Ultimately,

adults take on a coaching and advisory role (Mitra, 2005; 2006a). For all collaborative

and student-led efforts, adults act as advocates outside of the group by buffering the

group from potential concerns or conflicts that may put a stop to their agenda (Scott,

1998).

To gain momentum and influence on decision making, student voice efforts need

the political, financial, and emotional support of those in power (Beaudoin, 2005;

Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014). Navigating the adult-student partnership is

difficult, especially if leaders are concerned with the political and financial position of the

group (Mitra, 2006b; 2009). Student voice efforts require a supporting adult in a position

of authority to bring value to student voice work. This gives the group the emotional

support to keep moving forward even when they are let down by past outcomes (Mitra,

2014).

Solidify Structures and Practices. Student voice efforts need clear structures and

practices that students can use to conduct their work (Levin, 2000; Pekrul & Levin, 2007;

Mitra, 2014). It typically takes about a year and a half from the launch of the initiative for

students to begin implementing the work that they have done. Over this time, the group

puts in place basic structures and practices that guide and maintain the growth and

authenticity of their work (Rudduck, 2007). Without these established structures and

practices, the work can be seen as inauthentic and become ineffective in bringing student perspectives into decision making (Cook-Sather, 2006b; Murphy, 2017).

For creating sustainable structures, student voice efforts use a basic meeting structure to allow for sustained interaction among group members (Mitra, 2009; 2014). In this formal setting, adults and students have the opportunity to work together in sharing their perspectives, identifying key issues, formulating positions, constructing a plan, and initiating actions. Further, to move work from ambivalence to partnership, careful attention is paid to group norms (Beaudoin, 2005; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra 2014). The adults and students develop common norms for fostering a participative, caring, inclusiveness, and shared environment. Additionally, establishing a common group vision, mission, and goals helps ensure that all members are meaningfully contributing to the work.

Students participating in student voice efforts should also receive training and preparation for engaging in education decision making processes (Conner, 2015). Middaugh (2012) asserted that in order to "have real influence in the process of defining and addressing issues," students need to be trained and prepared "not just to speak, but to speak effectively and with accountability" (p.ii). This training and preparation vary depending on the activities of the student voice effort and range from leadership to youth organizing to interacting with adults to policy making. At a minimum, students need time and space, along with purposefully targeted training, to develop the skills necessary to evaluate how their decisions effect both themselves and their peers (Conner et al., 2015). Without training and preparation, students feel demeaned, tokenized, and disempowered

when striving to participation in education decision making. Adults leading or interacting with the student voice effort should often also receive training in order to combat deeply held beliefs that students have a limited capacity to provide ideas or address problems (Conner et al., 2016).

Additionally, student voice efforts should engage current education policies and practices in order to provide both adults and students with a different perspective (Holdsworth, 2000; Beaudoin, 2005; Pekrul & Levin, 2007; Mitra 2014). Through interactions with adults, students become valuable members of the learning community as they provide feedback based on their unique perspective and experiences (Fielding, 2004). Further, students gain a better understanding of the limitations and opportunities facing adults for making changes to the current policies and practices (Mitra, 2012). Student engagement refocus adult attention on persisting to make changes despite the difficulties this work can cause (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004).

Finally, student voice efforts evolve differently depending on whether they are positioned inside or outside the school system (Mitra, 2006b; 2009). Working outside the school system allows for different pressures to exist that enable student voice efforts to maintain their growth and influence on decision making, such as organizations providing financial and human resources provisions that can be eliminated by the school. However, working inside the school system enables access to and legitimacy from powerful insiders, such as principals and teacher leaders, who are necessary to entice in order to influence decision making.

Critique. It is clear that scholars studying student voice efforts, particularly

collaborative and student-led efforts, identified a number of components necessary for a student voice effort to evolve and influence decision making in educational settings. Broadly, these efforts require: (a) a shift in the traditional power dynamics between adults and students, (b) adults to take a risk in including student perspectives, (c) the creation of an inclusive environment where all student voices are heard and are represented; (d) adults serving as advocates for students participating in the student voice effort; and (e) structures and practices to guide the evolution of the effort. However, there are still several questions left concerning whether a student voice effort can evolve, influence decision making, and then maintain its role in decision making both inside and outside of schools.

First, scholars were unclear on how adults shift hierarchical power relations to empower students and what type of educational environment will foster this shift (Taylor & Robinson, 2009). Mitra (2006b; 2009) noted that efforts may be more effective outside of schools; however, it was unclear as to the specific types of organizations that would be best suited to support these efforts. Second, scholars did not address how student voice efforts combat hegemonic or dominant structures that privilege the voices of students that fit the dominate discourse and aspirations of education environments (Taylor & Robinson, 2009). Third, there are many resources available for adults organizing training for students participating in efforts; however, there is limited research around the essential training and preparation students need to be effective in education decision making. Fourth, scholars rarely addressed what happens to a student voice effort when adults supporting the effort leave the education environment. Mitra (2009) found that

efforts often fail when they lose their adult champion; however, there was limited research into what other factors may lead an effort to fail. Finally, scholars did not address how student turnover affects the ability of a student voice effort to continue to influence decision making once obtaining this capacity. These concerns relate to both collaborative and student-led efforts, and further research is necessary to fully comprehend how these student voice efforts evolve and influence decision making.

Student Voice Impact. Scholars found that student voice efforts have a number of positive impacts on students, adults, and the school environment. In a comprehensive literature review of the effects of student voice, Mager and Nowak (2012) found that there are four main categories in which effects can be sorted: (a) personal effects on students, (b) personal effects on teachers, (c) effects on interactions in the educational environment, and (d) effects on the school as an organization. They found moderate evidence for positive effects on developing life skills, communication skills, responsibility, self-esteem and social status, a sense of agency, democratic skills and citizenship, student–adult relationships, and school ethos. Mager and Nowak also found positive effects, with limited evidence due to lack of high-quality research, on peer relationships, student health, academic achievement, and change to facilities, rules, and polices. Specifically concerning effects on teachers, Rudduck and Flutter (2014) found that student voice efforts provide teachers with "(a) a more open perception of student capabilities; (b) the capacity to see curriculum from a different angle; (c) a readiness to change thinking and practice; (d) a renewed sense of excitement in teaching; and (e) a practical agenda for improvement" (p. 151-152).

Scholars also identified some negative effects of student voice. These effects include "student disillusionment and disappointment or frustration, limited or nonexistent student influence on policies, unsuccessful student requests, stress accompanied by being a student leader, and student victimization" (Mager and Nowak, 2012, p. 45). There was also the concern that students would feel that their voice is not represented as student voice efforts could seem uniform and monolithic, potentially overlooking "the essential differences among students, their perspectives, and their needs" (Cook-Sather, 2006b, p. 11). Currently, there is limited evidence to support the emergence of these positive and negative effects in student voice efforts.

Scholars also noted that the potential for positive or negative effects to emerge depends on the model and stage in which a student voice effort aligns and how engaged students are in the effort (Mager & Nowak, 2012). Based on observations of and interviews with adults and students participating in 13 different student voice efforts in the San Francisco Bay area, Mitra (2004) found that student voice efforts that incorporate collaboration between adults and students and enable students to serve as leaders show more positive effects on students, adults, and the school environment. This is particularly apt for students in these types of efforts as students are given increased ability to develop agency, experience with democratic skills and citizenship, responsibility, self-esteem, social status. They also encourage stronger relationships between students and adults. However, to achieve these increased positive effects, Mitra (2004) asserted that adults need to strike a balance between supporting students to raise their voice along with allowing them to have the space to develop their individual roles and responsibilities.

While Mitra's (2004) findings may not be generalizable beyond these student voice efforts, they do provide an initial understanding for how student-led student voice efforts may have more desirable outcomes.

Critique. As the literature surrounding student voice is a relatively new field, there were relatively few studies that have examined comparable outcomes and used similar measures (Mager & Nowak, 2012). There is no commonly accepted definition of student voice, and there are several different models and stages in which student voice efforts emerge. This makes it challenging for studies to coalesce around similar outcomes and measures. Therefore, additional empirical studies are necessary to develop valid and reliable measures of the effects of student voice.

Wrap-up of Student Voice in K-12 Education Decision Making. The scholarship highlighted above provides insights into how student voice efforts manifest itself in classroom and school-level education decision making. Scholars demonstrate that in the 21st century, our understanding of the student in democratic countries has evolved in such ways that have encouraged the inclusion of student voice in K-12 education decision making (Murphy, 2017). These student voice efforts develop in diverse models and stages, and the way in which the effort evolves influences the effects it has on the students, adults, and the school environment. The efforts that align with my definition of student voice most closely were those that incite collaboration between adults and students to share in decision making or those that enable students to make decisions and guide adults through implementing them (Mitra, 2014).

Scholarship in this field is relatively new and the studies are not generalizable to

the broader population of schools, as scholars have not examined student voice efforts from randomly selected samples of the population. Clear gaps in the literature persist that this study strives to address, including: (a) the factors that influence student continued participation in student voice efforts, (b) how an effort evolves over time to encourage collective student participation, and (c) the effects, if any, of differentials in power within an effort have on student participation. Additionally, the studies have limited construct and internal validity because there is no single definition of student voice and it is often unclear the influence student voice efforts have on students, adults, and the school environment. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a common belief amongst scholars that student voice efforts contribute to increased democratization in schools, which enables students to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities.

The Public Policy-Making Process

The public policy process literature applicable to this study explores how actors approach the policy process. I first provide an overview of how a policy may move through the policy process. The reminder of the section is then divided into three sections based on where students can participate as actors in this process: (a) problem identification and agenda setting, (b) models for issue consideration and policy adoption, and (c) factors that impact the policy process. Cited literature is meant to provide greater understanding for how student voice efforts may navigate the state-level K-12 education policy decision making process.

This section cites scholars that developed theoretical frameworks for how actors approach the policy process. Therefore, while much of this literature is dated, it provides

foundational understanding for how actors may participate in the policy process, which are still applicable today. Cited scholars rely heavily on case study findings to construct their theories. These findings are developed from scholars' interpretations of a particular phenomenon and may not be generalizable to all situations. For the purposes of this review, a phenomenon is any event taking place in the policy process, such as an actor striving to influence a legislator or an actor proposing a new bill.

The theoretical frameworks described below are commonly accepted in education policy. Therefore, they can provide insights for understanding how student voice may manifest itself in the policy process. However, scholars from the public policy process literature have not traditionally considered students as actors in the process. Therefore, the frameworks are critiqued based on the insights they provide regarding understanding how student voice efforts can influence the K-12 education policy decision-making process.

Overview of the Policy Process. There are many theories for how actors may navigate the policy process. Many of these theories will be discussed in the following sections; however, it is important to provide an initial overview of how a policy may progress through the policy process to provide context for how actors may navigate the process. Fowler (2013) divided the policy process into six stages to show how a policy moves from an idea to adoption. These stages are: (a) problem identification, (b) agenda setting, (c) policy formulation, (d) policy adoption, (e) implementation, and (f) evaluation. Problem identification is where a problem was identified for policy reform. Agenda setting is when actors strive to place the problem on the policy agenda in order

for it to be considered by policy makers for adoption; the policy agenda or formal agenda is discussed further in the following section. Policy formulation is when a policy is written into a bill in order to be formally considered for adoption. Policy adoption is when the bill is adopted by the policy makers. Implementation is when policies are put in place by front-line workers, such as district administrators, principals, or teachers. Finally, evaluation concerns determining whether a policy works the way it was designed. Policies may move forward or backward in the identified stages depending on how successful actors are in moving their policy through the process. Throughout the rest of this section, I focus on where students can participate as actors in this process.

Problem Identification, Agenda Setting, and Policy Formulation. Theories abound for understanding how actors create issues, formulate policies, and influence policy adoption. In this section, the political theories concerning issue creation (Cobb & Elder, 1995), agenda setting (Cobb & Elder, 1995), and visible and hidden participants (Kingdon, 1995; 2003) are discussed. These theories provide insights into how actors advocating for an issue, such as students in a student voice effort, may establish an issue, formulate a policy solution, and ensure that decision-makers consider it for adoption.

Scholars theorized that actors, those participating in the policy-process, strive to create and place issues on the policy agenda to be considered for policy formulation (Cobb and Elder, 1995; Fowler, 2013). According to Cobb and Elder (1995), "an issue is a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of position or resources" (p. 96). An issue is created as a result of both an initiator and a triggering mechanism that transforms a perceived problem into

a concrete one. Once an issue is created, it is placed on the system agenda, consisting of

all the issues that the political community recognized as meriting public attention. Cobb

et al. (1995) emphasized that for an issue to be considered for policy formulation, it must

be advanced to the formal agenda. This formal agenda is the subset of issues explicitly

considered by authoritative decision-makers for policy formulation. There is typically a

gatekeeper controlling when and where issues are placed on the formal agenda.

Discussing actors in the process, Kingdon (1995; 2003) identified both visible and

hidden actors who influence the agenda. Visible actors are those that receive considerable

press and public attention for their participation in the process, e.g. legislators, high-level

appointees, the media, and other elected or election-related actors. A legislative

champion, or a legislator that endorses and actively advocates for a bill in the legislature,

often acts as an important visible actor for policies going through legislatures

(Wohlstetter, 1991). However, there are hidden actors, including academic specialists,

career bureaucrats, and congressional staffers. While the visible actors often affect the

issues placed on the agenda, the hidden actors typically have influence over the policy

solutions available to address these issues (Kingdon, 1995). A policy solution is a policy

designed to address an identified issue (Fowler, 2013). Additionally, there are interest

groups outside the process, which can be hidden or visible depending on media attention,

that advocate for their values and priorities at the legislature in order to achieve an

outcome adventitious to the group (Kingdon, 2003). This advocacy could be either in

support or against a particular issue and policy solution. These groups have a frequent

influence on the formal agenda depending on their ability to mobilize and get actors to

pay attention to their issue.

  Critique. Cobb and Elder (1995) and Kingdon (1995; 2003) did not address in detail how actors, either visible or hidden, gained access to the policy-making process. It is clear that once in the process, actors' influence depends on their ability to mobilize support and influence decision-makers to pay attention to their issue, but it is unclear how actors gain access to the process (Kingdon, 2003). Kingdon (2003) noted that hidden policy actors often have policies waiting for a problem to arise so that they can become a visible champion; however, this often takes years to occur and sometimes an opportunity to champion a policy never arises.

  In navigating the policy process, students would essentially be acting as a special interest group striving to influence decision-makers to support their interests. Students, who have been traditionally excluded from the system and have a limited timeframe to participate due to aging out of K-12 education, could have a more difficult time than other actors striving to enter the process as their voice may not be seen as influential by legislators or other decision-makers, particularly because many students cannot vote (Crosnoe, 2011). Cobb and Elder (1995) noted that the legitimacy of the policy initiator may be more important than the salience of the issue in terms of its placement on a governmental agenda. As discussed in the previous section, our understandings of students have shifted in the educational system from passive actors to knowledgeable experts; however, these understandings may not exist outside the school system. Therefore, it is essential to understand how access to the policy-making process may influence a student's ability to participate and influence the process.

Models for Issue Consideration and Policy Adoption. Researchers identified three key models for understanding whether an issue will be considered for adoption: (a) the multiple streams model of policy adoption (Kingdon, 1995), (b) the garbage can model (Cohen et al., 1972), and (c) the arena model (Mazzoni, 1991). Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams model suggests that policy actors need to understand (a) how their problem may be viewed by decision-makers, (b) where their problem may be on the agenda, and (c) the opportunities available to leverage policy adoption in order to have their issue considered for adoption. There is a limited window of opportunity available for problems to be considered for policy adoption. Once they have these understandings, actors need to develop a strategy for uniting these three strands in order to gain support from decision-makers around their issue. Actors need to strategically decide what pieces of their issue were important to them and compromises they were willing to make to navigate this political process.

Cohen and his colleagues' (1972) garbage can model suggests that an actor's available energy, e.g. time, and resources, such as economic, social, or political capital (discussed in detail below), influences their ability to advance their issue to be considered for adoption. Therefore, the garbage can model suggests that actors need to consider how much energy and resources they have available to advance a particular issue for adoption. This is because some policies require more energy and resources depending on where they are in the policy stream.

Finally, Mazzoni's (1991) arena model asserts that the arena in which actors strive to advance an issue for policy adoption greatly influences the likelihood of it being

enacted. Mazzoni argued that within arenas, there is a constant struggle as stakeholders contend for agenda status and policy preference. According to the arena model, actors need to shift the arena from the subsystem arena, where a typical coalition of education bureaucrats, legislators, and special interest groups are the decision makers, to the macro arena, where the public has more influence, to have their issues and policy solutions heard. This enables the public to rally both political leaders and outside actors around their cause and increases the probability of their policy solution being considered for policy adoption. Mazzoni noted that the leadership arena, where elites bargain to forge working alliances to accomplish issues important to them, is where substantive polices are more likely to be formed.

Critique. Similar to the above critique, Cohen et al. (1972) and Mazzoni (1991) did not address how actors, particularly those traditionally excluded, gain access to the policy process. Kingdon (1995) addressed it briefly when noting that those in decision-making roles must perceive a group as legitimate in order for the group to influence the policy process. However, it is unclear how this legitimacy is gained. Further, these models assumed that actors have the ability to (a) determine how decision-makers viewed their issue, (b) know whether their issue was on the formal agenda, (c) be aware of the opportunities available to leverage the issue, and (d) be cognizant of how much time and resources were necessary to advance an issue. The ability to gather this information will greatly depend on actors' access and power, or capacity to influence legislators or other decision-makers to share information, within the policy-making process. It is unclear how students, with limited access to legislators and power, would be able to influence the

policy-making process in a meaningful way.

Factors Impacting the Policy Process. Building on the research focusing on the phases of policy making, investigations showed how different factors impact the policy process. In this section, the factors addressed concern (a) local context (McLaughlin, 1990; Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993); (b) the historical political context of education (Kofod et al., 2012); (c) social, economic, and political capital (Bourdieu, 2005; Tamir 2010), and (d) political advocacy (Scott et al, 2009; 2016). Each of these factors can influence whether and how an issue progresses through the policy process. Students should consider each of these factors when deciding whether to propose or support a particular issue and policy solution. In this section, critiques are offered when discussing each factor instead of at the end of the section as there is limited overlap in my critique of each element.

Local Context. Several scholars found that local context influences how actors navigated this process (McLaughlin, 1990; Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993; Fowler, 2013). In the United States, education policies span three-levels of government: (a) federal, (b) state, and (c) district. Scholars found that "it is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice, especially across levels of government" as the nature, amount, and pace of change at the local level is diverse (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 12). Additionally, understanding local capacity and will are crucial to achieving intended policy outcomes, as local actors must be motivated to accept policy goals or they may not be implemented (Fowler, 2013). Therefore, in policy design, actors at the state level should consider how their policy would be accepted at the local level if enacted.

Wahlstrom and Louis (1993) identified three elements essential for comprehending the local policy process: (a) "knowledge and playing by the local rules of the game, (b) understanding the local communication channels; and (c) acknowledging the roles of key actors in the discussion and decision stages" (p. 108). Each element influences whether a policy is adopted at the local level. When designing education policies, actors should consider how local education agencies may influence each policy's implementation as their values and ideals may not align with those desired by the state, resulting in a policy not being implemented fully (Fowler, 2013). Ultimately, change fares better when the local context was understood and policies address the context (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993).

McLaughlin (1990) and Wahlstrom and Louis (1993) considered how local context must be considered in policy design in order to ensure implementation in the future. However, these scholars did not consider how local views of actors advancing a particular policy may affect how the policy is received. For example, if a local context does not perceive actors' voices, such as students, as having influence or value, then it may be difficult for these actors, or students, to ensure that the policies they advance are considered. Khalifa (2013) noted that structures needed to be put in place by leaders to ensure that student voices, particularly those of historically marginalized and undervalued students, were valued and included in the conversation. It is imperative to consider how local views of particular actors may influence the ability for policies advanced by these actors to be implemented.

Historical Political Context. Along with considering the local context, Kofod and

his colleagues (2012) noted that actors must also acknowledge the history of educational development and policies within their country, as this "affect[ed] the way new ideas are received and incorporated into national and local discussions" (p. 30). There were major differences in how state policymakers adapt and implement policies in K-12 education. To understand these differences, actors must critically look at the events that shaped the way in which decisions were made and interpreted. This enabled them to better comprehend the policy process in which they were working and helped them identify different ways to advance policies.

Kofod and his colleagues (2012) showed that actors must understand their state context when striving to implement new policies. However, these scholars did not address the possibility that a state context may limit the ability for actors, such as students, to participate in the process. Actors may not be as receptive to including the student voice based on their understanding of students or past events that shaped the policy process. Therefore, students may not be able to participate in the process. It is important to address how actors historically exclude students from political processes and how students can use this knowledge to gain access into the process.

Capital. Actors must also consider how their social, economic, and political capital (or lack thereof) influences their ability to participate in the policy process (Bourdieu, 2005; Tamir 2010). Bourdieu (1986; 2005) defined capital as a type of asset held by individuals or collectives that can be used as a form of power to enhance the influence of its holder in a particular space. Bourdieu identified three different types of capital: (a) social, which refers to the network of relationships among individuals and the

benefits that arise from these relationships that can be leveraged to advance a cause; (b) economic, which concerns the monetary value an individual or community possess to advance a cause; and (c) political, which deals with the trust, goodwill, and influence individuals or communities have with policy actors that can be used to advance a cause. Tamir (2010) discussed the exchange rate of this capital and how it may vary depending on the political context and environment. Tamir noted that economic and political capital is often privileged; however, social capital can be used strategically to outweigh this balance.

Bourdieu (1986; 2005) and Tamir (2010) both asserted that capital is important for influencing the policy process. However, neither addressed how students, or youth, may participate in the process. Students are not traditionally seen as policy actors and, therefore, will enter the policy process with marginal (if any) political capital and will need to build this capital in order to advance their causes. Additionally, students have limited economic capital due to the probability that they are spending eight hours a day in school and have limited economic resources outside of those provided by adults. Students may have some social capital to leverage, but this will depend greatly on relationships previously built with adults who support their cause. It is unclear how students can build and leverage these three types of capital if other actors do not consider them to be influential actors in the process.

Advocacy. Finally, political advocacy is necessary to consider in order to understand how different actors may interact with the policy-making process to achieve their goals. Political advocacy has increased over the past two decades with a multitude

of diverse actors participating in the education policy-making process, such as lobbyists, advocacy coalitions, grassroots community organizers, philanthropists, and religious groups (Scott et al., 2009). Scott and her colleagues (2009) separated these groups into three policy terrains: (a) Congress, states, and the courts; (b) institutional arenas; and (c) sociopolitical movements. In the first terrain, education interest groups provide legislators with more resources, such as policy briefs and research, for making policy decisions and influencing the federal judiciary by sponsoring cases and filing *amicus curiae* briefs. Interest groups representing ethnic or racial minorities typically play more of a blocking role by lobbying to prevent legislation from passing in an effort to protect their represented populations. More conservative groups, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council, often provide technical support in drafting legislation and adoption of policies they support.

In the second terrain, institutions, such as private foundations, think tanks, and philanthropies, are "aggressively seeking to influence the way the school system is organized and administered in the United States" by working outside of the traditional education establishment (Scott et al., 2009, p. 8). These institutions design new models for funding, research production and propagation, and policy advocacy, which reshape how many education-focused organizations operate. These institutions are influencing education policy by backing policy initiatives in urban education settings, churning out new research to advance new policies, and using this research to advocate for adoption of these policies (Scott et al., 2009; 2016).

In the third terrain, community-based and grassroots groups are increasingly

engaging in education advocacy (Scott et al., 2009). These groups often "feel that their issues are not addressed by mainstream policy mechanisms" and tend to "advocate for schooling changes as policy outsiders" (p. 10). Advocacy activities range from organized social movements where supporters rally around a common cause, such as fiscal equity or parent participation in schools, to localized efforts to have a specific policy adopted. By mobilizing their supporter networks, community-based and grassroots groups successfully lobby policy actors to consider and adopt their policies.

Scott et al. (2009; 2016) showed how diverse political actors, such as education interest groups, foundations, and grassroots groups, influence the education policy-making process through different forms of advocacy. It is likely that policy actors will perceive student voice efforts as a community-based or grassroots group and, therefore, students will need to ensure that they have a statewide network of supporters available to influence education policy decision-makers. Scholars showed that adults are capable of building this network and persuading policy actors; however, it is not clear if students will have a similar capability.

Wrap-Up of Public Policy-Making Process. The scholarship highlighted above provides insights into how actors, including students, may influence and contribute to the policy-making process in their state. Students' capacity to influence state-level K-12 education decision making may depend heavily on their ability to participate in the policy process. Students are rarely actively engaged in this process, particularly at the problem identification and agenda setting phases (Mitra, 2012; 2015). However, as shown in the literature surrounding student voice, students have the knowledge and expertise to

provide insights into effectively enhancing their educational experiences (Fielding, 2004). Students particularly have the capacity to participate in the policy process as they collaborate with adults, who foster the inclusion of their voice, around issues that have an influence on their education environment (Mitra, 2012; 2015). Works cited are helpful for grasping how students, when given the capacity, may navigate the policy process to have policy they care about become enacted and implemented.

There is extensive literature examining how actors in general approach policymaking. Yet, there is limited research on how student voice in particular intersects with the policy process (Mitra, 2012; 2015). It is imperative to consider student voice when designing and implementing education policies as students can offer problem definitions on issues and policy solutions that previously were not considered by adults. Further, these insights could align with those suggested by adults, both bolstering adults' confidence in the policy and providing students with the ability to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities. This study strives to enrich and deepen the policy-setting literature by looking more deeply at how interest groups, such as students, can influence the education policy process.

Summary

The purpose of the foregoing literature review was to understand how student voice is represented in state-level K-12 education policy decision making. Scholarship on (a) student voice in K-12 education decision making, and (b) the public policy-making process were considered. Each body of work provided insights into how student voice may manifest itself in and influence state-level education policy. Student voice in K-12

education decision making literature offered guidance on how student voice efforts evolved in classroom and school-level education decision making. This literature showed that (a) our comprehension of the student in democratic countries has changed in such ways to foster the inclusion of student voice in decision making; (b) student voice efforts develop in diverse models and stages, which influences the effects they have on students, adults, and the school environment; (c) student voice requires a power shift, inclusion, and authenticity to be successful, and (d) there are many positive effects of including student voice, such as increasing student appreciation of democratic rights and responsibilities, and marginal negative effects, such as causing some students to feel excluded and devalued when the effort is implemented incorrectly.

Additionally, the public policy-making process literature shed light on how students may influence and contribute to the policy process. This literature demonstrated that there are several ways in which students can navigate the policy process and have policies that they care about implemented. However, this literature also showed that it is unclear how students can or do participate in state-level policy making, as they have limited access and power to influence legislators and other decision-makers. Together, the cited works provided some understanding on how students may use their voice in K-12 education policy making.

Conceptual Framework. Based on the literature, I developed a conceptual framework to guide my study. My conceptual framework is built on two models: (a) how students participate in statewide student voice efforts and (b) how students have an influence on policy through student voice efforts. The first model is rooted in my

comprehension of how student voice efforts developed and supported students in their activities over time. The second model is based on how I believed students would strive to navigate the state-level policy-making processes to instigate policy change. Both models are necessary in the conceptual framework to provide a comprehensive picture for how students may use their voice in K-12 education policy making as it is important to analyze how students internally participate in an effort before examining the external activities of an effort, such as advocating for K-12 education policy making. In the following, I discuss each model and their relationship to one another.

Student Participation in Statewide Student Voice Efforts. For the first model, it was my understanding that statewide student voice efforts require four components to ensure authentic and inclusive student involvement where all students have opportunities to participate in and influence effort activities. These four components were: (a) power shifts, (b) shared practices, (c) adult supports, and (d) student relationships. The first component, power shifts, was based in the belief that student voice efforts must give students equal or inflated influence over decisions in comparison to adults (Murphy, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Additionally, efforts must strive to dismiss social order power dynamics and provide all students with equal voice (French & Raven, 1959; Conner, 2015). Adults and students may be uncomfortable with and threatened by shifting these power dynamics; however, it is necessary to ensure all students can participate.

The second component, shared practices, requires efforts to have basic structures and practices that lay out roles and expectations (Mitra, 2014). If structures and practices

are not clear, students may feel tokenized, manipulated, or exploited. Structures and

practices must promote openness and trust between students and adults and create an

inclusive, open, and authentic environment (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Conner, 2015).

The third component, adult supports, highlights the need for an effort to have at

least one dedicated adult as well as the political, financial, and emotional support of those

in power, such as funders (Beaudoin 2005; Mitra, 2014). Additionally, students require

development opportunities to enhance their ability to participate as not all students join

with the same skillsets (Conner, 2015). Finally, the fourth component, student

relationships, identifies how students need to build relationships with one another to

engage in effort activities (Mitra, 2004). Figure 1 summarizes these four components for

how students ideally participate in statewide student voice efforts.

Figure 1: Model for Student Participation in Statewide Student Voice Effort
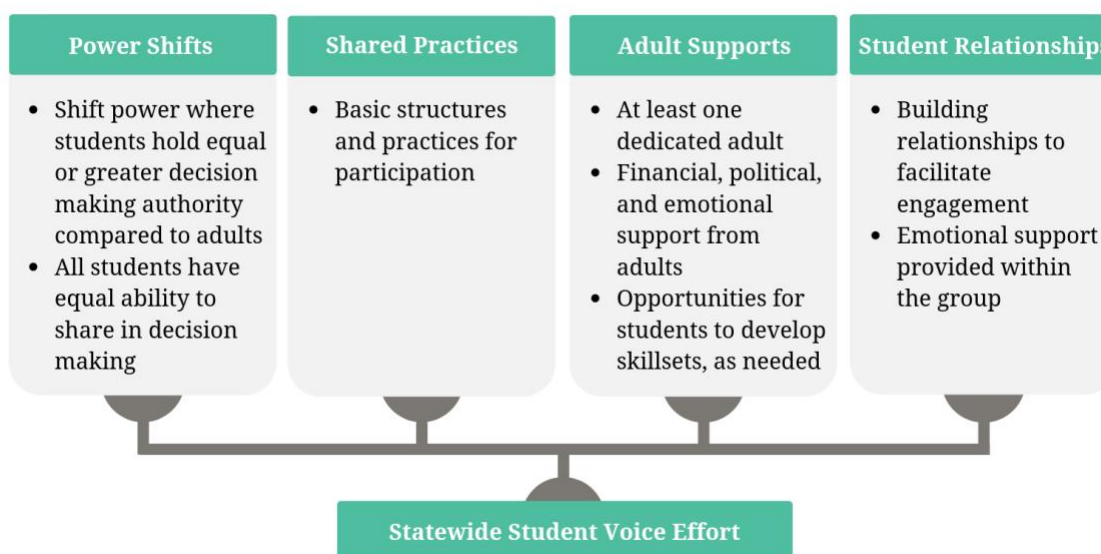
Student Voice Efforts Influencing Policy Reform. For the second model, my

understanding from the literature led me to believe that students participating in student

voice efforts will influence policy change in a similar way to any organized community-based or grassroots effort participating in the policy-making process (Scott et al., 2009). As noted in the literature, the policy process can be messy, and it may be difficult to create a clear roadmap of how students navigate it as many activities are happening simultaneously. However, I strove to create a model to show how student voice efforts may enact change in the policy process.

I separated the policy-making process into four phases utilizing Fowler's (2013) model as a starting point. As a reminder, Fowler's (2013) described six stages of the policy process: (a) problem identification, (b) agenda setting, (c) policy formulation, (d) adoption, (e) implementation, and (f) evaluation. However, Fowler's model is more focused on how a policy moves through the process rather than how the actors may navigate the process. Therefore, I created a new model to show how students as policy actors may navigate the process. My phases of the policy-making process are: (a) problem identification, (b) policy consideration, (c) community building, and (d) policy adoption. I did not include implementation or evaluation because my study ends at policy adoption.

My phases are different from Fowler's (2013) in the following ways. First, I did not include agenda setting as a separate category because I believed students will be engaging in agenda setting activities throughout the policy process. This is because community-based efforts must mobilize their support networks to get their policy on the formal agenda and will often need to continue to advocate to keep their policy on the agenda throughout the entire process as policymakers may not necessarily see it as a

priority (Scott et al., 2009). Second, Fowler did not provide a specific stage in which

actors may strategize for moving a policy from an idea to adoption. Therefore, I

constructed a new category entitled policy consideration to capture policy activities

related to developing a strategy for ensuring a policy is adopted. As students will likely

be acting similar to a community-based effort, much of the strategies developed during

policy consideration will be related to how to (a) mobilize their support networks, (b) get

and keep their policy issue on the formal agenda and formulated into written form, and

(c) how to ensure their issue is adopted. Finally, I created a separate category for policy

activities related to community building because I believed these activities will be an

essential stage of the process for students as they will need to mobilize support from

community partners in order to achieve their goals (Scott et al., 2009; Tamir, 2010)

Within each phase that I identified for the policy process, there are activities that

student voice efforts may take to guide a problem and policy from idea to adoption.

Below, I describe the potential activities efforts may take in each phase. It is important to

note that I did not characterize these identified phases as being mutually exclusive, and

policy activities could occur simultaneously as the policy process was dynamic and ever

changing; however, I did believe that these phases would likely take place in the order

listed.

Problem identification requires the student voice effort to identify a problem,

establish a policy solution, recognize the priorities of the formal agenda, assess the policy

window for whether or not it is the right time to enact change, and understand the local

and historical context of their current environment to leverage opportunities and predict

challenges (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993; Cobb and Elder, 1995; Kofod et al., 2012; Fowler, 2013). Policy consideration involves developing strategies to achieve policy adoption, such as identifying available energy and resources to pass a policy, determining the appropriate arena to enact change, securing visible champions to formulate the policy and move it forward, and determining hidden and visible actors that may move the policy forward or act as roadblocks (Cohen et al., 1972; Mazzoni, 1991; Kingdon, 1995, 2003).

In the coalition building phase, the student voice effort secures support from stakeholders, identifies opposition, and builds social, economic, and political capital (Bourdieu, 2005; Tamir, 2010; Mitra, 2014). Finally, in the policy adoption stage, policy actors will conduct community-based or grassroots advocacy and utilize built social, economic, and political capital to influence state-level policymakers, such as legislators, to adopt the desired policy (Scott et al., 2009; Fowler, 2013). Figure 2 summarizes how students may have an influence on policy through student voice efforts.

Figure 2: Model for Statewide Student Voice Efforts Influencing Policy Reform
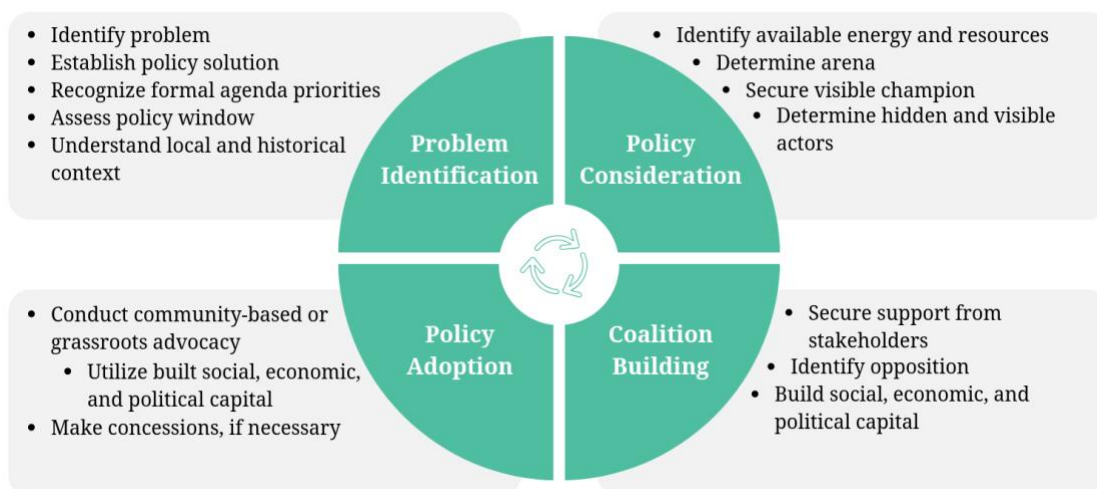
Together, these models provide a more complete understanding of how a student

may participate in the K-12 education policy-making process through a student voice effort. The first model provides insights into how an effort's internal dynamics may influence a student's ability to participate in a student voice effort. The second model outlines how a student voice effort may engage in the policy-making process. It was my belief that if a student voice effort does not have internal structures to promote authentic and inclusive student participation, then it will be challenging for students to engage in the policy-making process as students will not have access to the supports needed. These supports include: (a) clear working structures, (b) development opportunities to learn the policy process, (c) knowledge that student perspectives and experiences are valuable, or (d) the financial, political, and emotional support of peers and partnering adults. Without these supports, students involved in a student voice effort may find it difficult to organize collectively, enter the policy arena, and stay engaged following setbacks (Conner et al., 2016). Therefore, both the participation in state-wide student voice efforts model and student voice efforts influence policy reform models must be considered in my conceptual framework for understanding how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Many researchers (e.g. Corbett & Wilson, 1995; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Cook-Sather, 2006a; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Murphy, 2017) have explored the inclusion of student voice in classroom and school-level education decision making. Much inquiry has focused on the growth of student voice, the components that influence its success, and its influence on students (Cook-Sather, 2002; Rudduck & Flutter, 2004; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014). There is, however, an incomplete body of work on the inclusion of student voice in district or state-level decision making where many education policy reforms emerge (Mitra, 2009; Conner et al., 2016). This is because there has been scant attention to how student voice is represented in the education policy-making processes, particularly at the state-level (Mitra, 2015). Additional research is required to fill these gaps in the literature.

There is a growing movement to include students in state-level K-12 education policy decision making. Two non-profit organizations, the Prichard Committee based in Kentucky and the Chalkboard Project based in Oregon, have supported statewide student voice efforts: Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. These efforts bring together high school students from across the state to advocate on behalf of K-12 students in state-level politics. High school students participating in the student voice efforts work with policy actors to advance issues and policies in which they believe would positively influence their K-12 education. Students in both of these efforts have participated in the policy process; however, there is limited research to understand the lived experiences of these students and how they navigated the process.

Accordingly, this study strives to understand how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. In this study, my target sample is high school students participating in Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team or Oregon Student Voice, particularly those students that have engaged in the policy-making process. Using a constructivist lens to conduct a qualitative collective case study, I collected data for students participating in one of these two student voice efforts that can be analyzed and compared. My research aims to answer five discrete research questions:

1. How are statewide student voice efforts structured?

2. How do diverse factors influence student participation in student voice efforts?

3. How are differentials in power, particularly social order power dynamics, within an effort associated with student participation?

4. How do students, through student voice efforts, participate in the K-12 education policy process?

5. How do students perceive their experience in the K-12 education policy process?

It is important to understand how these efforts are structured and how students participate before looking at how they influence state-level decision making as I surmise that how students collectively make decisions and carry out the work influence how they participate in the policy process. There are many instances of students participating in state-level education policy decision making, but few occasions where students design and push forward a policy agenda as a collective under a youth-led organization. I hope the research I collect through this study will help future student voice efforts participate

in the state policy-making processes.

Study Methods

I conduct a qualitative collective case study to understand how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. The methods for this study are appropriate as I am striving to develop an in-depth description and analysis of how students participate in and influence the policy-making process by examining two cases (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2013). I use qualitative methods to gain a complex and detailed understanding of a little-known phenomenon. Qualitative methods are ideal for this study as it enables researchers to enter natural settings to explore the "social interactions expressed in daily life and the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 2). Through qualitative methods, I am able to better conceptualize how students experience the policy-making process. This section includes three subsections: (a) case study approach, (b) epistemological stance, and (c) my reflexivity and positionality.

Case Study Approach. A case study is a qualitative approach for understanding a phenomenon. According to Creswell (2013), "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system," such as a setting or context (p. 73). The focus of this type of research is to develop a detailed depiction and analysis of a single case or multiple cases. Ultimately, through this approach, the researcher is striving to offer a detailed understanding of what is happening in a single case or across multiple cases. The case study approach has been used in many disciplines

across the social sciences, and its origins can be traced back to psychology, medicine, law, political science, anthropology and sociology.

I utilize the case study approach in my study as I describe and analyze how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process. My issue of study is high school students in student voice efforts and my bounded system is the state-level policy-making process. In this section, I detail several components of case study design and briefly highlight the design of my study: (a) data selection, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis, and (d) interpretation and written report. In the following sections, I provide more detail for how I execute each component of my study.

Data Selection. After deciding to conduct a case study, researchers identify their case or cases, and determine the type of case study that would be most useful for their purposes (Creswell, 2013). There are many different types of case studies. The case "can be single or collective, multi-sited or within-site, or focused on a case or an issue (intrinsic, instrumental)" (p. 74-75). In selecting a case or cases, the researcher will likely do purposeful sampling by choosing cases that show different perspectives of the issue studied or cases that are ordinary. An essential feature of a case study is that the unit of analysis is an event, program, activity, or more than one individual. In this study, I conduct a collective case study where I look at one issue across multiple case studies to illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2013). I examine two cases: (a) Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team in Kentucky and (b) Oregon Student Voice in Oregon. I examine Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's participation in the policy-making process

and use findings from this case study to inform my examination of Oregon Student

Voice's participation in the process (Yin, 2011).

   Data Collection. Collecting data in case study research is "typically extensive,

drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents,

and audiovisual materials" (Creswell, 2013, p. 75). Researchers must ensure that they are

gathering data on the specific issue being studied and clearly decide the boundaries of the

system being studied in the case. These boundaries may be constraints of time, events, or

processes. It is essential that these boundaries are followed, otherwise the researcher may

gather too much information and may be unable to adequately analyze the issue in

question. In this study, I collect data through semi-structured interviews with high school

students participating in the student voice effort and the adults that support the efforts,

observations of student voice effort activities, and document-analysis of materials related

to the student voice effort and student participation in the policy-making process. As the

policy-making process can occur over multiple years, I limit my study to examining a

specific time frame as well as a single policy. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice

Team (SVT), the time period was November 2015 to November 2017. For Oregon

Student Voice (OSV), the time period was August 2016 to December 2018.

   Data Analysis. Data analysis for a case study can be a "holistic analysis of the

entire case or an embedded analysis of a specific aspect of the case" (Creswell, 2013, p.

75). Using the data collected, the researcher provides background information for the

case that includes the history, events, or day-to-day rendering of activities. The researcher

then analyzes key themes from each case to understand its complexities. The researcher is

careful not to generalize beyond the case, but also looks for themes that may transcend the case and be applicable to similar situations. When using multiple cases, the researchers provides descriptions for each case and repeats the same process with the addition of looking for themes that span across all cases (Creswell, 2013). In my study, I coded interviews, observations, and documents to identify key themes related to my research questions.

Interpretation and Written Report. For the interpretation and written report for case studies, "the researcher reports the meaning of the case, whether the meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case (an instrumental case), or learning about an unusual situation (an intrinsic case)" (Creswell, 2013, p. 75). In the report, researchers synthesize their findings, identify themes, and interpret how those themes relate to their phenomenon of interest. They also have a final section where they summarize what they learned about the phenomenon. This is typically referred to as the "lessons learned" portion. This report includes the components listed above and provides detailed understanding for how students in the researched student voice efforts participate in and influence the policy-making process.

Epistemological Stance. There are also multiple ways of knowing and approaching research. Masemann (1990) introduced the importance of leaving space for multiple ways of knowing and Crotty (1998) presented the relationship between the diverse methodologies, or ways of conducting research, and the diverse theoretical perspectives, or ways of knowing. One theoretical perspective is constructivism. Constructivists believe that truth is constructed from each individual's own perceptions

of the world, which is gained through experiences and reflection. Constructivists use these perceptions as data to identify common themes and collective consensuses (Schwandt, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

In conducting this qualitative case study, I use a constructivist approach to examine how students experience and navigate the process with particular focus on the factors that may influence their ability to participate in the process. I want to understand how students' and adults' experiences participating in the policy-making process through student voice efforts shaped their perceptions of the process. This is particularly important for my study as students are not traditionally considered policy actors and their experiences in this new arena, their lived truth, assist my understanding of their ability to participate in the process (Crosnoe, 2011). Using a constructivist lens, I can understand whether students perceive themselves to be actors in the policy-making process and whether they feel that their voice is heard, which is a key component of student voice (Mitra, 2014).

Reflexivity and Positionality. A study's findings and conclusions are inherently shaped by the researcher's interpretations of the data and point of view (Yin, 2009). Qualitative researchers must "self-disclose the assumptions, beliefs, and biases…that may shape their inquiry" to highlight the subjectivity that is present in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). Researchers are influenced by their experiences, histories, and traditions, which influence the ways in which they view the study. Even the "choice of a phenomenon for study stems from one's own pre-dispositions, values, and the researchers' personal investment in solving a problem" (Dahlberg, Drew & Nystrom,

2001, p. 33).

I am a middle-class white, female that had a privileged educational experience. I was afforded many opportunities in my K-12 education to socially and academically succeed, which included attending a private school to better meet my learning needs and participating in youth development programs to develop skills outside the classroom. Throughout my K-12 education, I possessed a strong drive to learn. I always wanted to know exactly how the world–and those in it–functioned, and I was not satisfied until I got answers. I had every opportunity to ask questions and receive answers that made sense to me.

During my undergraduate and master's degrees, I studied K-12 education policy issues in diverse settings, and quickly learned that not everyone was afforded the same opportunities. After earning a dual bachelor in arts in Political Science and Religious Studies, I decided to move to Washington, D.C. with the motivation of becoming a positive change agent in improving the K-12 education offered to youth. I wanted to contribute meaningfully to the ways students experience education policies and programs so that more students had opportunities to grow and prosper in their community.

While working for District of Columbia Public Schools, I found that my ideas about how education systems operate were too theoretical. I discovered that organizational and policy issues were very idiosyncratic or specific, and that my ideas were often too broad to be applied in many situations. Decisions were often made swiftly, based on available qualitative information or limited quantitative data; rarely was there time to engage research. I felt that my methodical way of research could be better utilized

to identify enduring policy solutions instead of quick fixes. Therefore, I decided to pursue a Ph.D. to gain a better understanding of how schools and districts could utilize research to develop more effective and enduring solutions.

During my second year in the program, I came across the concept of student voice. I was provided with an opportunity to live in Oregon for a summer and help the Chalkboard Project structure a student voice effort, which is now known as Oregon Student Voice. I found the concept of providing students with the ability to participate in education decision-making to be novel and essential. Like many individuals, I was not sure how capable or active students would be in the decision-making process.

After interacting with students, I quickly learned that students are very capable of understanding complex decisions and possess many innovative ideas for policy change based on their education experiences. I saw the potential in integrating student voice at each level of K-12 education decision making to bring positive change to the K-12 education system. I chose to continue working with Oregon Student Voice to assist them in bringing student voice to state-level policy decision making in Oregon. Additionally, I decided to focus my research on how students can participate in the education policy-making process as there was limited research available to guide our efforts.

Due to my proximity to the research, I recognize how my reflexivity and positionality influence the study. I regularly consider my own experiences when interacting with student voice efforts and note my own influences on their work. I continuously strive to comprehend my own biases and assumptions. I highlight these potential biases in the findings and conclusions. Because clear objectivity in my analysis

is impossible, I instead strive to be transparent.

Study Design

In this qualitative collective case study, I first assess how students participate in statewide student voice efforts as participation may influence how students engage in the policy-making process through the effort. I then examine the student voice efforts' participation in the policy-making process. I first examine data from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and use themes identified from this case study to inform my examination of Oregon Student Voice's participation (Yin, 2011). In the following, I discuss: (a) setting and participant selection and (b) data collection.

Setting and Participant Selection. There are few statewide student voice organizations in the United States that strive to encourage the collective participation in and influence of the K-12 education policy-making process by high school students.[3] As of 2018, I am only aware of three statewide organizations that meet the definition of student voice outlined in Chapter One: (a) Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, (b) Oregon Student Voice, and (c) Californians for Justice Reform. As a reminder, my definition requires that student voice efforts: (a) be open for all students to participate, e.g. they do not have an application process; (b) should strive to be inclusive of diverse voices, perspectives, and expressions; and (c) empower students to directly participate in decision-making. When this study started, I was only aware of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I learned about Californians for Justice

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[3] It is important to note that almost every state has programs where students can individually advocate for issues that they care about, but for this study, I am concerned with the collective efforts of students.

Reform in January 2019 after data collection and analysis for this study was complete.

Therefore, my study analyzes Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. These cases meet Stake's (2006) guidelines for case selection in multiple-case studies as they are (a) relevant to the phenomenon of interest, which is student voice efforts in policy-making; (b) diverse across contexts as Kentucky and Oregon contain different political environments, and (3) offer potential for learning about "complexity and contexts" (Stake, 2006, p. 23). This third component is key for my study.

While these student voice efforts are similar in purpose, they are slightly different in structure as Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team is directly affiliated with Prichard Committee and must receive approval from their board for all initiatives. Conversely, Oregon Student Voice is relatively independent from the Chalkboard Project and does not seek approval for advancing specific issues or policies. This difference can provide insight into how diverse structures may limit student participation in the policy-making process.

The policies pursued by the student voice efforts that I selected to study are based on two factors (a) students available to discuss their experience in advancing the policy and (b) how many policies the organizations had pursued. At the time of this study, Prichard Committee' Student Voice Team had pursued two policies at the Kentucky State Capitol since their creation: adding students to superintendent search committees in 2015 and the Powerball Promise Campaign in 2016. The first policy failed and the second succeeded. While both policies would provide interesting insights into student

participation, more students participated in the Powerball Promise Campaign and were available to discuss it during the time I was conducting data collection. Additionally, the Powerball Promise Campaign had occurred more recently, and I conjectured that respondents would be better able to recollect actions, events, and feelings. Therefore, I decided to study this policy. At the time of this study, Oregon Student Voice had collectively pursued one policy at the Oregon State Capitol: House Bill 2845, also known as the Ethnic Studies Bill, in 2017. Consequently, I selected this policy.

In Chapter One, I define an education policy broadly as any principle of action proposed or adopted within a statewide governing body that is meant to produce a change in a state's K-12 education practices. The Powerball Promise Campaign meets this definition as it is a principle of action in asking the Kentucky State Legislature to adopt a change in the state budget that increases funds for the state's College Access Program for low-income students at public colleges and the Kentucky Tuition Grant for low-income students at private schools (Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, 2016). House Bill 2845 meets the policy definition as it was a bill proposed within the state legislature. In the following, I provide more details about the context and structure of both organizations as well as the policies being studied.

Prichard Committee Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team was founded in fall of 2012 in Lexington, Kentucky as a team of high school students working to advance students as partners in education improvement. They started as a group of five students that researched, debated, and tested ideas for incorporating student voice into education decision making at the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence. Prichard

Committee is an independent, nonpartisan, statewide nonprofit that strives to mobilize

Kentucky citizens to push for world-class public schools since 1983 (Prichard Committee

for Academic Excellence, 2017). Prichard Committee agreed to support the Student

Voice Team's efforts in spring of 2013. Since 2012, the Student Voice Team has grown

to over 100 self-selected students located across Kentucky. They describe themselves as:

> A team of self-selected middle school through college students working closely
>
> with the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence to elevate the voices of
>
> Kentucky youth on the classroom impact of education issues and support students
>
> as policy partners in improving Kentucky schools (Prichard Committee for
>
> Academic Excellence, 2017).

They participate in activities ranging from: (a) speaking at statewide education summits

and rallies; (b) drafting and championing legislation; (c) testifying before legislative

education committees; (d) publishing commentaries in local and national news media

outlets on education policy issues; and (e) facilitating and sharing policy-oriented

conversation with middle and high school students across Kentucky.

Because they are directly affiliated with the Prichard Committee, the Student

Voice Team must receive approval before pursuing organizational activities, such as

advocating for a specific policy. This slightly limits their ability to participate in the

policy-making process because students can only participate after receiving approval

from adults. However, it also provides students with access to economic, political, and

social capital as Prichard Committee has been advocating for education policies in

Kentucky since 1983 (Bourdieu, 2005; Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence,

2017; Tamir 2010).

As of April 2017, there are currently over 120 students participating in the Student Voice Team with 60 former student participants. These students attend schools in roughly 30 school districts across Kentucky's 194 school districts. A majority of these students are in high school, but roughly ten are in middle school. There is balanced participation from male and female genders. There is representation from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer community. Finally, 19 percent of participants are students of color.[4] Students participate in Student Voice Team activities both in-person and online via Zoom, a web-based communication platform.

Policy of Interest. For years, the Kentucky State Legislature redirected lottery proceedings originally designated to education to other priorities when creating the state budget. The lottery proceedings were supposed to be used to fund the state's College Access Program for low-income students at public colleges and the Kentucky Tuition Grant Program for low-income students at private schools. By 2016, these programs were underfunded by $55 million and students eligible for the programs were unable to access scholarship dollars. Therefore, the Student Voice Team decided to address the issue and created the Powerball Promise Campaign to ensure gaming profits would not be diverted from education. They advocated that the legislature fully fund the programs by committing an additional $55 million to the programs over the biennium. They wrote over 10 opinion and editorial pieces published in state and national newspapers, meet

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[4] Roughly 21 percent of students in Kentucky public schools are students of color (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

with state legislators, and organized a rally on the Capitol steps. Ultimately, the
legislature agreed to commit an additional $14 million over the following two years to the
need-based college grant and scholarship programs.

 Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice was founded in summer of 2016 in
Portland, Oregon as a student voice effort to increase student participation in education
decision-making across the state. Oregon Student Voice started when a high school
student approached the Chalkboard Project with an idea to launch a statewide student
voice effort in Oregon. Chalkboard Project began in 2004 and is a nonpartisan, statewide
nonprofit that strives to help create systemic reform in the quality, accountability, and
stable funding of Oregon's K-12 public schools (Chalkboard Project, 2017). Chalkboard
Project agreed to assist the student and brought together five students from the Greater
Portland area to research and design the effort. These students structured initial systems
for (a) recruiting students, (b) governance, (c) addressing policy issues, and (d) upholding
equity. They officially launched in August 2016 as an independent student voice
initiative. They describe themselves as:

 A student-led initiative that creates a space for students to express their voice on
 K-12 education issues in order to strengthen student success and improve Oregon
 public schools. We strive to elevate all students' opinions on how education
 policies impact their classroom and school context (Oregon Student Voice, 2017).

They participate in activities ranging from (a) advocating for education policy issues at
the state legislature, (b) meeting with students to learn about what they care about in
schools, (c) writing policy briefs to advance policy concerns, and (d) launching a

statewide survey to learn about what policies students want changed in education across the state.

On January 1, 2019, Oregon Student Voice became a youth-led nonprofit. However, Chalkboard Project continues to support the nonprofit as they transition. Chalkboard Project provides Oregon Student Voice with (a) a virtual and physical space to conduct business and (b) financial support for organization activities. Chalkboard Project does not monitor Oregon Student Voice's advocacy choices and students decide to pursue policies independently of Chalkboard Project's decisions. However, Chalkboard Project has a strong reputation in the Oregon education policy arena and provides Oregon Student Voice with aid in organizing meetings with legislators and education advocacy organizations.

As of December 2018, there are over 100 students currently participating in Oregon Student Voice. These students attend roughly 35 different schools across Oregon. Most of the members are in high school, but there are also five members participating who recently graduated. A majority (65 percent) of participating students are female, while 32 percent are male. There is also representation from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer community. Finally, 60 percent of participants identify as white, while 41 percent identify as a person of color.[5] Students participate in Oregon Student Voice activities both in-person and online via Zoom, a web-based communication platform.

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[5] Roughly 37 percent of students in Oregon public schools are students of color (Oregon Department of Education, 2016).

Policy of Interest. In 2016, Oregon Student Voice joined the ethnic studies coalition, which consisted of over 20 organizations from across Oregon. The goal of the coalition was to pass a state law that directed the Oregon Department of Education to convene an advisory group to develop ethnic studies standards into existing statewide social-studies standards. Oregon Student Voice members participated in the drafting of House Bill 2845 and successfully advocated for two high school students or recent graduates to be included on the advisory group. House Bill 2845 was introduced in the 2017 legislative session. Student members participated in the advocacy campaign to pass House Bill 2845 by writing several opinion pieces published in state newspapers, meeting with state legislators, and testifying before both the House and Senate Education Committees. Students worked directly with the coalition to organize activities. The bill successfully passed the House and Senate chambers by late June and was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown on June 30, 2017.

Data Collection. According to Creswell (2013), it is imperative for case studies that researchers gather data on a specific issue being studied in clearly decided boundaries, which may be constrained by time, events, or processes. I study the activities of two student voice efforts where high school students collectively participate in the state-level K-12 education policy-making process. The first case I analyze is Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and their participation with the Powerball Promise Campaign in Kentucky's 2016 legislative session. I examine data related to SVT organizational structures and activities ranging from November 2015 to November 2017. Data collection for this case occurred from September 2017 to November 2017.

I use themes identified from the first case study to shape my analysis of my second case. The second case is more current as I analyze Oregon Student Voice and their participation with House Bill 2845, the Ethnic Studies Bill, in Oregon's 2017 legislative session. I examine data related to OSV organizational structures and activities ranging from August 2016 to December 2018. Data collection for this case occurred from December 2017 to December 2018. As this is a qualitative collective case study, I collected data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Appendix A provides a timeline for study data collection and analysis.

It is important to note that student voice efforts are constantly evolving and changing. My study looks at a very specific period for both organizations. Since data collection, the structure or activities of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team or Oregon Student Voice may have changed.

Interviews. Qualitative researchers often rely heavily on in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). My primary source of data collection for my study is one-on-one semi-structured interviews with students participating in the student voice efforts and adults that they interact with in the policy-making process. I interviewed ten students from the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and ten students from Oregon Student Voice, who were purposively selected students from diverse demographic background with a range of participation in the student voice efforts. The range of participation is from students leading effort activities around drafting and gaining support for the policy to students only engaging once in awhile, such as only attending monthly meetings, in advancing the policy.

In selecting study participants, I provided Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's adult advisor with a list of criteria and asked her to provide me with a list of 15 potential students to interview. This criterion outlined that the types of students I was hoping to interview: (a) students that were deeply engaged in Student Voice Team activities, (b) students who were less engaged in activities, (c) students who participate virtually, (d) students who participate in-person, (e) students who are White, and (f) students who are non-White. The Student Voice Team's adult advisor provided me with a list of students along with their email and the criterion that she believed they met. I selected 12 students from the list to interview who I believed provided a comprehensive representation of the Student Voice Team population. From this sample, only ten students agreed to be interviewed for this study. For Oregon Student Voice, I used the same criteria and selection process for participants; however, as I was the organization's adult advisor, I selected the 12 students to interview from the entire population. From this sample, only ten students agreed to be interviewed for this study.

For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, I interviewed five male students and five female students; seven of the students were White and three were non-White; and eight participated in-person, one participated virtually, and one participated in-person and virtually. For Oregon Student Voice, I interviewed five male students and five female students; five of the students were White and five were non-White; and five participated in-person, three participated virtually, and two participated in-person and virtually. I do not note which students were considered actively engaged versus peripherally engaged in activities because all students I interviewed felt that they were actively engaged in

activity. Perceptions of the adult advisors for both organizations did not match student perception of involvement. This could be because only those who considered themselves to be deeply involved were willing to be interviewed.

I also interviewed four adults from the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and two adults from Oregon Student Voice, who directly work with the students in navigating the policy-making process. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, I interviewed two policy advocates, one communications director, and the adult advisor who regularly assists the student members. I asked the Student Voice Team's adult advisor to identify supporting adults for me to interview and she connected me with the two additional adults. For Oregon Student Voice, I interviewed one policy advocate and one communications director who consistently support the student members. As Oregon Student Voice's adult advisor, I directly identified and connected with these individuals. I was the adult advisor that supported Oregon Student Voice; therefore, I did not interview the adult advisor of Oregon Student Voice. I resigned as Oregon Student Voice's adult advisor in February 2019, which was after data collection was complete. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize background and demographic information for student and adult respondents from each student voice effort.

Table 1: Background of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team Participants

Respondent Pseudonym	Relationship to Effort	Self-identified Gender	Self-identified Race	Participation Virtual/In-Person
Students				
Eric	Member	Male	Non-White	In-Person
Melanie	Member	Female	White	In-Person
Kim	Member	Female	White	In-Person
George	Member	Male	White	In-Person
Patrick	Member	Male	White	Virtual/In-Person
Jane	Member	Female	White	Virtual
Rebecca	Member	Female	Non-White	In-Person
Brian	Member	Male	White	In-Person
Lindsey	Member	Female	White	In-Person
Greg	Member	Male	Non-White	In-Person
Adult Supporters				
Chris	Policy Advocate	Male	White	N/A
Ben	Communications	Male	White	N/A
Dan	Policy Advocate	Male	White	N/A
Sara	Advisor	Female	White	N/A

Table 2: Background of Oregon Student Voice Participants

Respondent Pseudonym	Relationship to Effort	Self-identified Gender	Self-identified Race	Participation Virtual/In-Person
Students				
Cayla	Member	Female	White	In-Person
James	Member	Male	Non-White	In-Person
Delaine	Member	Female	White	In-Person
Ryan	Member	Male	White	In-Person
Kareen	Member	Female	Non-White	Virtual/In-Person
Gary	Member	Male	Non-White	Virtual/In-Person

Respondent Pseudonym	Relationship to Effort	Self-identified Gender	Self-identified Race	Participation Virtual/In-Person
Beth	Member	Female	White	Virtual
Stephen	Member	Male	White	In-Person
Amanda	Member	Female	Non-White	Virtual
Evan	Member	Male	Non-White	Virtual
Adult Supporters				
Jackie	Policy Advocate	Female	Non-White	N/A
Karen	Communications	Female	White	N/A

I conducted one interview with each student and adult. Interviews took place in-person and via-Zoom, a web-based communication platform, depending on the respondent's location. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, seven of the interviews occurred in-person and seven occurred via Zoom. For Oregon Student Voice, ten of the interviews occurred in-person and two occurred via Zoom. Interviews associated with the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team focused on their past participation in the policy-making process, while interviews associated with Oregon Student Voice focused on their past and current interactions in the process.

All in-person and video interviews were conducted in a private or semi-private location at a time that was convenient for the student and adult. Interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Follow-up questions were asked of respondents via email when questions arose regarding statements. Research conclusions based on respondent answers were crosschecked with respondent to ensure fidelity of meanings and accurate capture of their statements (Creswell, 2013).

The intent of these interviews was to understand how students participate in student voice efforts and how students collectively participate in and influence the K-12 education policy process through these efforts. Interview protocols were semi-structured and responsive (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). According to Rubin and Rubin, responsive interviewing is a form of qualitative interviewing that "emphasizes flexibility of design and expects the interviewer to change questions in response to what is being learned" (p. 7). Little is known about student participation in the policy-making process; therefore, responsive interviews were ideal for this study as they provided me with the ability to adjust the interview based on new information gathered and engage in more personal, natural conversations with the interviewee. Ultimately, each interview exists as a self-contained story about the student's participation in the effort and the policy-making process or the adult's interaction that is interpreted within the context of the interview (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

Interview questions were written to gather information and stories that provide insights into the research questions. The interview protocol for students is included in Appendix F and for adults in Appendix G. The interview protocol was developed with the assistance of the adult advisor of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and the executive director of Oregon Student Voice. These individuals reviewed questions for clearness, relevance, and significance to their work. The same interview protocol was used for interviews with the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice as major changes were not seen as necessary following interviews with Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team members.

Documents. Documents can provide insight into the ways in which student participants and adult supporters understand their involvement in the policy-making process (Bowen, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). Examining these documents gives essential understandings into how students and adults alike participate in the policy-making process. Documents provided by Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice concerning organizational structures and activities all provided understandings of how students engage in activities and participate in the policy-making process as well as how adults support them. Both student voice efforts currently use Google Drive to store their documents.

I reviewed all documents in the Google Drive with specific attention being given to those documents about student participating in advancing policy. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, this policy is the Powerball Promise. For Oregon Student Voice, this policy is House Bill 2845. Additionally, I reviewed any legislative documents, testimony, or opinion pieces written or submitted by the students during the period in which they were advancing the policies being studied. Finally, I reviewed any documents that provided insight into what the political environment was like during the time in which the students were engaging in the policy-making process. Questions guiding document analysis related to my research questions and included:

1. How is the student voice effort structured, including governance structure and funding sources?

2. What are the demographics of the student voice effort?

3. How did students participate in the policy-making process?

Observations. Observations are an effective means for triangulation as they reinforce the themes that emerged through the use of interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, they provide important data on their own as the researcher directly observes the phenomena of interest, in this case, student participation in the policy-making process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It is not unusual for interviewees to say one thing when they are actually doing something else, and observations enable researchers to identify these differences (Glaser & Strauss, 2008).

For the Prichard's Committee's Student Voice Team case study, I could not directly observe their participation in the policy process for the Powerball Promise as participation ended in May 2016. Instead, I observed how the student voice effort functions to gain a better understanding of how the effort is structured and how students participate in decision-making. In reviewing documents and speaking with student members, I found that The Student Voice Team had not evolved drastically since 2016, therefore, these observations would still provide relevant findings for this study. I attended one Student Voice Team in-person monthly meeting, a virtual monthly meeting, and a Prichard Committee event that student members attended to highlight their work. These observations provided me with insights into both research question one, about how student voice efforts are structured, two, concerning factors influence student participation, and three, regarding how power dynamics effect student participation in the effort. Questions guiding observations included:

1. How is the student voice effort structured?

2. How do students relate to one another?

3. How do students share their opinions and thoughts during meetings?

4. How are all voices included in the student voice effort? Are some student voices not heard? Are some students not sharing their voice?

5. What factors limit participation of students?

6. What factors enable participation of students?

For the Oregon Student Voice case study, I directly observed how students participated in the effort and how the effort engaged in the policy-making process. As their adult advisor, I attended a majority of Oregon Student Voice's in-person and virtual activities. These activities included Oregon Student Voice monthly meetings, internal meetings for planning, strategizing, and executing activities, including advocating for policies, and external meetings concerning activities, such as meetings with legislators. However, I was unable to directly observe meetings with legislators for House Bill 2845, or the Ethnic Studies Bill, due to conflicting schedules. I was able to observe meetings in the 2018 legislative session when Oregon Student Voice members supported other policy priorities. I do not include these policy priorities in this study as interviews were taking place while the legislative session was unfolding, and members were unable to reflect on the process. Meetings with legislators during the 2017 and 2018 legislative sessions were not vastly different based on student feedback. Therefore, I believe these observations are still relevant to this study. These observations provided me with insights into all five of my research questions. Questions guiding observations included:

1. How is the student voice effort structured, including governance structure and funding sources?

2. How do students relate to one another?

3. How do students share their opinions and thoughts during meetings?

4. How are all voices included in the student voice effort? Are some student voices not heard? Are some students not sharing their voice?

5. What factors limit and enable participation of students?

6. How do students participate in the policy-making process?

7. How do students view their participation in the process?

8. What factors limit and enable participation in the process?

Data Analysis

Data collected is analyzed to understand the components in each case that contributed to how students participate in education decision-making. As many of the components were similar across cases, I employed cross-case data analysis (Stake, 2006). This analytical technique of pattern matching is utilized in order to build an understanding about what happened in each case and identify patterns between the two. Identifying key themes across interviews, observations, and document analysis in each case contributes to identified patterns between the cases. These patterns may offer key insights into the research questions that, in turn, provide an understanding for how students participate in the education policy-making processes.

I used two forms of pattern matching: (a) expected outcomes, which "compares if the initially predicted results have been found and alternative patterns are absent," and (b) rival explanations, which "searches whether there is another explanation for the conditions that might better articulate the findings" (Yin, 2014, p. 217). For my study, the

initially predicted results are outlined in my conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two. Model one of my conceptual framework explores my predicted outcomes for the components necessary to create an authentic and inclusive student voice effort. Model two of my conceptual framework outlines my predicted outcomes for how students influence policy change through student voice efforts. My conceptual framework consists of both models because I believe students need the supports of a student voice effort in order to collectively participate in a state-level education policy-making process.

I performed pattern matching for the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team case and Oregon Student Voice case to determine whether my predicted results were accurate and to search for alternative results that may better predict how students collectively participate in the policy-making process. Findings from both cases are compared to note patterns between the two.

I utilized open coding to identify themes in the data (Creswell, 2013). In open coding, data is categorized based on identified themes that emerge during initial data collection that are developed and modified as additional data is collected (Creswell, 2013). Themes are identified based on how data relates to and provides insights into the discrete research questions. Throughout the process, more substantive categories are defined and refined as themes nest in one another to show overarching similarities across data (Creswell, 2013). I coded the transcribed interviews, observation notes, and document analyses. Themes identified inform study findings and conclusions.

Data analysis for this study began during data collection and was continuous and ongoing. This study used findings from an older case (Prichard Committee's Student

Voice Team) to inform the data collection of a more recent case (Oregon Student Voice).

Therefore, it was important to analyze data during data collection to gain a stronger guide

for further data collection. However, no changes were made in data collection between

cases because I felt that the questions asked were collecting the necessary data.

Several steps were taken to ensure study validity, reliability, and transferability

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, I employed triangulation by conducting interviews with

participating students and adults, performing field observations, and reviewing

documents. I also performed member checks to ensure fidelity in meaning to interviewee

intentions and extrapolated interpretations. I also interviewed a wide range of students

participating in the student voice efforts, particularly students from diverse racial

backgrounds and divergent levels of participation in effort activities, to gather a range of

perspectives. Finally, I attempted to contextualize findings and conclusions in the local

setting to enable readers to determine whether or not the findings apply to their context

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

In conducting member checks, I shared statements with the interviewees during

data analysis and allowed them an opportunity to contextualize their statements and

experiences. I did not conduct member checks until Spring 2019, which was close to the

conclusion of my data analysis. Therefore, I asked interviewees to reflect on their

experiences during the period of the study rather than their current experiences. As a

result of the member checking, two student participants asked to provide additional

information for their quotes based on changes made after data collection within the

student voice efforts. This additional information provided is noted in the analysis.

Ethics

The University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board approved this study as well as the adult advisor of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and the communication and development director at the Chalkboard Project, who oversaw Oregon Student Voice's adult advisor (me) at the time. Consent from adult and student participants, as well as from parents of minor students (those under age 18), was obtained prior to interviews. Adults are potentially identifiable in this study as there are a limited number of adults who directly support the student voice efforts. To limit their exposure, I changed their names and only describe them broadly by their job description. Adults were made aware of this concern before agreeing to be interviewed.

Students are mostly unidentifiable in this study as their real names are not used and pseudonyms are used instead. Students may still be able to be identified based on their statements, as there are a limited number of participants in these organizations. While these students actively chose to participate in the effort, I tried to limit any potential exposure. I only interviewed 10 students from each student voice effort. Further, in discussing interview responses in the findings, I identify students by their gender, race/ethnicity, and whether they live in a rural or urban area. I only identify students as White or non-White due to the limited number of students of color participating in the efforts. I do not identify student grade, age, or location as these demographics could make it possible to identify a student. Students, and parents of minor students, were made aware of this concern before agreeing to be interviewed, and I informed them of the steps I would take to protect each student's identity.

Limitations

There are four main limitations for my study. First, there is ambiguity in the student voice efforts surrounding how much influence adults supporting the effort have over the students' decision to participate in the policy-making process. Students participating could be following the ideas of their adult supporters and advocating for policies as tokens or decorations (Hart, 1992). Further, there is ambiguity around whether the students would be successful navigating the process without these supporters. Both the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice receive assistance from adults, who help guide the effort. However, it is unclear how big of a role adult play in student decision-making and enabling student participation in the policy-process. I strive to understand the role of adults by interviewing them as well as the students. Additionally, the observations and document analysis provide further understanding of their role.

A second limitation is that by virtue of working for the Chalkboard Project to support Oregon Student Voice, I have more data on how Oregon Student Voice is structured than Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. I also have a far deeper understanding of Oregon Student Voice, which may disproportionately influence my interpretations of the qualitative data. I conducted longer interviews with Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's students and adults as well as immersed myself in their documents in order to provide a better comparison between the two student voice organizations. Further, by using Student Voice Team findings to shape my research of Oregon Student Voice, I believe that I accurately captured differences and similarities on

how students were able to participate in the policy-making process.

A third limitation is that the adult advisors of both organizations selected students to be interviewed for this study. There may be bias in which students were selected to be interviewed and, therefore, student experiences represented in this study may not be shared by other members within the organizations. I strived to mitigate potential adult bias by providing Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's adult advisor with a list of criterions for participants as well as asking for more students than I needed for the study. For Oregon Student Voice, I deliberately made a long list of students to consider for participation and narrowed the list based on the criterions to ensure I interviewed a representative sample of membership. I believe for both organizations, I interviewed participants that are reflective of membership due to the diversity in experiences and backgrounds students possessed; however, it is unclear how potential adult bias may have influenced participant selection.

A fourth limitation is that I support Oregon Student Voice and want them to succeed in the policy-making process. To understand my own influence on Oregon Student Voice, I regularly considered my own experiences when interacting with the students and noted my own influences on their work. I strive to ensure that my findings are transparent; however, they may not necessarily be objective based on my role.

Chapter Four: Formation of Statewide Student Voice Efforts

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, I discuss and analyze student participation in student voice efforts by comparing and contrasting practices of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I utilize the theoretical framework for statewide student voice efforts outlined in Chapter Two and detailed in Figure 1 to organize the discussion and findings from the data. I focus on themes identified from the data and arrange them into the following categories: (a) power shifts, (b) shared practices, (c) adult supports, and (d) student relationships. I strive to show how effort design, student and adult relationships, power structures, and outside forces influence student participation in effort activities. I divide these discrete categories into two broad groups in order to ease analysis. These broad groups are (a) structures and (b) connections.

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, I provide findings and analysis for three of my study's research questions:

1. How are statewide student voice efforts structured?

2. How do diverse factors influence student participation in student voice efforts?

3. How are differentials in power, particularly social order power dynamics, within an effort associated with student participation?

In this chapter, I provide a detailed background on how Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice launched and expanded in Kentucky and Oregon, respectively. In Chapter Five, I discuss how student voice efforts structure power shifts and shared practices to foster participation. In Chapter Six, I explain how student voice efforts use connections through adult supports and student relationships to support

participation.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team

The idea for Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (SVT) began in 2012 at the Prichard Committee 30th anniversary celebration. Attendees were asked to contribute to the organization's strategic plan for the upcoming years and vote on priorities, one of which was the concept of student voice. Student voice received attention from several stakeholders, which inspired Sara, an adult who worked in development at Prichard Committee, to move forward in engaging students in Prichard Committee's work. She hung up flyers in a few local high schools inviting students to attend a meeting in a coffee shop in order to discuss education policy concerns. Four students responded to the flyer and they met to discuss how to include student voice in education decision making. For the next year, Sara and the students worked together to brainstorm how to structure the initiative and authentically bring student voice into education decision making at Prichard Committee and statewide. Throughout the year, more students joined the effort.

By the end of the year, the students, now considered members of the Student Voice Team, had constructed a plan for incorporating student voice in decision making. At the annual board meeting, the members presented their plan to the Prichard Committee members in order to gain approval for a pilot initiative to implement their plan going forward. Of the presentation, Sara stated:

It was a very engaging presentation. They'd been studying this issue for a year, we had great PowerPoint slides, a little multimedia, and people were pretty wowed by it, as they should've been. There was a lot of energy in the room and there was an

immediate floor vote to approve a pilot going forward.

While the initiative received a positive response, the pilot was unfunded for another year. The members were excited to gain official recognition for their work from the Prichard Committee and it gave them an official structure to operate in and be accountable to. It was at this time that they gained their name: Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In discussing the members' desire to be connected to the Prichard Committee, Eric, one of the founding members who is a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> We wanted to be involved institutionally in the committee because we felt like that would provide us with the credibility to be involved with the policy discussion and process writ large and so we saw, in a lot of ways, the Committee as an entry point to that.

The members felt that they needed the Prichard Committee, which had been working in education policy for 30 years, to provide them with legitimacy as they entered the policy arena. While this connection limits some of their work, as all activities must be approved by Prichard Committee's executive director, the members asserted that the value in leveraging the Committee's connections outweighs the benefits of being a standalone organization.

Over the next several years, the initiative continued to grow as they began to influence education decision making at the district and state-level. They lead two statewide policy campaigns: (a) to incorporate student representatives on superintendent selection committees; and (b) to increase funding for two need-based college grant and

scholarship programs by $55 million. Both of these campaigns gained the Student Voice Team national media attention.

By 2015, the members were committed to their "College Tripwires Project," which focused on conducting research and identifying the possible reasons for why Kentucky students may not attend college. This project enabled them to raise financial support from outside resources, such as foundations, and Sara transitioned to becoming a fulltime staff member for the Student Voice Team. Sara's official title is now Student Voice Team Director. Through the College Tripwires Project, the members conducted interviews with over 100 students across Kentucky and wrote two policy reports and one book. While the members were continuing their work on college tripwires, they also launched a secondary project exploring how school climate and safety influence student success.

As of 2018, the Student Voice Team (SVT) was officially embedded into the structure of the Prichard Committee. The work of SVT was viewed as a valuable resource by the organization and the members no longer had to fight for resources to conduct their work. Over the past seven years, the members had written over 50 opinion pieces and articles for local, state, and national newspapers, received over 75 media appearances, presented at over 100 local, state, and national conferences, held three statewide rallies to support their policy initiatives, and convened over 40 focus groups with students from across the state. Through their work, SVT influenced the ways in which student voice was perceived at the local, state, and national level as districts, schools, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations regularly reach out to the team in order to gain insight on how to

incorporate students into their own work; the most notable being the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Facebook.

Oregon Student Voice

The idea for Oregon Student Voice (OSV) started in 2016 when a high school student approached Chalkboard Project about her desire to start a student group to incorporate student voice into education decision-making. Chalkboard Project was already doing work around including teacher voice into decision making and the student thought the nonprofit may also be interested in promoting student voice in decision making. Karen, an adult who worked in communications at Chalkboard Project, had recently attended a Policy Innovators in Education Network (PIE Network) conference that featured Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and thought the student had a great idea. Karen immediately spoke with the president of Chalkboard Project, who agreed to allow Karen and the student to begin working on a pilot project to bring students together, but with very limited financial assistance. In thinking back on why she agreed to help the student create a group, Karen stated:

> Since we are about K-12 education reform, I felt it was really important that student voice be part of our efforts because when you look at reform efforts, they succeed only when all stakeholders are engaged. The one participant or stakeholder that often is ignored or left out is the student.

Karen held a strong commitment to support the students in amplify their voice and wanted to ensure they would succeed in their efforts. Karen's first step in helping the students was to bring in an advisor to work with the students in starting their group. After

reviewing applications, Karen decided to hire Samantha Holquist (me) because she had experience starting and developing student organizations. During this time, the high school student found four other students from the Greater Portland area to research and design the student group. Over the summer, Karen and I assisted the students in structuring Oregon Student Voice's initial systems for (a) recruiting students, (b) governance, (c) addressing policy issues, and (d) upholding equity. The students also decided to name the group Oregon Student Voice during this period.

Oregon Student Voice (OSV) officially launched in August 2016 as an independent student voice initiative of the Chalkboard Project. After the members gave a brief presentation to Chalkboard Project's president and multiple meetings with Karen, Chalkboard Project agreed to provide the members with limited financial resources for two years, mostly to support Samantha Holquist's role as an advisor, and agreed not to interfere with the member's work as long as the members did not "disrupt" Chalkboard's other work. Karen served as Chalkboard Project's oversight for the initiative.

During this two-year time period, Oregon Student Voice members were tasked with setting up the structures for an independent organization as well as establishing themselves in Oregon as an important stakeholder in education decision making. Much like how Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team members viewed Prichard Committee, OSV members saw the benefits of starting under an established nonprofit organization. As Gary, a non-White male student from an urban community, explained:

Chalkboard Project provides institutional support in terms of having something, an established organization, that can provide us with resources, knowledge, and

expertise in how to go about completing our work. They also give us access to

educators and political leaders that are difficult for us to reach.

Using Chalkboard Project's name recognition and reputation to gain access to

communities and educators, the members quickly grew from five members to over 100

members in the first two years. Students came from over 29 school districts located

across Oregon with a majority (65 percent) of students living in the Portland area. Hoping

to advance their mission to empower student voice in Oregon, the members worked

together to design and launch three member-led programs: (a) Amplify, (b) Empower,

and (c) Thrive. The initiatives were described as follows:

Amplify teaches students how to conduct research and partners students with

decision makers to work together in improving students' experiences. Empower

provides youth with tools and trainings to lead change in their schools and

communities. Thrive gives students an opportunity to learn how a nonprofit

organization is run (Oregon Student Voice, 2017).

Through these programs, members worked on two policy campaigns: (a) adding ethnic

studies standards into existing statewide social-studies standards in 2017 and (b) creating

a rural education task force to provide recommendations for increasing support for rural

students in 2018. Members also conducted research on the student experience in Oregon

by distributing a statewide high school student survey and conducting focus groups; they

released a report in spring 2018. In fall 2018, members designed and held a statewide

training to bring together over 100 students and educators to learn to implement student

voice in their schools and communities. As a result of these activities, OSV became an

active player in Oregon's K-12 education system and was contacted weekly by state agencies, districts, and schools to provide insights into how they can better include students in their education change efforts.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, Oregon Student Voice members also diligently worked to create an organization that could operate independently of Chalkboard Project. They applied for and secured funding from state and local foundation grants to support their work and retain an adult advisor. Members also created bylaws and recruited a board, which is a majority youth (ages 18 to 24), to guide their efforts. Finally, they secured approval from Chalkboard Project's board to formally separate from the organization. In 2019, Oregon Student Voice officially launched as an independent nonprofit organization operating in Oregon with Chalkboard Project still providing financial oversight. The current plan is to officially separate from Chalkboard Project by 2020.

The work of Oregon Student Voice was viewed as a valuable resource in Oregon and its members were often called upon by state and district officials to provide their thoughts on education change efforts underway. Over the past three years, the students wrote over 20 opinion pieces and articles for local, state, and national newspapers, released 9 research reports and policy briefs, received over 50 media appearances, presented at over 30 local, state, and national conferences, provided over 30 youth development trainings, held one statewide rally to support their work, convened 13 focus groups with students from across Oregon, and served on three statewide government committees. Through their work, OSV changed the ways in which students were included

in local and state education decision making in Oregon. As an example, in the 2019 legislative session, the Oregon Department of Education with the support of OSV released a bill to create a statewide institutionalized system to provide students an avenue to share their thoughts on education decisions with Oregon's governor, legislature, and department of education.

Chapter Five: Creating Structure to Foster Student Participation

In the following narrative, I explore how adults and students create structures to encourage participation in the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I organize themes related to structures identified from the data, which included interviews with students and adults as well as observations of activities and document analysis of work, into the following categories: (a) power shifts and (b) shared practices. Power shifts are necessary in order to encourage authentic student participation in effort decision making. Shared practices ensure that all students understand the ways in which they can expect to participate in an effort. Throughout the chapter, I first explore Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and then compare and contrast these findings with those of Oregon Student Voice. Together, findings from the themes in Chapter Five and Six provide insights into how student voice efforts are structured and the factors that influence student participation, including differentials in power.

Power Shifts

According to the research, there are several major power shifts that need to happen in order for a student voice initiative to authentically engage students in decision making. The first shift is that adults need to re-conceptualize power, where students hold equal or inflated decision-making authority in comparison to adults (Murphy, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2014). The second shift is that all students have equal ability to share in decision making (French & Raven, 1959; Conner, 2015). Below, I explore these two shifts as well as a third shift identified from the data that students appear to have made that enabled them to better participate in the student voice team:

viewing their voice as important. Together, these three power shifts enabled students and adults to construct an initiative where students are collectively able to participate in and influence education decision making.

Shift in Adult Power Structures. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice empower students to have equal or inflated decision-making authority in comparison to their adult advisors. For the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, Sara, their adult advisor, held equal decision-making authority to the students. It is important to note that Student Voice Team members had to ask the Prichard Committee before moving forward with a policy or program; however, this did not influence their relationship with their adult advisor. For Oregon Student Voice, students hold inflated decision-making authority over their adult advisor. In both cases, the adult advisors offer guidance to students around their decision making in order to ensure that students understand all of the options, benefits, and costs. Adult advisors worked to shift their positional power, or ability to influence a situation based on their position, to help students grow their personal power, or influence in a situation (French & Raven, 1959). Ultimately, equal versus inflated decision-making authority did not appear to affect student participation in the effort.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The idea for starting a student voice initiative at Prichard Committee started with an adult, specifically Sara. Therefore, students were not initially involved in the first steps of the initiative, such as securing approval from the executive director or outside recruitment. However, Sara was intentional in ensuring that she did not design the initiative without students. After

securing approval, she immediately reached out to local high school students, through flyers and meetings with government teachers, to construct a team to partner with her in designing the initiative. For Sara, students were at the heart of the initiative and needed to be involved in every decision. In describing the design phase of the initiative, particularly the first meeting, Sara stated:

> I've always insisted from the beginning that they call me by my first name. It's been very important to me because it conveys an articulated difference from their school adult relationship. I wanted to project this idea that this is not your traditional youth and adult dynamic that we're after here. We want to model what a really egalitarian working partnership can look like. And I've never wanted to be called a mentor either for that reason because I felt like at the beginning we were after a very even partnership where our skills complement each other as they have the skills that I do not have, and vice versa.

Sara was very clear to set up a shift in the traditional adult role in the beginning as she created structures, she wanted the students to follow in order to place them on equal footing with her, such as calling her by her first name. She designed these structures in order to mitigate her positional power as an adult authority figure and to allow students to grow their personal power. She also continuously reminded the students that she was not the authority figure, or the teacher figure, and that the students were partners with her in the work. She noted that she often had to reinforce this fact and that it took the students "a little while to move past that." She viewed their skills with equal, if not, greater value to her own. She also acknowledged that she would need to teach them some skills that

they may not possess, such as professional writing and media relations, to be successful in this work.

In looking forward from the initial design phase, Sara found that her role had changed over time and she now felt like she was a colleague with the students rather than someone who was seen as an authority figure. In comparing her role when the organization first started to now, she stated:

> I was the facilitator of all the work in the beginning, but that slowly changed over time and now we are at the point where I truly, truly am a colleague with the students, to a point where I have to push back hard and advocate for my own ideas sometimes. They're really smart and they're very strong-willed, and that makes sense, and the best idea wins out every time, and I've lost a lot of arguments that way. But it's very, very collegial and it now goes beyond me, too.

It is clear that she still plays a major role in decision making; however, this role is now equal to that of the students as their ideas often win out over her own ideas for how a report, policy, or activity should be constructed and carried out.

The students who work with Sara view her role in a similar fashion. They described her as "equal to us all in leading the work," "partner in crime," "co-conspirator," and "adult liaison." In discussing her role, Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community, asserted:

> I would say that ultimately [Sara] is our adult ally. I think that it's still difficult for people to accept that this is a student-run organization. She's definitely our backbone and our connection to our parent organization, the Prichard Committee.

But, it is in the interest of the students. I think that [Sara] is instrumental in

facilitating communication with adults that otherwise would not have been

possible because we are students. I often need her to send a follow-up email. Even

though I've been saying all of this information, it doesn't seem like it's

transmitting. She sends a follow-up email. An adult voice is helpful in that sense.

While the students clearly view themselves as colleagues to Sara, they also believed that

they could not do the work without her because adults did not always respond to their

requests and students were in school for most of the working hours. Sara served in the

role of translating information that the students wanted to communicate into the adult

world, particularly during business hours. Therefore, the students relied heavily on her to

interact with some adults outside of the organization. Unfortunately, this made the power

shift of having students be completely equal to Sara challenging as they were not

handling some of the communication.

As an example of how this power shift may not be fully realized, Rebecca, a non-

White female student from an urban community, described Sara's role as follows:

[Sara] definitely is our chief of staff. It doesn't work without her, and I think it's

really important in order for student organizations to work to have teachers and

adults on the ground, to hold students accountable, but also to make sure that the

organization functions in the way it should. We couldn't do what we do if there

wasn't someone in the office every day, helping execute our vision. I'd say we're

lucky in that [Sara] gives us a fair amount of leeway, and what directions we want

to pursue. And she's always willing to have a conversation if we want to push in

another direction. And some of us try to push our luck.

While the student sees herself as a decision maker in the organization, Rebecca's statement also showed that she still may view Sara in a position of authority over the organization, particularly in reference to Sara giving them "a fair amount of leeway." Because Sara must execute the vision for the organization while students were in school and through her role as serving as the main liaison between the students and Prichard Committee, she may always hold some amount of authority over the students. However, due to her commitment to striving to ensure that students were leading decision making for the initiative, Sara was able to shift her positional power and the traditional power structure a majority of the time to ensure students held equal decision-making authority. This commitment appears to have encouraged increased student participation rather than discouraged participation as every student interviewed views Sara as a key ally and mentor in their efforts to influence education decision making in Kentucky.

Oregon Student Voice. The idea for creating a student voice group at Chalkboard Project started with a high school student. Therefore, students had always been at the center of decision making for Oregon Student Voice. However, they did receive a lot of support from Karen, an adult who works in communications at Chalkboard Project, Samantha (me), their former adult advisor, and several other individuals to help them navigate their work. When the student approached Chalkboard Project, she specifically asked that the student group be student-led as she was nervous about tokenization and manipulation, which she had experienced in her past work. Having been previously exposed to the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, Karen held no hesitations

about this arrangement and also convinced the president of Chalkboard Project that a student-led group was essential for supporting authentic student voice. In recounting the initial interaction with the student, Karen described:

> Our vision was that students self-create their pathway forward. It was not to just leave them alone and let them figure it out, it was to come alongside and help where they needed that help, and help them with the guidance, help them with organizational structure, things that they have not been exposed to. That's where [Chalkboard] play[s] a key role.

This mutual held understanding between the high school student and Karen that students would lead decision making in Oregon Student Voice laid the groundwork for the power shift within the organization that gave youth a majority of authority over decision making. When Karen hired me to help guide the organization in development, she asserted that my role would be to provide support and the students would be making the decisions. Additionally, the high school student recruited four other students from the Greater Portland area who also all aligned with this ideal. In sharing her experience with founding OSV, Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, explained:

> There's a power dynamic where the adult is the one that has all the power and all of the ability to make decisions about your life. And then you're the student, so you feel like you are kind of in a vulnerable position…We wanted to create space where we could lead decision making.

This belief was held by all of the students participating in the design and, therefore, the first several meetings revolved around creating structures to ensure students remained in

charge of decision making. These structures included: (a) specifying that the adult advisor can only provide guidance around decisions, (b) creating student decision making protocols where all students held equal authority over decisions, and (c) clarifying the group's relationship with Chalkboard Project. Each of these structures were meant to ensure that adults engaged with the effort, including me, shifted their positional power to allow students to gain personal power and lead the organization. These structures helped students feel secure in the fact that they would be making all of the decisions for the organization with support from adults.

During this initial design phase, I served in the role of the adult advisor and supported the students in making their decisions. I provided guidance during decision making around options they could consider and helped facilitate discussions around positive and negative outcomes. Similar to Sara from the Prichard Committee, I hold the belief that students have greater understanding then I do over what they need but need help in developing skills to execute their vision, such as analytical thinking and communications. In honoring the members' commitment to student-led decision making, I strove to only provide support or guidance when asked. I also supported the students in executing every decision that was made even when I did not agree. Much like Rachel, I played a larger role in guiding decision making during the design phase than I did later on in the organization. In looking back on how the adult advisor role has changed in the organization, Delaine, a White female student from an urban community, explained:

>   I think it's changed throughout the year and a half. I think coming in, [Samantha]
>   definitely had a larger role in directing us. I think we didn't really know what we

wanted and we didn't know where we were going as an organization. I think as we've developed, it's turned into more support and a resource. If we have questions, we can go to [Samantha] and keeping us organized and tying together everything.

As Delaine describes, as the organization grew, the members needed less and less support from the adult advisor in decision making and started to view the role as more of a resource for when students needed help.

Students continuously described the adult advisor role as "a faculty advisor," "resource for support," "cheer leader," and "secretary." They also noted that the advisor executed many of the decisions made while members are in school and served as a point of contact for the Chalkboard Project. Ultimately, they saw the advisor as a necessary and valuable resource for the organization as the person filling the role provided experience; however, the members all viewed student authority of decision making as central to the organization. They felt a deep sense of personal power over decisions. This commitment to student-led decision making appears to have increased student participation in the organization as every student interviewed attributed it to a reason for remaining committed to the effort.

Since Oregon Student Voice started with students leading decision making, the shift away from traditional adult-student roles in decision making took place rather quickly. Unlike with the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, there was never a question of if OSV's adult advisor was an authority figure as every member was aware that the advisor held no power in decision making. OSV members turned to the advisor

for guidance, but largely made decisions based on their own understanding and visions. Because SVT's adult advisor held equal power in decision making, it may have taken more time for the organization to overturn traditional adult-student roles as students became more comfortable with seeing Sara as their equal. It is important to note that in both organizations, the adult advisor played a major role in executing the decisions of the members and, therefore, the members must rely on and trust the advisor to uphold their vision. Because of this role, the adult advisors must continuously work to shift their positional power to give students personal power. So far, members of both organizations have not reported that the advisor has gone against the members' decisions. I imagine that if the advisor did go against the members' decisions, it would cause a rift in the organization and mistrust in the advisor, which could decrease student participation in the effort and how they view their role.

Shift in Student Power Structures. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice created structures to ensure that all students have equal ability to share in decision making. Both organizations fostered a safe environment for everyone and created low barriers of entry to participate. They also offered multiple ways in which to engage in organization activities and decision making. However, both organizations consisted mostly of students that come from backgrounds that traditionally hold power in society, which is White, middle class or wealthy, able bodied, and high achiever (French & Raven, 1959; Conner, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2015). It is unclear if and how a student's background influences their participation in effort decision making and activities.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team strove to be inclusive of students from across Kentucky, and welcomed input from any student who joins the organization. Their goal was to make sure that all members have equal ability to share in decision making regardless of their perspectives, feelings, race, ethnicity, geographic location, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, affiliation, ideology, religious beliefs, and background. They ensured that any student can participate by having a low-barrier to entry, a student simply had to fill out a form on their website to participate in activities, and by conducting a majority of their communication and activities over Zoom, a virtual video conferencing platform, Slack, an online messaging platform, and Google Drive, an online workplace management platform. Each of these activities could take place over a computer, cell phone, or another electronic device. Students still needed to have opportunities to learn about the organization and acquire an Internet or data connection to join; however, once in the organization, all members had an opportunity to participate in decision making. Members reported that a majority of students have access to some form of electronic device to join but it could be challenging to reach students in rural areas due to lack of internet or data.

While all members have the opportunity to participate in decision making for the Student Voice Team, members noted that access to the organization can limit who is sitting at the table. Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> If you come from a family of wealth or come from a family of privilege, and
> especially if that means that you don't have a part-time job, you're going to be

able to participate more readily in the organization and be able to have more time

to devote to the organization and, therefore, you'll be able to take on leadership

opportunities faster within the organization. If you're in central Kentucky, if you

have a car, if you can drive, you'll be able to take part in more events. You'll be

able to do more things. If your parents agree with the mission, if your parents

have the ability to drive you somewhere, you're going to get more leniency from

them, and you'll be able to participate more. If you're at a school that has a strong

speech and debate team or a school that has a strong Kentucky Youth Association

or some other type of incubating organization that we rely on for skill

development, you're going to have an easier time transitioning to the work

Student Voice Team does and there'll be lower barriers of entry for you there.

Eric clearly outlined the many barriers students face when striving to participate in the

organization. According to members, each of these barriers presented a new roadblock

for students, which resulted in many of the members sitting at the table to be high

achieving,[6] extroverted White students from urban communities in central Kentucky.

Therefore, while the members value the ideal that all members hold equal ability to share

in decision making, ultimately, many of the members sitting at the table hold a

background, which is White, middle class or wealthy, identify as a high achiever, or from

an urban community, where individuals typically hold power in situations (French &

Raven, 1959; Conner, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2015). It is unclear how members that

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[6] I define high achieving a student who is in mostly Advanced Placement or Honors
courses and plans on attending a four-year college or university.

did not hold these characteristics felt included in decision making or participated in effort activities.

During member checking, Eric expanded on his statement to include how the Student Voice Team strives to address the barriers discussed to help students participate. Eric shared:

> First, we adopted the mindset that our number one priority must be to represent the views and perspectives of students who are not present in our ranks. We achieved this goal by visiting schools and hosting roundtable discussions that involved hundreds of students from every corner of the state. We took this responsibility seriously because we well knew how one voice could change the entire debate. Second, we identified internal levers we could pull to make our team as accessible as possible despite the barriers we identified. We hold monthly digital meetings as an alternative to our in person meetings for students who can only make one; we offer food at our in person general meetings for students to enjoy a hot dinner; we request compensation from large non-profits for our students who are invites for speaking opportunities; we have written multiple grants for "equity fellows" that would allow high school students to be compensated for their work; we recruit teachers to help support students in more remote schools engage meaningfully in our work; we adopted a leadership structure that abandons traditional notions of leadership in favor of a flattened, more collaboration-based ethic; and we tackle issues that highlight the inequities pervading our education system. Ultimately, our student leadership team, which

includes multiple students of color, LGBTQ students, and women, will never stop

pursuing as dynamic and diverse a team as possible when it comes to approaching

this work.

Each of these strategies reaffirmed SVT's commitment that all students have equal ability

to share in decision making and organizational activities. Although these strategies exist

and SVT is continuously striving to lower barriers for students to participate, it is still

unclear how members who are outside the background of that held by a majority of SVT

members feel included in decision making or participate in effort activities.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice worked to be inclusive of students

from across Oregon regardless of their background. They created decision making

structures that allowed any student that joined the organization to have equal ability to

participate in decision making. Using the same tactics as SVT, OSV had a low barrier to

entry as a student could join on the website, and they conducted a majority of their

communications and activities over Zoom, Slack, and Google Drive. However, students

still needed to hear about the organization and to access an Internet or data connection to

join. Similar to the Student Voice Team, members noted that a majority of students had

an electronic device, but internet and data connections may not always be available.

Once in the organization, everyone had equal ability to participate in decision

making as all decisions were made using a debate and vote format. During a meeting, the

members all discussed the options available and took a vote, sometimes by hand and

sometimes using an online survey tool, such as Google Forms. Members that did not

attend the meeting could vote after by communicating with student leaders or taking the

online survey. Student leaders, along with the adult advisor, then executed these decisions.

To further help all students feel comfortable in the environment and overturn traditional social power structures, Oregon Student Voice made an effort to start each meeting recognizing their mission statement and statement on equity. This equity statement read:

We are committed to making meaningful progress toward equity and justice in Oregon's K-12 education system. There are barriers and inequities systemically embedded in our schools that prevent students from having equal opportunities and access to achieve their full potential. We believe each individual has value and we actively try to understand, include, and empower all students regardless of their unique perspectives, feelings, race, ethnicity, geographic location, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, affiliation, ideology, religious beliefs, and background (Oregon Student Voice, 2017).

Each student was also introduced to this equity statement when they joined the organization by the recruitment coordinator and members received training on how to center equity in their work and decisions.[7] While observing meetings, I witnessed members say or do some things that did not align with the equity statement and fellow member interrupted the behavior in the moment by reminding the group of their commitment to upholding it for one another. These institutionalized practices were

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[7] As of December 2018, Oregon Student Voice members had received five different trainings specifically on equity and inclusion, while four other trainings touched on the subject.

different from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, as they did not have a clear

and specified equity practices.

Oregon Student Voice members were aware that the organization was not

representative of all students in Oregon. Delaine, a white female student from an urban

community, explained:

> We are trying to figure out how to best recruit rural students. I think that's an issue
>
> that we keep running into. We also don't do a very good job of making OSV
>
> accessible for students with disabilities or including them in our programs or
>
> recruiting them. We haven't yet figured out a solution to either of these.

Delaine echoed the sentiments of many students interviewed who felt like the

organization could do a better job recruiting rural students, students of color, and students

with disabilities. While they strove to eliminate barriers to entry, much like the Prichard

Committee, OSV did not have clear and targeted method to recruit students holding these

backgrounds. A majority of the members in OSV were White, middle class or wealthy,

identify as a high achiever, or live in an urban community. Members that were non-White

hold equal decision-making power and oftentimes inflated authority to execute decision

as most of OSV's board and student leaders identify as non-White. In reflecting about his

experiences, Evan, a non-White male student from a suburban community, shared:

> As a person of color and more specifically a student of color, I find myself
>
> growing up in two main spheres that of my cultural heritage and that of
>
> "mainstream" American culture. One of the greatest minority struggles is
>
> maintaining my cultural heritage while navigating a world that doesn't quite

understand it. I have to decide whether I am outspoken or quiet, and often have

chosen the latter.

Diving more deeply into Evan's sentiments, non-White members voiced that it may take

a little bit more time for them to share their thoughts in environments that were a majority

White as they were not sure their ideas would be respected or heard. These students

reported that building a strong sense of community helped them feel more comfortable in

these types of environments. Members also recruited their friends to join, which

contributed to them feeling more comfortable speaking up and participating in activities.

Expanding on these sentiments, James, a non-White male from an urban community,

discussed why he feels comfortable to participate in OSV activities:

> I feel more comfortable in OSV than in other environments because we are the
>
> ones in charge, the absence of a rigid authoritative figure that can be very
>
> disengaging, and everyone has an equal voice. It's is different from other
>
> environments…I can be myself and everyone accepts me. We just roll off one
>
> another and laugh during meetings. We have a rhythm…it makes it easy for us.

While OSV had created institutionalized structures to shift the traditional power structure

and foster an inclusive community, the lack of clear structures to recruit students from

diverse backgrounds lead to an environment that was fairly homogeneous. It is not clear

if or how students from different backgrounds participate in effort activities and decision

making.

Both Oregon Student Voice and Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team create

many pathways to build an inclusive community and increase student involvement.

However, they may not do enough to create pathways to diversify student involvement. Therefore, it is not clear if all students are able to participate in decision making. Further, these student voice efforts want to be representative of all students from their state; however, they may not be success due to the lack of diverse student involvement. Based on the above analysis, I would posit that because a majority of students participating in these organizations are White, middle class or wealthy, from an urban community, and/or high achievers, there may be an environment where individuals that do not hold at least one of these backgrounds do not feel able to participate. Both organizations worked to ensure that everyone could participate; however, they did not specifically recruit and work to retain students from diverse background. As shown in the shared practices section, it may be imperative that these organizations shift their structures for recruiting student participants as they attract a very specific demographic of students to the work.

Shift in Student Thinking on Their Voice. Students who joined Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice often must challenge their own understanding of the power of their voice. Many students entered the organizations without holding a strong belief that they could change education decision making as they had not been empowered to use their voice in their classrooms or schools. However, once in the organizations, they began to shift their thinking and saw themselves as agents of change in education. By providing space for members to explore their identities, SVT and OSV enabled students to become more confident to use their voice. They learned to confront the status quo of students as passive actors in the K-12 education system and to see themselves as important stakeholders.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Many students joined the Student Voice Team without a clear understanding of the concept of student voice. They each noted that it did not come naturally for students to believe that they could have a say in education policy. George, a White male student from a suburban community, summarized this belief as follows:

> We were all coming into it on the same level. What is this student voice thing? Because for all of us it was a really radical idea to be, hey, students have a say in education policy. The first year was really figuring out what that meant to all of us.

Members had to shift their own thinking about the power of their voice and consider themselves agents of change that could influence policy. This shift in thinking came from reconceptualizing how they viewed themselves as students and their role in shaping their education. Eric, a non-White male from an urban community, stated:

> [The concept of student voice] resonated with us because we knew instinctually that there was something kind of weird about the fact that we were spending 40 hours a week in a classroom, but really had no idea how decisions about what happened in that classroom were made and also no one is ever asking us what was working and wasn't working in that classroom. We knew instinctually that this made no sense.

By shifting their thinking around their role in education, members began to see themselves as powerful change agents worthy of being listened to and heard in education decision making. This power shift resulted in members feeling more confident in using

their voice to make change. The shift was able to occur because they were provided an open space to examine their voice, their role in education, and how they could lead and make change as students.

    Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members recognized the shift in their understanding around the power of their voice. James, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> [Oregon Student Voice] really broadened my view and like I can actually like do stuff…it's broadened my view of like my power as a student and my power as a person and a person with a voice.

In discussing their experience, members all shared James' transition in thinking. However, a majority of the students interviewed also focused not on their own comprehension, but on how they hoped to shift the ways in which all students think about their role in education decision making. Members wanted to create a space where all students were given the opportunity to grow their understanding of their power. Amanda, a non-White female student from a suburban community, reflected on the importance of student voice and why she decided to get more involved in OSV:

> Not everyone has a say in their education…I wanted to change that perception and get involved. Show people that regardless of whatever you believe in or what you represent, that there's a place for you and you can have a voice…something I'm really passionate about is just expanding our voices.

Amanda, working alongside fellow Oregon Student Voice members, created institutionalized structures to support members in shifting their thinking. They designed

and launched monthly youth development trainings and dedicated time in every meeting for students to talk about issues they hoped to change in their school. The youth development trainings were focused on teaching students how to use their voice to change the ways in which their schools and communities include students in decision making. The discussions during meetings provided students with an opportunity to share their thoughts and dive into a deep discussion about how were going to take active steps to change their school. In describing these trainings and discussions, Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, stated:

> OSV is filling a gap that was really an issue in our state. And I'm really glad that we have the opportunity to step up and give students who are not necessarily given opportunities in their schools a chance to develop skills. And honestly, skills that you can develop in [OSV] are not available in other places.

By developing structures to support students in shifting their voice, Oregon Student Voice members not only saw themselves as powerful change agents in education decision making but helped others in becoming more confident with their voice as well.

Both the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members strove to shift the thinking in how they see their role in education decision making and how students in general view their power. The Student Voice Team helped instigate the process of students changing their thinking in education decision making by being one of the first youth-adult partnership statewide organizations in the United States. I believe that their growth in Kentucky as a powerful player in education contributed to OSV members feeling that they could have a strong voice in education decision making

and, therefore, OSV focused more on designing institutionalized structures to ensure that all students experience this shift. These structures ensured that all members within the organization, and oftentimes students outside the organization, could see themselves as powerful change agents in the K-12 education system.

Shared Practices

Student voice efforts need basic structures and practices that lay out roles and expectations for participating adults and students (Mitra, 2014). These structures and practices must promote openness and trust between students and adults. They must also foster an inclusive and authentic environment where all students feel capable of participating (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Conner, 2015).

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice established several broad structures when initiating their work. They both decided that any middle or high school student could become a member by filling out an online form or contacting a participating student. They also decided that meetings would be open to everyone and would be conducted virtually and in-person to ensure that no one was limited from participating due to their location. Finally, there were clear practices for decision making. While the Student Voice Team agreed to shared decision making authority where members and the adult advisor could equally participate in decision making, Oregon Student Voice only allowed members to participate in decision making with the adult advisor helping them to think through their choices. These broad structures and practices were made during the first years that Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice started, and still remained in place when this study concluded.

Some more specific structures and practices were also established as the organizations grew and needed to create clearer ways for students to participate. These included: (a) established meeting structures, (b) virtual and in-person meetings, (c) virtual work practices, (d) time commitment, (e) a recruitment pipeline, (f) a leadership team, and (g) clear decision-making structures. Each of these new structures increased student participation in the organizations in some areas, but also decreased student participation in other aspects.

Established Meeting Structures. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both had established meeting structures that allowed space for students to participate in organizational planning and decision making. They both had one concrete monthly meeting date and time where all members strove to attend. They then had flexible program-specific meetings dates and times where members could choose whether to attend depending on their interest in planning and executing activities. These predictable meeting structures allowed students to understand how and when they could engage in the work of the organizations.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. During the design phase, the Student Voice Team met roughly once a week to participate in planning and establish the original structure. However, as the Student Voice Team grew, they realized that they needed a space for more students to participate who could not attend a weekly meeting due to other commitments. Therefore, they created a monthly general meeting structure where all students from the team could commit to attend. The students also realized that they needed to create an established meeting structure in order to encourage students to

prepare for the meeting ahead of time, to keep the flow of the meeting moving forward, and to enable more students to participate. In discussing the meeting structure, Kim, a White female student from a rural community, stated:

> Our meetings are extremely structured. There's always an agenda that is given to you in advance, we know what we're going to be talking about and the time that we're going to be talking about it. How long each topic gets.

In creating an agenda, the students provided time for discussion about education concerns that other students were facing in their schools. This provided a space for students to digest what was happening in their schools and to bring it to the attention of the entire group. In reflecting on her time in the general meetings, Rebecca, a non-White female student from an urban community, asserted:

> Now there's structures. Now we figured it out, like we've got a flow going, which I really enjoy. General meetings are so open and you can come in and talk about any issues, like, 'Oh, I don't like this teacher, because they teach this.' Say, 'Oh my teacher didn't even address the election in their classroom,' something that is conversational, is cafeteria talk. You could easily be translated into it.

Because topics for discussion were so broad, students that were new could easily jump in and share their experience. Students believed that this created an open and authentic environment that empowered anyone to join in and feel included.

In observing a monthly general meeting, I found it to be structured and fast moving. Sara led the meeting, while different students participated in leading segments as they were called upon. The students leading segments were the leaders of those

initiatives. The meeting opened with student introducing themselves, which included their name, school, and grade. They then participated in a discussion that revolved around discrimination against Black and LGBTQ+ students in schools. The discussion topic came up organically as Sara asked the entire group if they had anything they would want to talk about tonight and one student shared her experience, which ignited the discussion. After about 20 minutes, Sara ended the discussion and moved the students on to other activities, which included providing updates on initiative activities and then a breakout session where students met in their initiative teams to discuss their work. The meeting adjourned after an hour and a half; however, many of the students stayed around to chat with one another.

Outside of the monthly general meetings, students met with their initiative teams, as needed, to keep the work moving forward. A majority of these meetings occurred over Zoom or in-person at coffeeshops. There initiative team meetings were less structured and provided an opportunity for members to further engage in the work of the group. These meetings were led by the initiative team leaders and were sometimes attended by Sara depending on the topic of the meeting and a need for her presence.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice had an established monthly meeting schedule and flexible schedules for program team meetings. The monthly meetings were held on the first Wednesday of every month with an option for members to attend in person or virtually. OSV asked all members to commit to attend these monthly meetings in order to stay updated on activities and engaged in the group. Members were given an agenda developed by the leadership team several days before the

meeting to allow time for members to prepare. The agenda included (a) a list of items to complete before the meeting, which ranged from readings to taking a poll, (b) references to the mission and equity statements of OSV, and (c) a detailed breakdown of the activities that would be covered during the meeting, which included updates on program activities and discussions. The agenda changed each month depending on the organization's current needs for discussion and decision making. For each decision, there was a discussion and time to vote.[8] For example, during legislative session, a majority of the meetings focused on discussing bills and then deciding whether OSV's wanted to support, stay neutral, or come out against a bill.

Unlike the Student Voice Team, a student leader led each Oregon Student Voice monthly meeting. The student leader started each meeting by discussing the mission and equity statement to remind the members why they joined the organization and their commitments to one another. The leader then asked everyone to share their name, school, preferred pronouns, and answer an ice breaker question. The rest of the meeting was dedicated to the topics covered on the agenda, which had prescribed time limitations to ensure the members were able to cover all of the information. In observing several monthly meetings, I found that students did not always stick to the agenda time constraints and would often focus on one topic for longer if members were having a deep discussion about the topic.

For example, in spring 2018, I observed a meeting where members were deciding whether to part from Chalkboard Project and become an independent nonprofit

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[8] I will discuss Oregon Student Voice's decision-making structures later in this section.

organization. This discussion was slated to take 30-minutes and at the 30-minute mark

the student leading the meeting asked if they wanted to have more time to discussion. The

members asked for more time and the leader shifted the remaining items to be discussed

electronically over Slack instead of during the meeting. This flexibility allowed all

members to share their thoughts on the issue at hand and not feel pressured for time. It

enabled an in-depth conversation that all members in attendance felt comfortable

contributing to as it allowed time for everyone to collect their ideas and share. In

discussing why flexibility during meetings is important, James, a non-White student from

an urban community, stated:

> It was like created by students for students….so it really runs smooth because like
>
> for meetings it's easier because we adjust meetings for students to get involved
>
> and state their opinion. Whereas if it was a student a part of an organization that
>
> was run by adults, they would not make that adjustment.

James was noting how meetings were continuously adjusted to ensure that students had

the space to contribute and how this space was not normally allowed in adult contexts.

Beyond extending the amount of time discussions take, the student leader also regularly

asked students to take 30-second breaks during discussions to allow other students that

may not have shared their thoughts yet to have space. This space empowered members

who need more time to collect their thoughts and share an opportunity to get involved

without feeling like they were interrupting. OSV believed that these flexible practices

during meetings allowed everyone to feel included and comfortable to participate.

Outside of the monthly meetings, students met with their program teams at least

twice a month to work on specific activities to move the organization forward. OSV had three member-led programs, (a) Amplify, (b) Empower, and (c) Thrive, in which students could choose to participate in the planning and execution of activities. As monthly meetings were mostly a time for large group discussion and decision making, the program meetings were where a majority of OSV's work was completed. The date and time for these meetings were mutually decided by the members who wanted to participate in the program activities. These dates and times were typically kept until it no longer worked for a student to attend, and then the students worked together to find a new date and time. Almost all of these meetings occurred over Zoom. These meetings were led by a student leader in charge of the program and were typically less structured. Program meetings offered a space for students to not only engage more deeply in the work of OSV, but also develop stronger relationships with one another. These meetings were sometimes attended by the adult advisor depending on requested need by the student leader.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both had established meeting structures. However, differences arise in the monthly meeting structures because Oregon Student Voice meetings were designed and led by students. Sara, SVT's adult advisor, led their monthly meetings and kept them on a specific timeline, while OSV student leaders allowed for more flexibility. This flexibility may create more space for members to engage in discussions and decision making. Conversely, SVT meetings allowed more time for members to engage in discussions about activities happening in their individual school environments, while OSV meetings

were focused on organizational planning and decision making. OSV's focus on the organization may have exclude new members from participating as they might feel like they do not have all of background to participate in organizational planning and decision making. It may be important for both organizations to learn from one another to ensure that all students feel that they can participate in monthly meeting discussions and decision making. Both organizations may address these issues by ensuring that program-specific meetings occur outside the monthly meetings to allow for more students to participate.

Virtual and In-Person Meetings. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice allowed members to participate in meetings through virtual and in-person options. By providing a virtual option for participation, the organizations were able to reach more students across the state and locally who may not have the means or time to travel to an in-person meeting. Both organizations used Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform that allowed for video and telephone participation, for meetings. Virtual participation lowered the barrier for participation in activities and provided more opportunities for students to engage.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In the beginning, the Student Voice Team used to conduct the monthly general meetings virtually and in-person at the same time. In-person meetings took place in Lexington and those outside the Lexington Metro joined virtually. However, they quickly learned that this made it difficult for the virtual participants to get involved because it was difficult to assert themselves into the conversation. Therefore, they made the decision to separate the in-person and virtual

monthly general meetings into two separate days. The in-person meeting occurred on a Wednesday, while the virtual meeting occurred the following day. In discussing her experience with virtual meeting, Jane, a White female student from a rural community stated:

> After members of the Student Voice Team came to my school, it was so much easier for me to say, 'Okay. Yeah. I'll just block out a certain amount of my time during the month, I can join via videoconference to your meetings and participate this way.' And so, their willingness to be flexible with me was really helpful.

Virtual meetings provided a way for students that were not in the Lexington area to become engaged with the work. However, they also required a great deal more effort from the students that only participate virtually to become involved in the organization. If students were participating virtually, they must be more assertive in voicing their desire for which activities they wanted to participate. During in-person meetings, students were able to just raise their hands when they wanted to help, but virtual meetings did not lend to the same platform. In recanting her experience with virtual meetings, Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community who participates in-person and virtually depending on her schedule, stated:

> I think that a lot of times what I've noticed is that it's really difficult for people who aren't in Lexington to become really integral parts of [the team]. It's really difficult to over a virtual meeting include yourself and assert yourself. I can attest to that. I hate virtual meetings. They're some of the worst things. I would much rather be in a meeting in person.

While Lindsey shared only her experience, the Student Voice Team did have very few members that regularly participated in meetings outside of the Lexington area. Further, these members were seldom involved in the leadership team or activities of the organization. While the virtual meeting structure did allow for more students to participate, it did not appear that many students were actively taking this opportunity. Many of the monthly virtual meetings were attended by students that live in the Lexington areas, but could not make the Wednesday meeting due to a conflict of schedule.

During member checking, Lindsey followed up on her comment and shared that in Spring 2018, the Student Voice Team changed the structures of their virtual meetings. She stated:

> I still think it's difficult for us to connect with individuals outside of central Kentucky, but soon after you interviewed me, we completely revitalized our virtual meetings. I think it's unfair to say I hate them, in fact, I now prefer them. We have incorporated breakout rooms and tried to facilitate one on one conversations within the context of the virtual meeting to have the same feeling as that of those in-person. We've also modified our agendas to enable a maximum amount of time for participation from those on the meeting. Previously, it was run similarly to a presentation or in-person meeting with an agenda lacking discussion, but now it is catered in the moment specifically to those on the call.

While these changes were outside the data collection time period of my study for the Student Voice Team, they were important to share as they changed the perceptions

Lindsey, and potentially other members, had of virtual meetings.

 Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice allowed students to join monthly meetings in-person or virtually. In-person meetings originally only took place in Portland, while those located outside of the Portland Metro joined virtually. Similar to the experiences of the Student Voice Team, OSV members quickly found that it was differently for virtual participates to get involved and assert themselves during conversations. The first step OSV members took to address this issue was to develop a guide to provide tips for new members who may not be used to participating in virtual and in-person meetings. Some tips in the guide included: (a) knowing that you are on video, (b) speaking up when sharing, (c) recognizing where the microphone is, (d) muting yourself when not speaking, and (e) being aware of how much you are talking. This guide was included on the agenda before every monthly meeting and members were reminded to review it. In addition to this guide, members also decided to regularly pause discussions to allow virtual participants an opportunity to share their opinions and get involved. In recounting his experience as a virtual participant, Ryan, a White male student from an urban community who often participated virtually due to a lack of transportation, stated:

> From the perspective of someone who is not physically there, [it is] kind of
> isolated. It's harder…to have, I want to say, buy in and commitment. What made
> it easy is the people who are meeting in person would constantly ask, 'On the
> screen, do you have any opinions?'

Ryan's feelings were shared by many virtual participants who often felt disconnected from the community and unable to fully participate in activities. Unfortunately, the changes OSV made did not completely dissipate these feelings.

After a year of this structure, Oregon Student Voice decided to switch to a regional meeting center model to help non-Portland Metro based members to feel more connected to the organization. Regional meeting centers were a physical space, located in a school or community center, equipped with video conferencing capabilities where members met to join OSV for monthly meetings. OSV also found a supporting adult, who lives in the community, to facilitate the meeting space and communication with OSV's adult advisor and student leaders. For monthly meetings, the supporting adult set up the video conference equipment in the space and OSV members then congregated around the video camera to join the virtual meeting in-person from their center. All centers virtually participate in the meeting alongside members who were unable to attend the meeting in-person at a center.

Members decided to open meetings centers in locations where they had five or more student participates. They launched their first two meeting centers in Portland and Salem in 2017. They launched a third meeting center in Reedsport in 2018. Figure 3 provides a map of where the meeting centers are located.

Figure 3: Map of Oregon Student Voice Regional Meeting Centers
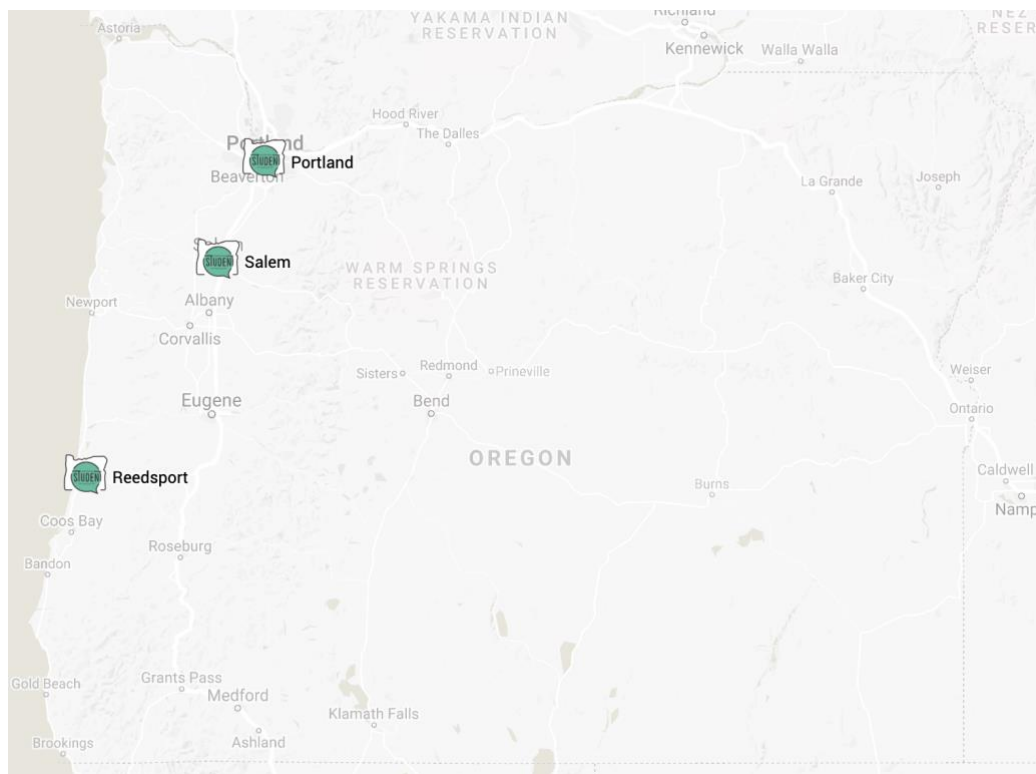
Since the opening of the Salem and Reedsport meeting centers, membership

increased in both of these regions from five to over ten as members brought friends to

join. Further, these centers increased the members' connection to the organization as they

felt more involved and focused on the work. Evan, a non-White student from a suburban

community, shared his experience with participating from one of the meeting centers:

> Sense of community is the most important thing that activism can breed because it
>
> already feels like you're going against the grain in terms of the work you do.
>
> When you have real-life human interactions and a designated, organized time to
>
> focus on the work, it gets you in the mental state to be able to think your best and
>
> dedicate 100-percent of your brain space.

While Oregon Student Voice was still experimenting with this model, the meeting centers offered students an opportunity to engage with one another virtually from around the state, while also enabling them to build a sense of community connected to the work in their local region.

OSV found that in-person and virtual program-specific meetings held similar problems for engagement as monthly meetings. Beth, a White female student from a rural community, found that program meetings were really difficult for her to participate in when they occurred in-person and virtually:

> Even though we have Zoom set up and stuff, sometimes there's technical difficulties or even if most people are in Portland and you're trying to set something up, if they're all like, 'Oh, let's just meet in a coffee shop' and you're like, 'Wait, what about me? I'm on my computer.'

Beth, similar to many members not based in Portland, often felt excluded from these meetings. Because the dates and times for these meetings tended to change fairly often, OSV decided that it was too challenging to ask a supporting adult to be available for these meetings. Therefore, the organization shifted all of these meetings to be virtual so that everyone was participating in the same way. By switching to this format, members felt as though they were equally able to participate and more freely engage in discussions and activities.

Oregon Student Voice's structure addressed many of the limitations of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's structure in regard to increasing participation outside of the metropolitan area in which the organization was based. By providing in-person

opportunities throughout the state, Oregon Student Voice helped members feel more comfortable with virtual meetings because they were participating as a group. Members were building a sense of community at the local and state level, which limited their isolation and contributed to their desire to continue engaging in the work. Ultimately, the Student Voice Team may need to consider different methods if they want to ensure that all students are able to participate from across the state.

Virtual Work Practices. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice used Google Drive and Slack, an online communication platform, to collaboratively complete work. Through Google Drive, work can be easily organized into different folders and shared across multiple platforms, such as email and Slack, with members. Google Drive provides members with the ability to share and edit documents collectively to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to participate in planning and executing activities. Slack operates similar to a messaging platform, like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, or GroupMe, which many students already used for school and social purposes. Slack is an application that students could download on their computer and/or phone and message with one another in larger groups through channels or individually through private messages.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Outside of the monthly and initiative team meetings, the Student Voice Team conducted much of their work over Google Drive and communicated through Slack. Every document of the organization, past and present, lived in their shared Google Drive folder. The main folder included subfolders, which were named according to their purpose. Examples of folder topics included: (a)

communications, (b) College Tripwires, (c) school culture, (d) membership, and (e) leadership and organizing materials. Students collaboratively worked on documents in order to complete their activities. Examples of collaborative working documents were (a) policy briefs, (b) reports, (c) interview protocols for research, (d) grants, (e) presentations, and (f) opinion pieces. It was normal for four to five students to be writing and editing in the same document at the same time. Students constantly worked on different documents at different points depending on the next due date, which was typically established by the leadership team or a commitment the group made. These virtual work practices enabled students to participate in activities based on their schedules and created more opportunities for engagement as all documents were shared with every member. Students were never excluded from sharing their opinion on any document.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice also used Google Drive to collaborate on all of their work and communicates through Slack. There were no differences in how OSV and SVT use Google Drive and Slack to complete their work. However, OSV members did offer insights into why they prefer Slack for virtual communications. In discussing practices that made it easy for her to participate in the organization, Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, shared:

> I like the fact that we use Slack because that makes it a lot easier than doing the whole email thing…it's a youth run thing…it just makes communication easier I feel like, because there's no disconnect. It feels like everyone's kind of on the same level and it's easy to work with others and talk with others.

Cayla found that Slack made it easier for students to communicate because it was a

platform that was more familiar to them than email. Middle and high school students did not regularly use email, so they did not regularly check this platform. However, they were used to checking applications. Therefore, Slack provided a more user-friendly experience for members than communication over email.

Time Commitment. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice had open membership without time commitment requirements, which enabled members to be as involved as they wanted to be with the organization. However, for both organizations, members that were actively involved in activities were spending between five to fifteen hours per week completing the work depending on deadlines and activities. This is a large time commitment for middle and high schoolers, who must also balance school, family, and other extracurricular activities. This time commitment may limit participation among students.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. From the beginning of the Student Voice Team, dedicated members took on most of the work, spending a majority of their time outside of school on organizational activities. Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, described his experience as follows:

> It really did take up a lot of time. I remember when I was at my senior year of high school, I was probably spending 30 to 40 hours a week doing Student Voice Team stuff. That's obviously weekends included and late into the night since that was the time that we would meet, but it really did take up a lot of time. That was really hard to devote when I was doing things like applying to college and being a high school senior.

Eric was a leader within the organization during a time when the team was getting their footing and, therefore, had more responsibilities than most members. The 30 to 40 hours a week was not a common practice among the organization's members. However, in talking with other dedicated members who were deeply involved in activities, it did take a great deal of time that could be taxing on their other commitments. Most members of the leadership team spend between 15 and 20 hours a week completing SVT work, while other dedicated members spend between five to ten hours a week. According to one member, Greg, a White male from a rural community, about 20-percent of the SVT members were completing 80-percent of the work at any given time.

In discussing her experience, Kim, a White female student from a rural community who was not a member of the leadership team, stated:

> I find myself spending eight hours on a transcription, and I was like this is taking so much of my time. So that can make it feel really challenging sometimes, because you're like oh my goodness, this is so much work. Then also I guess it's like…it can be challenging to want to…it's a weird balance of you want to give your time to it, but also looking at some of my friends who are in it, this is their entire life. This is their world, and I was still doing a lot of other things too. So, I would feel like I wasn't doing enough.

Even after contributing eight hours to the Student Voice Team work, Kim felt like she was not doing enough to help move the work forward. This sentiment shows how dedicated many of the students are to ensure the organization is successful and making a positive influence in Kentucky. However, it also shows how taxing the time commitment

can be on the students who really want to be deeply involved in the work, but also have other commitments to uphold. For students that do not have this amount of free time, due to school or other outside commitments, it may be challenging for them to become deeply involved because of the high time commitment.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members also noted the high amount of time that leaders and active members committed to the organization. However, time commitments appeared to be lower for OSV members than Student Voice Team members. According to volunteer hours tracked by OSV members, leaders spend roughly five to ten hours per week completing work, while active members spend about three to six hours per week. Based on observing both organizations' activities, it is not clear why OSV members report lower number of hours as they preform similar amounts of work. It may be because OSV began to track some volunteer hours to capture them on their 501(c)(3) application to the Internal Revenue Service, while Student Voice Team members do not actively track hours and are making an educated guess on how much time they spend. It also could be because more OSV members are engaged in the work at a given time than SVT members, as noted in the next paragraph.

The amount of time Oregon Student Voice members spend varies each week based on activities and deadlines. For example, if members were releasing a report soon or preparing to advocate for a bill, then the amount of time increased leading up to the activity. Higher than the Student Voice Team, roughly 40-percent of OSV members complete 60-percent of the work at a given time. This higher percentage of student engagement could be due to differences in the structures for the leadership team and

decision-making protocols between the two organizations, which is discussed in the following sections. Much of the reason why only 40-percent of OSV members complete the work is because members can choose how involved they want to be in the organization. Evan, a non-White male student from a suburban community, discussed this practice:

> I really enjoy the fact that it's what you make of it so you can get as involved or as uninvolved as you want. For me, kind of having that initial inspiration to get really involved because I want to better my understanding and also make an impact. There were multiple opportunities to do that, and I also think that the channels for communication helped it so I could get in touch with who I needed to, to be able to do what I needed to. And obviously there were also opportunities for me to get involved with the leadership, and kind of do things like that, so it really helped me contribute my own abilities and talents in ways that could contribute to the whole movement generally.

Evan decided to become more involved in the organization after attending several meetings and working on some projects. He felt like he was making an influence and, therefore, he decided to get more deeply involved. OSV designed their structure to be fairly open because they hope that all members have a similar experience to Evan. They wanted members to feel like they could learn about the organization a little bit more before they became deeply invested and committed more of their time. At any time, members, who are not leaders, could join or leave a project or activity. OSV believed this

practice increased participation because members did not feel confined to specific activities.

Further, Oregon Student Voice had an open time commitment policy because they knew that students' schedules were constantly changing due to classes and other extracurricular activities. Gary, a non-White male member from an urban community, shared how he balances OSV and other commitments:

> The difficulties of joining were not so much with the organization, but it was more that school is really difficult for me, and that I have to put a lot of work in to do well. Every time I decide to do a meeting, or do a club, or do something outside of school, there's an opportunity cost there that I have to be cognizant of, and I tend to run head long into things, and just throw myself in there, and then I talk to my parents and they're like, 'No, you are double booked for that amount of time this week. You cannot do that because you need to sleep.'

Gary, like many high schoolers today, had a fairly challenging schedule and, therefore, was only be able to commit so much time to OSV activities depending on the week. By allowing members to fluctuate their time commitment, OSV allowed for more members, like Gary, to join and participate in the work.

However, Oregon Student Voice's open time commitment policy had several downsides. Much like the Student Voice Team, the policy results in a few members consistently completing a lot of the work as they were more deeply involved, and less active members often rotated on and off projects. It also led to challenges with consistency on projects as each week different members may be contributing to the final

outcome. Finally, it could hurt the community as members were not sure who they could count on to show up for meetings. To navigate these difficulties, OSV decided to place several student leaders within each program to ensure consistency for the projects and secure there was also a familiar face at meetings.

Time commitment was a challenge for both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. Students must weigh their schedules to determine how much time and energy they want to dedicate to the many activities that they have an opportunity to join. Because the work of both organizations could be time consuming, it may limit the types of students who can actively be involved and, therefore, result in some students not having an opportunity to participate. For example, if you have to hold an afterschool job, it could be challenging to participate deeply in either organization. While both organizations offered stipends for some of the work, it was not consistent due to lack of funding. OSV hoped to one day offer part-time paid positions to all leadership team members to address this equity issue. Both organizations strove to address limitations of student time by offering fairly open time commitment requirements for membership.

Recruitment Pipeline. A clear and consist recruitment pipeline is essential for ensuring that new students join the organization when older students graduate. It also helps to diversify membership. Student recruitment was a continuous challenge for both the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. Neither organization followed clear and consistent recruitment practices. They relied heavily on other youth development organizations and current member networks to recruit new

members. Therefore, much of the membership was reflective of the same types of students, high achieving, upper to middle class White students from urban communities.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team did no active recruitment, and students that joined the organization self-selected to become members. A majority of students found out about the Student Voice Team through other organization or clubs with which they were involved, word of mouth, or from social media platforms. The main organizations or clubs that fed into the Student Voice Team were: (a) the Kentucky Youth Assembly, which is a three-day experiential learning program where students model state government, (b) speech and debate clubs, and (c) student government associations. Each of these organizations provided students with some basic skills, such as taking initiative, public speaking, argumentative writing, and/or understanding of the policy process that enabled them to quickly engage in SVT's activities. SVT strove to recruit students that already had skills as they did not see themselves as a youth development organization. Sara discussed this as follow:

> We do have students from a range of backgrounds, but in terms of numbers, there
> are fewer numbers because they [students without predeveloped skills learned
> from another organization] take a lot of work and a lot of time. And because we're
> not a youth development organization, that's a whole other ball of wax that's
> really important. We try to build on existing need-serving agencies work.

Most of the members that join through other youth development organizations or clubs lived in the Lexington area where the Student Voice Team was headquartered.

Students also found out about the Student Voice Team when the members of the

team visited schools to conduct activities, such as school climate audits, student focus groups, or student interviews. However, members noted that this was not a very effective way of recruiting students because these students often had a hard time getting involved because they often lived outside of Lexington and did not have a direct connection to the rest of the members. In describing how these students sometimes become more engaged, Patrick, a White male student from an urban community, stated:

> We have students in Louisville, which is only an hour away from us, but it's still hard to get students involved there. We have teachers who love the work we do and want to get their students involved, so they've been really great about helping them get involved, even giving them transportation to events. When [the teachers are] going to Student Voice events, they're bringing [the students] with them.

By identifying an adult champion in an area, members were better able to recruit students from the region. However, it was sometimes challenging to identify this adult because members did not live in the area. Adults often found out about the work when members conducted activities at a school or presented at conferences.

In terms of retention, when new members joined the organization and attended a first meeting, not all of them continued to engage in organization activities. There was no clear yearlong recruitment process or orientation set in place to help students navigate the organization. The Student Voice Team did host a bi-yearly orientation at the beginning of the school year and the calendar year. In reflecting on students that join the organization, Brian, a White male student from an urban community, said:

> And it grows, it ebbs and flows, and people, I think you saw two or three more

people show up to the meeting last night. Maybe one of them will return. And

we'll get two, three more people show up. Those people probably end up on our

email list for the rest of the year. They'll be a member, so the definitions are very,

very fluid.

Students who join the organization did not get removed from the organization listserv

until the end of the year when the team sent out a survey asking who wanted to

participate next year. The organization purposely kept members on the email list

throughout the year as some students may get busy at certain periods and stop showing

up only to return later when they have more free time.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice strove to actively recruit new

students; however, their strategy was inconsistent and unclear. New members tended to

find out about the organization through their school, friends, or other extracurricular

activities. They tried several ways to actively recruit students; however, few have been

effective in diversifying their membership. These activities included: (a) reaching out to

school guidance counselors and government teachers to share OSV with students, (b)

attending community service fairs at schools or in local communities, (c) providing youth

development trainings to adults and students in schools and local communities, and (d)

asking members to reach out to their network on social media. The most effective

strategies for recruiting new students had been attending community service fairs and

having members reach out to their network. In 2018, OSV decided to ask the supporting

adults in their regional meeting centers to help them with recruitment, and they were

working together to determine a clear strategy.

While Oregon Student Voice did not have a clear recruitment strategy, they created a clear process for onboarding new members when they joined the organization. Because students could join at any point in the year, new members could feel overwhelmed when they attended a first meeting or strive to get involved. Early on, OSV found that many new members were not continuing to stay connected with the organization after joining. Therefore, OSV created an onboard process for new members to help them feel more connected to the organization.

After a student joined the organization through a link on the OSV website, the process worked as follows. First, the recruitment coordinator, who was a fellow member, sent the new member an email welcoming to the organization that included a link to OSV's new member guide, an invitation to Slack, an invitation to the next monthly meeting, and a request to have a one-on-one meeting. The new member guide provided details on the organization, how new members could get involved in activities, and how to use the different communication platforms, such as Zoom and Slack. Once they setup a time to meet, the recruitment coordinator than connected with the new member over Zoom to talk about OSV, the new member's interests, and where he/she/they may want to get involved. The first meeting was over Zoom in order to teach the new member how to use the platform. Following the welcome meeting, the recruitment coordinator then sent a follow up email to the new member with an invitation to join the Google Drive, a link to a Google Form where the new member could indicate which program they wanted to get involved in, and an invitation to write a blog post for the OSV website with information on how to complete the activity, if they were interested. The recruitment coordinator than

regularly followed up with the new member to ensure they felt engaged and connected to the organization. Amanda, a non-White female student from a suburban community, shared her experience as a new member in the process:

> I remember [the recruitment coordinator] was really helpful when I first joined. He would respond…literally within five minutes. I'm just like, 'Wow, you guys are so fast at this.' It was really nice. Having access to Google Drive, and just looking through that. Looking at how much you guys have accomplished, was really cool, and really nice, and interesting to see how much you guys have done…before getting super involved.

Amanda felt more comfortable getting involved with the organization because she knew she could ask the recruitment coordinator questions and she could learn a lot of information about OSV by looking through the Google Drive. Using a clear onboarding process, Oregon Student Voice strove to ensure that all students felt welcome and comfortable to participate in the community. OSV was continuously refining this process based on student feedback. In 2018, they added a "buddy system" to provide mentorship to new members. This system is discussed in more detail below in the student relationships section.

Neither Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team nor Oregon Student Voice had clear and consistent recruitment practices. It is clear that based on the types of students that were actively involved, a majority high achieving, upper to middle class White students from urban communities, that the recruitment practices employed by both organizations only reached a certain subset of students. Therefore, both organizations

may need to consider creating a clear recruitment strategy that targets students from backgrounds not already represented in the organizations. This strategy may help ensure that all students have the ability to participate in student voice activities. In addition to creating a clear recruitment strategy, the Student Voice Team may want to develop an onboarding process similar to Oregon Student Voice to ensure that all students feel welcome and connected after they join.

Leadership Team. A student leadership team is a group of students who hold more power than other members to plan activities, make decisions, and execute the overall organizational vision and mission than other students. Essentially, students on the leadership team hold more responsibilities than other students over the work. How students were selected for the leadership team varies based on the organization. Additionally, student roles within the leadership team also is dependent on the needs of the organization A student leadership team can be similar to an organization's management team.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both launched without a student leadership team. As membership grew, both organizations realized that they needed to develop a student leadership team to help manage the work. The Student Voice Team's leadership team took on more decision-making authority than Oregon Student Voice's leadership team. This difference could influence student participation in the organizations as members may feel less engaged if they are not actively participation in decision making for the organization.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In 2015, three years following the

design phase, the Student Voice Team decided to create a leadership team to help them better manage and breakup the workload. They originally started with five committees and a chair of each committee. However, as their work evolved and members graduated from high school, they quickly realized that they only needed three committees to sustain the bulk of their work: (a) the postsecondary committee, which evolved into the College Tripwires initiative, (b) the school governance committee, which evolved into the school climate initiative, and (c) an executive committee to provide oversight for communications, development, and strategy. Any members could join the postsecondary committee or the school governance committee. Only the chairs of these two committees and three college students, who were members in high school, along with Sara were a part of the executive committee. There were also different leadership opportunities within the committees, although they were not formal positions with titles. In describing how the leadership opportunities are delegated, Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community, stated:

> [Sara] chooses the chairs along with the previous chairs for the leadership structure. My perspective is that it's very ambiguous as to how the chairs are chosen. I know that when I was originally asked to lead a school, it was just, 'You've done a lot.' [A committee chair] and [Sara] approached me, or approached me digitally together, and were just like, 'You've done a lot. Do you want to continue to do more? You've shown that you're interested in the work and we think that you would do really well at this.' Which is obviously quite a small role, but it was still the same type of process.

Leaders were chosen based on their demonstrated commitment to the work and their

desire to continue doing more work. The Student Voice Teams strove not to make their

leadership team too expansive and structured, as they learned over the years that needs

shift based on presented opportunities and student availability. They decided it was easier

to stay flexible to ensure needs were met when needed. This flexibility made it easier for

students to eventually acquire a leadership opportunity if they were interested and

committed to the work.

The committee chairs, along with other student leaders, such as the executive

committee, rarely described their leadership in terms of making decisions, but instead

viewed their role as carrying out the vision and mission of the Student Voice Team. In

discussing his leadership role, Brian, a White man from an urban community, asserted:

> Typically, in leading the work it's a lot of behind the scenes, it's making things
>
> happen. That means a lot of emailing, a lot of following up, confirming dates with
>
> schools, with students, making phone calls. Sitting in the office with [Sara] and
>
> the team and debating different things. A lot of it involves writing or sketching
>
> out visions. If you went through our Google Drive, you would see dozens if not
>
> hundreds of proposals that never came into reality, and you'd see a couple that
>
> actually did.

The leaders did much of the background work in order to move the Student Voice

Team's work forward. They determined needs, setup meetings, and delegated work to

other committee members when needed.

However, the leadership team also may make many of the decisions for the

Student Voice Team. In discussing the role of the leadership team, Kim, a White female student from a rural community and also a non-leader, stated: "leadership makes decisions and then the rest of us kind of follow." This sentiment resonated with several members of the group and may have led to some disengagement from activities as those outside of leadership did not feel as involved in decision making.

Oregon Student Voice. A year after launching the program, Oregon Student Voice decided to create a leadership team to help organize and manage the work. They originally designed a ten-person leadership team with roles and responsibilities divided based on types of work, such as a policy director, communications coordinator, recruitment coordinator, events coordinator, etc. However, they quickly realized that these breakdowns caused some overlap between positions and did not adequately capture all of the work. Therefore, OSV built a new leadership structure that aligned with their student led programs: (a) amplify, (b) empower, and (c) thrive. There were four director positions, which were an executive director, amplify director, empower director, and thrive director. There were also supporting positions under each of these directors, but these positions could shift from year to year depending on the number of students interested in a leadership position. In 2018, there were five supporting positions: (a) two under the thrive director to support recruitment and communications, (b) two under the amplify director to support policy and research, and (c) and one under the empower director to support training design. Each position was assigned clear roles and responsibilities to ensure that leaders understood what they should be working on.

Selection of leadership team members has also evolved over the years. At first,

leadership team members were selected based on popular vote. Interested candidates ran

for a position and then members would vote on them. OSV quickly realized that this

practice may be inequitable as new members did not have as many relationships with

others as older members. When OSV transitioned to the new leadership structure, they

also moved to application-based model. At the end of every calendar year, interested

members could apply for a leadership position. The application consisted of a resume,

four short answer questions, and an interview. Interested members received professional

development on how to complete these items before submitting them. The new leaders

were then selected by OSV members who were graduating from high school and the adult

advisor. If a member did not receive the leadership position that they applied for, then the

selection committee created a new position for them based on their strengths identified

from the application process. OSV strove to ensure that everyone interested in a

leadership position was able to hold one as a way to foster engagement and participation.

In general, the leadership team was responsible for helping members to organize

and execute the work. Any member could be a part of developing and completing the

work of the student-led programs; however, not all members may have as much time to

dedicate to ensuring the work kept progressing. Therefore, the leader's job was to support

the members. In describing the leadership team's role, Gary, a non-White male student

from an urban community, stated:

> We do a lot of the legwork, we do a lot of the lifting in terms of getting stuff
>
> written and getting stuff out…other people who are members may have other
>
> commitments and limited time, and so I guess that division of labor makes sense.

> We're kind of like cheerleaders for our teams, and we organize meetings for each
>
> of our divisions.

As Gary noted, leaders made sure that the decisions decided by each team were completed and they often picked up the work of other members if they were unable to complete their assigned tasks. They also ensured that members felt engaged with the work and supported new members in understanding what projects the team was working on in the moment.

Unlike the Student Voice Team's leadership team, Oregon Student Voice's leadership team did not make decisions for the organization. As discussed in the next section, OSV used group decision-making structures. In describing the role of the leadership team, Kareen, a non-White female student from a suburban community who is not a member of the leadership team, stated:

> Our student leaders are…their role is I guess to make sure that everything runs
>
> smoothly. They fill in the gaps where [Samantha] can't. Actually, [Samantha is]
>
> the one that fills in the gaps when they can't, but they just make sure everyone is
>
> on task, everyone has a role, everyone's engaged, everyone feels welcome and
>
> makes sure that everyone has a place in the organization, so I like that.

Kareen highlighted how the leadership team's role was to help members execute their work. Kareen also showed OSV's adult advisor's relationship with the leadership team, which was to complete tasks and provide support when requested. Because the leadership team did not make decisions for the organization, members not on the team may have more buy-in and feel more engaged with the work as they directly participated in decision

making.

Oregon Student Voice had a clear and known process amongst membership for how the leadership team was selected and what the leadership team's roles and responsibilities were, while the Student Voice Team's selection process for the leadership team and their roles and responsibilities appeared to be unclear to members. These differences may lead to increased engagement amongst OSV members as they saw the leadership team as an organizing entity, and decreased engagement among SVT members as they saw the leadership team as a decision-making entity. SVT may want to consider creating a clearer process for selecting leaders that involved more than the adult advisor as well as rethinking the roles and responsibilities of the team.

Clear Decision-Making Structures. How decisions are made can influence student engagement in the work. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice had clear decision-making protocols for how decisions are made in the organizations. Both organizations used a collective decision-making model where members discussed a decision and voted on it. However, the Student Voice Team only used this model for organizational wide decisions, while Oregon Student Voice used it for all decisions. This difference may influence member participation and engagement with the organizations.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team made big decisions, such as the direction of a committee or proposing a policy in front of the legislature, based on discussions and collective decision-making. When a big decision needed to be made, a committee chair or Sara brought it to the entire membership during

a general monthly meeting or a special meeting. At the meeting, the students had a

discussion, raising pros and cons, and then held a final vote on whether to move forward

with the decision. If a majority of students present at the in-person and virtual meeting

vote in favor, then the group moved forward. A majority consisted of more than half of

the students present at the meeting. The students noted that by the time a decision was

brought to the whole membership for vote, it was likely that the membership would agree

to go through with the decision. In describing how decisions are made, Lindsey, a White

female student from a suburban community, stated:

> We have a lot of meetings regarding big decisions. Obviously smaller decisions
>
> are going to be made by those who know the most about what it is. But, if it's a
>
> big organizational decision, we're going to go through a lot of discussion and
>
> ultimately at that point it doesn't matter who the chair is, it doesn't matter how
>
> much experience you have. Every opinion is valid and every opinion is heard and
>
> we often take the opinions of people who, like me when I was in 8th grade, who
>
> have really good ideas but aren't necessarily leaders. I think that when making
>
> these decisions, the opportunity for everyone is created.

It was clear that the Student Voice Team strove to include all members in big decisions to

ensure everyone was committed to the decision. Big decisions included the policies the

organization would advocate for, the next activities they would be working on, and the

overall vision and mission of the organization. Big decisions were basically anything

related to the future of the organization and its work. Before meetings, they used Slack to

inform members about big decisions that would be voted on at the next meeting. If a

member could not make it, they could share their opinion over Slack. This practice of striving to include all members may increase participation amongst membership because members feel as though they have a responsibility and role within the organization.

For smaller decisions, the committee chairs, executive committee, and/or Sara, oftentimes collectively, made the choices. These smaller decisions included what schools they were going to work with, where they were going to present, and how the work was going to be divided. Smaller decisions were basically those related to the day-to-day operations of executing the work decided by the big decisions. This practice may decrease participation as members may not understand what decisions were made when they are not communicated back to the group, which occurs fairly often, and other members must follow along with the decisions.

The decision-making structures appeared to work similar to how a nonprofit, membership-based organization would make decisions. The committee chairs, executive committee, and Sara served as the managers who made the day-to-day decisions, while the membership made decisions for the vision, mission, and large activities based on recommendations from the leadership team. This structure enables everyone to be involved in bigger decisions, while also enabling the leadership team to make day-to-day smaller decisions so that the work can move forward quickly. However, as noted above, these smaller decisions, when not communicated to the group, could lead to disengagement as members are unaware of how the work is moving forward.

It is also important to note how Sara was involved in decision making. Sara participated in decision making with the students. In describing Sara's role, Rebecca, a

non-White female student from an urban community, asserted:

> [Sara] does make her opinion known. She's our partner not like an adviser, so
> she'd be like, 'Hey, I would heavily suggest doing this, but it's just a suggestion
> by no means a final decision.' That's how we all really talk as through
> suggestions. Then from there we're like, 'Okay, this is it.'

By participating as a partner instead of an executor, Sara enabled the members to make many of the decisions, which sometimes contradicted her own views. When they did contradict her views, she carried out the decision the students made and was often convinced that the decision was the right decision in the end. However, her adding suggestions during decision making may also influence the overall decisions that the group made as students may be swayed by her suggestions since she was the adult. How her suggestions were taken by the group may depend on how equal in authority the students view her at the given moment.

   Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice also used a collective decision-making structure where members discussed decisions and then voted on a choice. Organizational decisions were brought to the group during monthly meetings or special all-member meetings by the adult advisor or one of the program directors. Members typically received materials about the decision ahead of the meeting, including pros and cons, and then held a discussion at the meeting. The discussion was moderated by either the adult advisor or executive director in order to ensure that all members had a chance to share their opinion. In discussing how the process works, James, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> If someone doesn't agree with the majority, it's acknowledged and made sure that
> everyone knows, like that that person's opinion, like their voice isn't invalidated
> because they're in the minority of the group. That their opinion is considered and
> there might be change depending on that person's opinion.

Oregon Student Voice prioritized ensuring that everyone had a voice in the decision being made and did not want anyone to feel like their opinion did not matter. During discussions, OSV also used an equity lens to think about how students that were not represented at the table may be influenced by the decision, such as support for a specific policy. Evan, a non-White male student from an urban community, shared what this equity lens looked like in practice:

> I think that a natural problem that organizations run into when they're
> representing whole groups is that the most involved people and the most
> dedicated people are the ones that are involved in the organization right? I think
> that the greatest thing about Oregon Student Voice is that the people have a
> genuine investment in the voices that aren't coming to the table. So a lot of times
> we talk about things like equity and accessibility and those are really core values
> to what we do, and I think that's what's really important because there are people
> that don't have the resources or that aren't involved and they don't know about the
> things that we do. And so we're bridging that gap by being cognizant of those
> things, and then considering them when we're making decisions.

Members spent a large amount of time during decisions thinking about how their choices would affect students across Oregon. Several times members did not move forward with

decisions because they would negatively influence other students. For example, members had a long discussion about supporting a policy to extend the school year to 180 days. Initially, membership was supportive until they realized that it may negatively influence rural and urban students who work part time jobs to support their families and pay for college. Therefore, membership decided not to support the policy.

Members continued engaging in discussions until everyone felt comfortable enough to vote in an attempt to make sure everyone was on the same page. It was rare in the organization that everyone did not agree by the end of the discussion. At the end of the discussion, the executive director or adult advisor called for a vote and whichever choice received the most votes was the decision. Results of the decisions were communicated to the team over Slack.

The same collective decision-making structure was followed for smaller program-specific decisions during program meetings. All program-specific decisions were published on Slack. It is important to note that the adult advisor did not have a vote in the organizational or program decisions and only provided input on the effects of choices. As the adult advisor, I rarely provided my personal opinion as to not sway the membership. I carried out all decisions made according to membership desires.

While Oregon Student Voice's collective decision-making protocol took more time than some of the protocols used by Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, it also allowed for increased member participation and engagement. Student Voice Team members participated in large decisions, but often not initiative-focused decisions. Further, SVT members may not always know the decisions made by the leadership team

or initiative teams. Because OSV members actively participated in all the decisions made by the organization, they may have a larger amount of buy-in for where the organization was going and commitment to helping to execute the activities. This increased transparency also provided members with information about each project and they were better able to choose whether they wanted to participate based on their interest and time availability. The Student Voice Team may want to increase transparency around day-to-day decisions in order to help students become more engaged in activities.

Summary

Findings discussed in this chapter provide a deeper level of understanding for how student voice efforts are structured and the factors that influence student participation, including differentials in power. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice created structures to promote participation in student voice effort activities. I organized these structures into two themes: (a) power shifts and (b) shared practices. Both student voice efforts strove to shift power in three ways to encourage student participation: (a) adults shift power where students held equal or greater decision-making authority compared to adults, (b) all students had equal ability to share in decision making, and (c) students understood their voice was important and impactful.

Both efforts strove to achieve these power shifts by creating clear roles for adults and students engaging in effort activities, creating open pathways for all students to participate in effort activities, and providing opportunities for students to grow in their understanding of their power. While SVT and OSV achieved the first and third shift, both efforts were still struggling to achieve the second shift as neither had created

institutionalized structures to ensure that all students had the support needed to participate in activities and equal authority in decision making. For example, it appears that students' background may influence their ability to participate as a majority of students participating in these organizations are White, middle class or wealthy, from an urban community, and/or high achievers. Further, not all students on the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team were able to participate in smaller decisions made by the organizations, which may influence members buy-in and participation. Therefore, it is unclear if all students were able to participate in decision making due to differentials in power dynamics.

Both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice also created shared practices to support student participation in effort activities. These shared practices ensured that all students understood the ways in which they could expect to participate. They were: (a) established in-person and virtual meetings, (b) virtual collaboration, (c) flexible time commitments, (d) open, active recruitment pipeline, (e) leadership opportunities, and (f) expected decision making practices. Each of these practices addressed a challenge that students faced to participate. These challenges ranged from distance from attending meetings in-person to inability to engage in work at the same time due to different schedules to needing accountability to keep work on track.

While OSV had more institutionalized structures to support students than the SVT, such as anonymous methods for engaging in decision making, a new member onboarding process, and a leadership application process, both organizations successfully mitigated many challenges that students faced when engaging in this work. However, as

mentioned above, neither organization had created a clear recruitment pipeline that enabled students from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in effort activities. Therefore, these structures may be insufficient in supporting all students in participating in effort activities. Both organizations need to consider how to better support students from different backgrounds to ensure that all students are able to participate in activities.

Chapter Six: Building Connections to Support Student Participation

In the following analysis, I explore how adults and students build connections to support participation in the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. I organize themes related to connections identified from the data, which included interviews with students and adults as well as observations of activities and document analysis of work, into the following categories: (a) adult supports and (b) student relationships. Adult supports are important in order to provide students with emotional and professional support to participate in student voice effort activities. Student relationships help students stay engaged and connected to the work. Throughout the chapter, I first explore Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and then compare and contrast these findings with those of Oregon Student Voice. Together, findings from the themes in Chapter Five and Six provide insights into how student voice efforts are structured and the factors that influence student participation, including differentials in power.

Adult Supports

An effort needs to have at least one dedicated adult as well as the political and financial, support of those in power, such as funders (Beaudoin 2005; Mitra, 2014). In addition to these resources, students also need additional supports from adults to complete their work. Students require development opportunities to enhance their ability to participate as not all students join with the same skillsets (Conner, 2015). Students need adults to open doors for them to move the work forward, such as principals allowing students to interview students in their school. In the following, I discuss the key supports

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice relied on, which included: (a) partner organization; (b) youth development opportunities; (c) relationship with adult champion, and (d) affirmation from outside adults.

Partner Organization. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice launched within nonprofit organizations, Prichard Committee and Chalkboard Project respectively. These K-12 education-focused nonprofit organizations provided the financial and political resources for the two student voice organizations to get their bearings. The financial resources included a salary and benefits for an adult advisor, limited funds to support activities, and administrative oversight in managing funds. The student voice organizations also utilized the connections of the nonprofit organizations to government officials, legislators, schools, and foundations to build relationships and expand their work. For more than a decade, Prichard Committee and Chalkboard Project worked in K-12 education in Kentucky and Oregon and they built significant political capital in these states. While Prichard Committee' Student Voice Team remained at their partner nonprofit organization, Oregon Student Voice separated from Chalkboard Project in 2019 to start a youth-led nonprofit.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Through the Prichard Committee, the Student Voice Team found a partner organization to give them support as they grow and evolve over the years. The Prichard Committee provided administrative oversight to the work so that the members could focus on their vision, mission, and activities. However, this administrative oversight came at a cost, which most students did not see as a major concern. This cost was that the Student Voice Team must receive approval for

many of their major decisions from Prichard Committee's executive director. It was rare that the Prichard Committee did not approve of the work of SVT, but it sometimes happened due to political or financial purposes. Most recently, the members wanted to propose a bill in the Kentucky state legislature; however, the Prichard Committee advised against it due to other political needs of the organization. The members noted that they were at first frustrated but understood the executive director's position.

Overall, the members felt that they need Prichard Committee to keep momentum with their work. In discussing their relationship with the Prichard Committee, Patrick, a White male student from an urban community, stated:

> There would be somebody that would bring it up and be, 'Do we really need the Prichard Committee?' We would always end the conversation with, well, they bring all this legitimacy to us, and they bring all this stuff to us. But now there's nobody that even begins to think about saying, 'Hey, we can do this on our own. We don't need that...' We've come to realize just how much that group really is important to us. We now realize that without them we would be able to do nothing. But at the beginning it was this thought of we don't really need them.

The members saw that Prichard Committee provided them with access to communication, advocacy, and development supports from adult employees without additional costs. The Prichard Committee also employed Sara, which enabled her to support the work of SVT. SVT must raise additional resources to fund their activities, but they utilized connections provided by the Prichard Committee. Without these essential resources, the students were unsure if they would be able to achieve the same level of growth and influence.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice held a similar relationship to Chalkboard Project. From their launch in 2016, Chalkboard Project provided OSV with an adult advisor and limited financial supports to fund activities. Members used connections to foundations provided by the Chalkboard Project to raise additional funds for their work and to help them launch a youth-led nonprofit organization. Members also relied on the expertise of Chalkboard Project's communication, policy, and school-based project directors to expand their work. Members worked with the communication director to speak with the media, the policy director to build relationships with legislators, and the school-based project director to reach school administrators and teachers.

The key difference between the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice was that Chalkboard Project always held the expectations that OSV would eventually separate from the organization. From the beginning, the student members wanted to become a nonprofit organization. Karen, who worked in communications at Chalkboard Project, explained:

> They were clear that they wanted to become an independent nonprofit organization. They just were not sure how to get there. They wanted time to create structures and figure out how to be sustainable before becoming a nonprofit. We built a firewall at Chalkboard to give them the independence to work on these activities without interference.

Karen showed how Chalkboard Project acted as an incubator for the student voice organization and helped the organization to grow. Chalkboard Project did not interfere in OSV's decision making and allowed OSV to pursue any activities that contributed to

their growth, including policy initiatives. The only major oversight Chalkboard Project held over OSV was financial to approve expenditures and ensure that the members were spending money appropriately. This incubation period enabled the members to raise funds, create sustainable structures, and built relationships within the communities.

After two years, OSV members felt ready to separate from Chalkboard Project and voted to begin working towards becoming a nonprofit organization in March 2018. The two organizations officially separated in January 2019; however, Chalkboard Project still provided financial oversight to the organization as they transitioned into an independent nonprofit. Chalkboard Project ensured that all funds spent meet the requirements of a nonprofit organization. It is not clear how becoming an independent youth-led nonprofit organization will affect OSV's growth and sustainability.

Through a partner organization, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members had the freedom to focus on their mission, vision, and activities in their first years. The student voice organizations were able to experiment with their designs and try out different structures without much worry about how these changes affect their sustainability and fundraising. This freedom encouraged participation from members as they had many opportunities to lead different efforts and interact with how to grow an organization. Both organizations used their partner organizations to gain access to policy makers and school leaders. Without this access, SVT and OSV members would not been able to grow and expand as quickly. This access also increased student participation as members were able to leverage connections to execute activities, such as interacting with the policy making process and conducting student focus groups.

However, freedom and access came at a cost for the Student Voice Team as they must receive approval from the executive director for much of their work. This may influence participation as members may become discouraged if a policy or project they want to pursue is not approved. Conversely, Oregon Student Voice members hold decision making authority over their activities, as long as it fell within the constraints of nonprofit activities. Members believed that this control increased member participation because it was rare that youth were fully in charge in the education space. Cayla, a White female student from an urban community, stated, "there are very few places where students have the ability to make decisions and be fully in charge and we offer a space for that." This was one of the most important values for the organization and, therefore, they decided to become an independent nonprofit. It is unclear how not being connected to a partner organization will affect Oregon Student Voice's future.

Youth Development Opportunities. Youth development is an important component of student voice organizations. Student do not learn all of the skills necessary to participate in research, policy making, grass roots organizing, or running an organization in school. Therefore, organizations need to teach students these skills. While Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team offered opportunities for members to learn these skills through participating in activities, Oregon Student Voice provided targeted training to students to help them learn these skills. These different approaches may influence student participation as the Student Voice Team does not provide the same training opportunities to all students, while Oregon Student Voice does.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team provided

members with many opportunities to develop their skills outside of a traditional school setting. Members reported that their work provided them with the ability to learn important professional skills, such as giving a presentation, facilitating conversations, conducting research, and communicating with the media, as well as essential social skills, such as understanding different viewpoints and meeting other students from divergent backgrounds. In describing how these opportunities influenced her experience, Jane, a White female student from a rural community, stated:

> Aside from being able to travel for conferences and present on a research that we did, I think one of the biggest things that the Student Voice Team gave me was really this opportunity for professional development, and being able to work with other people my age and learn how to publicly speak. Interacting with students who had more resources than I did and being able to learn from, that was incredible.

In addition to Jane, several members indicated that they would not have learned many of these skills, particularly conducting research and understanding different viewpoints, without these opportunities for youth development.

While youth development was important to the Student Voice Team, there were no formalized trainings for youth development offered by the organization. Members were encouraged to volunteer for projects or presentations and learn how to complete the work by doing the work. For example, if a member volunteered to conduct a round table, they were provided a list of questions ahead of time, asked to look it over, and given an opportunity to ask any questions they had before facilitating the discussion. In recounting

this experience, Brian, a White male from an urban community, asserted that "as an organization we operate by baptism by fire; you learn, and you lead by example."

While members currently participating in the organization appeared to hold no concerns about this type of learning, it may not be sustainable as they recruit students holding different experiences. As noted in Chapter Five, many of the Student Voice Team's members participated in other leadership development opportunities, such as the Kentucky Youth Assembly and speech or debate clubs. These previous opportunities may have enabled members to more quickly learn the skills necessary to give a presentation or conduct a focus group without deeper training. As the organization grows, they may need to offer more formalized trainings to ensure that all students have the same access and ability to participate.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice provided members with formalized monthly training opportunities and informal opportunities as necessary. The topics for the trainings were decided by members every six months. Members suggested ideas and then voted on the trainings that they believed would be the most pertinent for the work they were striving to complete over those six months. Sometimes special trainings arose if members needed support on a specific project. Trainings were led by the adult advisor, an outside adult with expertise in the training topic, or by a member with expertise in the topic. They were also conducted virtually over Zoom to ensure that all members could attend. Training topics included leadership, communication, government function, policy making, advocacy, equity and inclusion, and research and analysis. Examples of training were: (a) what is special educations, (b) how to write a policy brief, (c) how to

communicate with the media, and (d) how to develop a mission and vision. Completed

trainings were posted in Google Drive for members that could not attend virtually at the

time and date. Each of these trainings were used by members to move their work

forward. They also increased participation as members feel equipped to complete the

work.

Members also felt like they were receiving development while they were

completing the work. Delaine, a White female student from an urban community

explained:

> Well we have our professional developments…so had one on lobbying, special
>
> education, opinion pieces…so those are the formal ones, but also I think every
>
> day especially from [Samantha] from the small things that I have never had
>
> experience with as a student with but I would likely run into again as an adult.

Delaine was sharing how I, as the adult advisor, provided impromptu training to members

when I realized they may not know how to complete a small task. These trainings ranged

from teaching members how to write an email to how to navigate conflict with

legislators. Members often did not learn in school how to communicate electronically or

over the phone. They also did not learn about the education system and how to navigate

education reform. Therefore, these skills and knowledge must be taught in the student

voice organization. In describing the outcomes of the trainings, Gary, a non-White male

student from an urban community, stated:

> This was kind of new stuff for me, so it's good to be able to learn that stuff, and to
>
> have guidance from an advisor who cares enough to teach it and guide us along in

the right direction is cool. It's a lot of help. I feel like that's maybe the difference

between having a mediocre outcome and having an outcome that makes adults

pause and notice us.

Gary showed how participants see the trainings as not only valuable to their personal

growth, but valuable to the organizations as adults saw their work as professional and not

"just done by kids." These trainings gave the members confidence in their work and

excitement to keep moving the organization forward.

The youth development opportunities provided by Prichard Committee's Student

Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice provided students with skills that they would not

traditionally learn in school environments. These trainings enabled members to design

and complete activities. Oregon Student Voice's formalized trainings may provide more

opportunities for students to learn than the Student Voice Team's learn by doing

approach. These formalized trainings provided all members with the same access and

opportunity to grow in the organization. The Student Voice Team's informal approach

may limit the members that participate in activities as members may not feel comfortable

learning while doing.

Relationship with Adult Champion. An adult champion is essential for helping

student voice organizations navigate an adult centric society. Adult champions provide

students with mentorship, support completing the work, and act as an essential bridge

between members and other adults. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and

Oregon Student Voice had an adult champion to support the members through their adult

advisors. Members viewed the adult champions in high regard and saw the individuals as

essential for their work. In this section, I will utilize adult champion instead of adult advisor to describe the roles of Sara and myself.

 Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. While the Student Voice Team received assistance from a number of different adults, they had one adult who served as their champion and protected their needs, Sara, their adult advisor. As summarized in Chapter Four, Sara was the adult advisor of the Student Voice Team, employed by the Prichard Committee, and had been working with the group since formation in 2012. As the adult champion, she not only supported the members in their work, she also served as the liaison between the members and other adults as well as a professional and personal mentor to the members. While the adult champion's role in promoting and protecting the work of the members is important, Sara's relationship with the members appears to be more important for ensuring the continued growth of the organization. Many members reported joining the organization to get more involved in research and policy making, but they stayed due to the strong relationships they developed with other members and Sara.

 Sara was described as a "information provider," "friend," "mentor," and "second mom." Members turned to her for advice on their work for The Student Voice Team as well as for support in their academic and personal lives. As the adult advisor, Sara provided snacks and transportation for events as well as helped the members learn how to give presentations and manage workplace conflicts. However, as a mentor, Sara also provided the members with an outlet outside of school and their families to discuss their

concerns in a safe environment.[9] In discussing her relationship with Sara, Kim, a White female student from a rural community, stated:

> She's always been…well…a lot of people call her their second mom, because she's like that to us, in that she cares so much about us. She wants us to succeed, so she's giving us the space to do that. I think it's an interesting relationship because at the same time, she's a colleague, and she treats us as such.

Like Kim, many of the members saw Sara as a "second mom" and a "colleague," which required Sara to seamlessly shift her role between mentor, caregiver, and teammate. At any given time, Sara may be offering personal support to members, providing critical feedback on work, and ensuring that the work of the organization continued to move forward. In discussing her position as adult advisor, Sara did not seem fazed by the many roles she served at once and focused on ensuring that the members felt supported. She stated:

> I would say I think of myself as a partner and a colleague. I do bring some middle-aged expertise to the things, I bring a little bit of the mom's sensibilities to stuff. I definitely try to say yes way more than no to anything, but I will sometimes talk students down off a cliff where they're very fired up about an issue. My job is kind of to say, Okay, and take a gulp, and do everything I can to support students' vision and make it a reality, and that has been underway over the last few years.

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[9] While Sara does not consider herself a mentor, SVT members used this term to describe her.

By serving many roles at once, Sara was able to meet the needs of both the students and the organization.

It is unclear what the influence on the organization will be when Sara decides to leave. Her relationship with the members serves as an essential component of growth and participation for many of the current and former Student Voice Team members. The members hold a great deal of respect and care toward their adult champion, and carefully navigating the transition of the adult champion will be essential for the organization to move forward.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice's membership also held their adult advisor (me) in high regards. My role was similar to Sara's from the Student Voice Team. I provided professional support to members by helping them execute their decisions as well as personal support as I served as their mentor by providing advice and assistance on matters outside of the organization. I worked with Oregon Student Voice since their formation in 2016 until February 2019, helping them to develop, grow, and navigate their transition to a nonprofit organization.[10] In describing the adult advisor, Kareen, a non-White female student from a suburban community, explained:

> Having someone, like an adult guiding you through all of it reassure you that it's okay if you mess up, you're still learning. I didn't know anything about policy. I don't know anything about a lot of this but [Samantha] told me my opinion matters and made me confident in my voice, which I'm still learning how to do.

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[10] I resigned from Oregon Student Voice in February 2019 in order to finish my doctorate and return to a career in education research.

[She's] here to actually empower and make sure that [we] have a voice. When [someone is] trying to do us wrong [Samantha] stand[s] up for us in a good way. I feel like [she'd] ride or die for us. Because like even though we are very put together kids…we still need that little bit of guidance just to keep us motivated and going…you're like the fuel to OSV.

Kareen, along with many of her peers, saw the adult advisor (me) as an important champion for lifting up student voice and helping students stay motivated in the work. While members made all of the decisions for the organization, they saw the adult advisor as a key source of guidance. Many members were unsure whether they would be able to complete the work without the emotional and professional support of an adult advisor.

In my role as an adult advisor, I was described as a "coach," "team mom," "mentor," "lifelong friend," and "faculty advisor." Members not only discussed my role within the organization, but also highlight how I supported them outside of the organization. Delaine, a White female student from a suburban community, stated:

[Samantha] is a great young adult mentor that I really like to have to talk to about college, and life, and how to navigate the transition between high school and college, and college and after college. And yeah, I would say that I like the fact that our advisor is younger, because again there's not so much of the disconnect in the culture and communication, so it feels like [Samantha's] really approachable and easy to talk to.

Because youth were navigating many different areas of their life, ranging from college to friendships, my role often extended beyond a professional relationship. In my

perspective, supporting members in all areas of life was really important for the adult advisor as OSV members often did not have access to adult mentors outside of their teachers or parents. This mentorship role not only helped strengthen my relationship with the students, but also provided me with insights into the many challenges youth were trying to navigate. It gave me a better understanding of their experiences and gave me with context for how I could support them both within the organization and outside. Much of my role was focused on uplifting students in every aspect of their life, which I believed translated to them feeling more empowered to share their voice in Oregon Student Voice.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members both saw their adult advisor as essential to helping with participation in the organizations. The adult advisors provided both emotional and professional support to ensure that the members felt empowered and connected to the work. These adults also helped members navigate challenges outside of the organization, which helped deepen their relationships with students. Ultimately, the adult advisors encouraged increased participation as members saw them as mentors and friends, which kept them coming back to the organization. While Sara from SVT remained with the organization, I left OSV in February 2019 and OSV hired a new adult advisor in March. It is unclear how me leaving OSV will influence member participation in the organization.

Affirmation from Outside Adults. How adults supported and viewed the work of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice, outside of the adult advisors, greatly influenced the students' ability to participate in the work. Parents,

teachers, and other education stakeholders each either positively or negatively influenced students' experiences. When an outside adult either did not understand or viewed the work negatively, students were less likely to be able to participate in activities. Conversely, when an outside adult viewed the work in a positive light, students had a positive experience and were empowered to keep participating.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Parents, teachers, and other education stakeholders all influenced the Student Voice Team members in different ways. Parents had both positive and negative reactions toward students participating in activities. Eric's, a non-White male from an urban community, family was extremely supportive of him participating as they were "very open to [him] exploring these alternative notions of what a high schooler could be doing." Eric's parents, along with many of the other SVT members, encouraged the work he was doing by providing transportation assistance to activities and emotional support during stressful periods. The students found this support to be important for their continued involvement in the group.

However, several other students did not have the same experience and participated in the Student Voice Team despite their parents' objections. George, a White male student from a suburban community, stated:

Me doing the student voice work was kind of conflictual in my household, because, it was just so, so, so new. No one in my community, no one in my household, ever could ever even comprehend that a 16-year-old could be doing something highly professional.

This conflict resulted in George having to overcome implicit and explicit barriers

structured by his family in order to continue participating in the work. Many other students faced these same barriers. Explicit barriers included parents not allowing students to attend events or publish opinion pieces, while implicit barriers revolved around the emotional conflict students felt about not spending enough time with their families. While students interviewed for this study continued to participate in the work, despite their parents' wishes, it created emotional turmoil for them as they reflected on how their parents viewed the work that they believed to be essential to their development.

Teachers, principals, and other education stakeholders also had both positive and negative influences on students. Similar to parents, adults that were supportive encouraged the students to keep working, while adults that were indifferent or held negative feelings toward the work made it difficult for the students to participate. In describing her experience with her principal, Jane, a White female student from a rural community, said:

> Oftentimes, when I would pull into the parking lot in the morning and I would go walking into the school, I would pass by the principal and he would say, 'Hey, if you need any help getting this excuse, let me know.' I didn't even realize that he had any idea what I was doing. For him to be supportive of that, to say, 'Let me know if you need anything,' it was awesome.

Through the support of their teachers, principals, and other education stakeholders, students saw the work as valuable not only to themselves, but the community around them. These adults allowed the students to miss classes or whole days of school because they saw it as important to the students' educational experience and development. These

adults were both implicitly and explicitly empowering the students to engage more deeply in the organization and see their work as important.

However, not all students had the same experiences with their teachers, principals, or other education stakeholders. Students noted that some adults did not necessarily see the importance of student voice and their work. Teachers and principals sometimes did not let students out of school to conduct research or give presentations. They also often did not respond to emails when students were inquiring about conducting research at their school; however, they did respond when Sara emailed them. This made it challenging for students to complete their work. Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community, noted: "it is discouraging to have to rely on an adult [Sara] to make true progress happen sometimes."

Beyond interfering with their ability to complete work, teachers, principals, and other adults could also negatively influence how students viewed themselves as leaders in the work. In discussing her experience with outside adults, Kim, a White female student from a rural community, stated:

> I sometimes felt tokenized by adults. At presentations or events, adults would come up and say, 'So cute, and it's so sweet that you guys are doing this. You're so well-spoken.' But then at the same time people were coming up to me and saying, 'Talk to me more about this issue.' I think one of the things that The Student Voice Team's done and we care about is that not all adults are ready for us to be partners. We have to be okay with that.

While the students found it discouraging when adults were "condescending" or

"patronizing," they also recognized that many adults on a fundamental level did not see their voice as valuable in the conversation. They strive to combat this viewpoint by building credibility with adults through "qualitative and quantitative research," "graphically pleasing presentations," and "eloquent adult like speech patterns." The students found themselves continuously combating the viewpoint that the "actual decision making be left up to the people [the adults] who know what they're talking about," as Greg, a White male from a rural community, asserted. Some of the students found it emotionally draining at times to constantly be pushing up against adults, but felt a reprieve when another adult recognized their viewpoint and work as valuable.

Although the need to constantly prove themselves could have pushed the students away from the work, much of the team took pride in working to subvert the adults' beliefs and looked forward to "paving the road for future generations to not deal with the same issues." Rather than dissuading them from continuing the work, it actually empowered and encouraged them. The idea of proving to adults that students could and should participate in decision making became an internalized value throughout the organization.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members encountered similar opportunities and challenges when sharing their work with parents, teachers, and other education stakeholders. Each member interviewed described at least one story that mirrored those of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's members. Each member recounted how important parent and teacher support was for them to continue to participate in the work as they allowed members to miss school and make up homework.

These adults also provided encouragement when the members were having a difficult time completing a task. However, during the interviews, OSV members focused on how adults, especially those in decision making roles, made them feel when engaging the work.

Oregon Student Voice members believed that many adults in decision making roles, such as state, district, school level administrators and policy makers, did not fully support their work. Cayla, a White female member from a suburban community, described her experience:

> Every adult we talked to is, like, 'That's fantastic, I love student voice, this is a great opportunity, I'm so excited.' And then I would say that as I have begun to understand the nuances of adult and student relationships in the context of student voice, I realized that a lot of times an adult saying, 'I love student voice,' means literally nothing. Because everyone loves the theory of student voice, but when it comes down to it people give you an opportunity to speak and then usher you out of the room as soon as they bring in the big dogs to talk about the real stuff. And they just say, 'thanks for coming.' So, you get to share your voice, but then when they're actually discussing the decisions that are happening, you don't get to be there to advocate for yourself.

Like Cayla, many members saw themselves striving to make a difference in K-12 education reform, but were continually shut out of participating in meetings. Members were invited to give presentations and share their work with decision makers. However, after the 30-minute presentations, members were asked to leave so that the decision

makers could make decisions based on what they heard. These experiences caused many members to feel tokenized in their work as they were unable to participate in the discussions to ensure that decision makers understood and used the information shared. These feelings could lead to disengagement and lose in confidence as students did not see a path forward to gain a seat at the decision-making table.

After two years of negative presentation experiences with adults, Oregon Student Voice formalized an internal process to try to mitigate some of the tokenization students were feeling. If OSV was invited to give a presentation to a decision-making group, such as a government committee, members began to request that a student be serving on the committee alongside other decision makers or participating in a deeper role before giving the presentation. So far, decision makers complied with these requests and OSV members served on three government committees: two at the state level and one at the district level. This request for decision-making groups to change their practices helped members feel less tokenized in their work and more excited to participate. However, this change took time and OSV had to build a reputation first. In describing this process from the adult perspective, Karen, who worked in communications at Chalkboard Project and supported the students in navigating this shift, shared:

> They're making inroads. I think they need to be patient and not lose confidence and not lose that energy, because it's…right now…adults are taking notice. Key decision makers are taking notice. But that doesn't mean they've changed their mind, or their paradigm, or their mental model of what students can bring to this conversation. And so they need to continue to push for that authentic voice, and

not settle. Sometimes they'll have to settle, but never give up on that vision. If they have to take a step backwards, it's only with the understanding that the next two steps will be forward.

OSV members continued to push decision makers to include students in decision making discussions in order to ensure that members did not feel like their voices were tokenized. This commitment to authentic student voice not only helped the students, but also helped decision makers to see that students can valuably contribute to K-12 education reform decisions.

Affirmation provided from outside adults, such as parents, teachers, and other educations stakeholders, positively and negatively influenced the ability for students to participate in the work and their overall experience. Outside adults provided essential logistical and emotional support for members to deeply engage in the work. However, outside adults also had a negative effect on students when they did not value the work of the members. Members often felt "tokenized," "patronized," and "belittled" by adults who propertied to support student voice, but also did not engage members' in deeper roles beyond presentations. Ultimately, student voice efforts must help members in navigating these different experiences they will have with adults by providing internal emotional supports and institutionalized barriers.

Student Relationships

Student relationships with one another are at the heart of student-led student voice efforts as students rely on building relationships within one another to stay engaged in effort activities (Mitra, 2004). These relationships help students foster an inclusive

community based in acceptance and understanding. They also help the students develop

an internal mentorship network so students can learn from one another and provide one

another with emotional support when challenges arise. Finally, these relationships are

based on students having passion for the work and wanting to change the ways in which

students interacting with education decision making. Below, I discuss how Prichard

Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members viewed

relationships within the efforts and how these relationships influenced effort activities. I

look at the perceived effects of: (a) building relationships, (b) mentorship, and (c) passion

for the work.

Building Community. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon

Student Voice prioritized fostering a community where everyone felt that they belonged.

They wanted members to feel included and accepted as members believed that their

schools and communities did not offer many safe spaces for students to be themselves.

Further, building inclusive communities for students also appeared to foster increased

engagement and dedication to the work as members felt they were growing together and

wanted to support one another.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. A majority of interviewed members

of the Student Voice Team viewed the effort as a community where everyone was

welcome and included. Members saw the Student Voice Team as a space where they

could grow with one another, explore their interests, and work towards a common

mission. In describing why she felt comfortable joining the Student Voice Team,

Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community, stated:

> I think [we are] a community that's very welcoming because [we] want everyone's voices…[we] want to raise the voices of those who wouldn't otherwise be heard. I think that knowing that as an individual I did have something to contribute simply because that was [our] mission to elevate all voices, that was really empowering to start off with.

Many students echoed Lindsey's sentiments that they immediately felt welcome because the mission of the organization was to empower everyone's voices and, therefore, they saw it as a place where they belonged. This common mission was the first step the Student Voice Team took in establishing their community as it created a space where students came in believing that their voices would be welcome. As discussed in previous sections, the Student Voice Team established power shifts and created shared practices to ensure that this belief became a reality and all students could participate.

In addition to having a common mission, the students noted that their shared interests in policy making and education reform also helped them develop relationships with one another. These shared interests helped them dive into deep political conversations with on another that they were unable to have in school. Student Voice Team members reported seeing their schools as "hostile" or "incongruent" environments for having debates around political ideals and education policy reform. Conversely, the Student Voice Team fostered space for these discussions and allowed everyone with an opinion to share. In discussing the environment, Kim, a White female student from a rural community, shared:

> I immediately felt like the students in the room were like me. We were all very

similar, similar interest, and it was so nice to be out of an environment that's very

hostile, to an environment that was extremely welcoming and loving. Yes, it's

okay to nerd [out] about public policy, and you can be yourself here.

Much of Kim's commitment to be a part of the group was rooted in the belief that she

was with individuals who shared the same interests as her even if they did not hold the

same views. Further showing the importance of shared interests among the students, Eric,

a non-White male student from an urban community, noted that he felt comfortable at the

Student Voice Team because of the many other activities that he participated in that were

similar to the work. He stated:

For me, it wasn't a matter of having to really stretch myself in order to feel

comfortable here. It was something that the networks that I had built up over the

course of my involvement with other activities were kind of naturally drawn to

and that made it easy for me to feel comfortable in the space.

These shared interests and activities helped Kim, Eric, and many other students feel

immediately comfortable in the space. This comfort fostered their sense of community

and ability to build relationships with one another around the work they were completing.

The experiences of Kim, Eric, and many other students also suggests that many of the

members of the Student Voice Team come from a similar population of students, as many

of the members hold similar interests.

Unlike Kim and Eric, other students took a little more time to get comfortable in

the environment. Some students took time to warm up to the environment to process their

thoughts and how they would engage in the space. Other students reported being more

introverted and not wanting to take part in large discussions. In sharing her experience

with joining the Student Voice Team, Rebecca, a non-White female student from an

urban community, described:

> I went to those general meetings every single month for a solid year before I said
>
> a single word. I mean, I'm pretty sure when I started speaking everyone was like,
>
> what in the world, like she speaks. I was just captivated by the idea that students
>
> could make an impact like meaningful changes now.

Rebecca joined at a time when the Student Voice Team was just starting out and many of

the students were older than her. While she felt welcome in the space and part of the

community, she was not quite comfortable enough to contribute her ideas. By not forcing

Rebecca to share her ideas, the Student Voice Team members gave her time to feel

comfortable in the space. Members also continued to invite her back to meetings and

ensured she knew she was always welcome. By giving everyone space to become

comfortable and accepted in the environment, the Student Voice Team members were

able to ensure that everyone felt "welcomed, included, and loved."

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members also saw the organization

as a community where they felt accepted and included. As noted in Chapter Five, OSV

strove to establish institutionalized practices and structures, such as decision-making

protocols and trainings, to ensure that all students felt like they had a space to feel

involved in the community. Members also were aware that all students may not feel

comfortable sharing their thoughts during large meetings and offered multiple

communication channels, such as Slack, for members to get connected and build

relationships. Each of these institutionalized practices helped OSV create a tight working community based in acceptance. Stephen, a White male student from an urban community, described his experience with OSV as follows:

> I definitely have to say that OSV's been very accepting. I mean, we say this, but we always joke that a lot of us are gay, and that's kind of a thing, and we're just very accepting of the LGBTQ+ community and I love that…we try to have a space for everyone, and anybody at any status or place in life in their high school career is able to join and feel involved.

However, beyond a working community, members also developed deep friendships with their peers. Many of these friendships evolved as students felt connected with the community and began to feel more comfortable contributing to decisions and work. Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, shared:

> I was not expecting to make super, super close friends from Oregon Student Voice, but I figured I would enjoy people's company. But, I've actually made some really great friends from the organization that we spend time with each other outside of the working atmosphere, just for fun.

Cayla expressed how she had grown close to the other members of the organization and saw them as more than just work colleagues, but as some of her closest friends. These relationships were evident when observing OSV meetings as members spent time socializing with one another before and after meetings. Developing relationships helped members stay connected to the work even when it became challenging, such as when they learn a policymaker will not support their policy reform, or when their school or

personal lives limited their availability. Members turned to one another during these times for support and encouragement to keep moving forward and not to give up.

In an environment where members hold a common mission and shared interests, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members developed deep relationships with one another. Many individuals viewed their fellow members as their "best friends" and "partners in crime." The members' sense of community kept many students coming back to the organization because they saw it as an accepting space to grow and develop "lifelong friendships" that they did not have in their schools or communities. The institutionalized practices described in Chapter Five have helped each organization create a strong sense of community.

Mentorship. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both engaged in peer mentorship activities to support members. These activities resulted in both organizations having a strong internal mentorship network where members could call on one another. Mentorship activities ranged from providing emotional support to overcome challenges to sharing insights into how previous members completed the work.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Mentorship was an important piece of the Student Voice Team's community as engaging in their activities could oftentimes cause stress on students. Through mentorship, members provided one another with emotional support to keep moving forward and cheer one another on when the work got challenging. In describing his experience in the policy work, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

I was really feeling a tremendous amount of pressure because of who we were

dealing with and how we were dealing with them and how we were being

targeted. I never really think I came to terms with that while I was in the midst of

it, but that was something that was very difficult, very degrading to my physical

and mental health at times, just because it wasn't something that a junior or senior

in high school was really prepared to handle.

While a member of the Student Voice Team, Eric relied on the support of Sara and the

other members to manage the day-to-day stress of engaging in the policy work. Members

helped one another deal with the challenges by not only supporting each other in

completing the work, but by also serving as friends to talk to when the work became

overwhelming. They mentored one another to ensure that members felt able to continue

engaging in the work and growing.

The members also regularly communicated with graduated members who have

moved on to college to learn how they completed work in the past. In discussing the role

of past members, Brian, a White male student from an urban community, said:

There's also a strong mentorship culture where we bounce ideas off of [past

members] because [they have] a really good grasp on a lot of this work. And

whoever succeeds [us] next year, I will hope will do the same.

These past members provided detailed insights into how they ran the organization in the

past and the types of activities they engaged in. Former members also provided their

thoughts on opportunities and challenges the current members may encounter in the

work. While there was not a formal structure for mentorship within the Student Voice

Team, it was an important piece that was built into their culture and community.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members did not discuss their

mentorship activities during interviews. In reviewing their Google Drive, I discovered a

formalized system in which new members were connected with old members when they

joined the organization. Members called this mentorship network the "buddy system." It

was designed to help new members get connected with the organization and develop

relationships. The buddy system was run by OSV's recruitment coordinator who matches

new members and old members. The buddy system evolved over several years as the

recruitment coordinator made changes based on feedback to ensure that everyone felt the

system was worth their time investment. One of the biggest changes made recently was

providing new and old members with each other's phone numbers, rather than using

Slack, to make communication easier as new members may not yet know how to use

Slack. The purpose of the buddy system was to help new members feel more connected

to the organization and to provide old members with an opportunity to share what they

have learned.

Members of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student

Voice viewed mentorship as a valuable tool to help students stay engaged in the

organizations. These mentorship opportunities provided graduated or older members with

the ability to share the knowledge they gained and their experiences with new members.

This sharing of knowledge helped move the work forward as well as maintained

continuity with past work completed by former members. Mentorship also provided

members with emotional support during difficult times as graduated and older members

could sympathize with the challenges newer members faced.

Commitment. Commitment to creating and leading K-12 education reform was important to members of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. This commitment helped members stay engaged in the work and supported them in moving forward when challenges arose. Without this commitment, members may find it difficult to engage deeply with the work.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Student Voice Team members hold a deep commitment for the work and to the mission. In discussing how her commitment for the work evolved, Lindsey, a White female student from a suburban community, asserted:

> I think that education was one of those things that I felt like I didn't have a lot of a voice in because I felt like it was very much out of my control, especially when I transferred into a public school from this tiny little private school.

Lindsey did not see a place for her to share her opinions on how to improve education and felt excluded from her education environment. This sentiment was shared by many of Student Voice Team members; a majority of which affirmed during their interview at some point that students should have a direct voice in education decision making. Therefore, these students became committed to reforming the K-12 education system to ensure that students would have a voice in the future.

This commitment not only stemmed from wanting to be involved in education change efforts, but also came from the "adult held" belief that students cannot engage in these types of efforts. Student Voice Team members often reported being told that they

need to "wait until they are older" or "wait till they finish school" to know how to drive education change. Detailing her experience, Rebecca, a non-White female student from an urban community, shared:

> I mean in my entire life I was being told, 'Oh like when you're an adult, you can do this' or 'when you get your law degree, you can work in the government,' and [the Student Voice Team was] already doing it. They were breaking the rules, it was something completely new and really unprecedented from what I've seen. I just fell in love with it.

Members saw the Student Voice Team as a place to show adults that middle and high schoolers could engage in change efforts in the same ways as adults. They hold a commitment to prove that they were capable of understanding the education system and providing meaningful contributions to improvements.

Finally, members had a commitment to confronting the injustices they saw in their schools going unaddressed. Injustices SVT shared ranged from discrimination of students due to race or sexual orientation to unequal access to financial resources for college. In reflecting on why they are committed to the work, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> It is important to underscore that we took on this burden ourselves [the burden of engaging in education reform]. The injustices we were witnessing not only within our school but between our school and others were simply unacceptable. We, a group of 16, 17, and 18-year-olds, decided that enough was enough and that we were prepared to do what it took to make a difference. And we did.

Commitment to education reform, commitment to showing the importance of student voice, and commitment to addressing injustices in schools kept members engaged in the work and moving forward when challenges arose.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members also hold a deep commitment for the work. OSV members saw their work as a way to make change in their environments to improve the K-12 education system for themselves and their peers. Delaine, a White female student from an urban community, explained:

> It's easy to keep working and staying on our feet because these are things that are affecting you at school. [We] spend so much time at school so it's easy to keep sight of why [we're] doing this. It doesn't feel useless. I can see how it's affecting me and how it's affecting my peers.

Delaine directly experienced how OSV's work could alter her educational experiences and these experiences contributed to her commitment for continuing to move the work forward. Echoing Delaine's sentiments, many OSV members wanted to make changes to the education system; however, could not find pathways to initiate these changes in their school environments. Therefore, they turned to OSV for support and to lead efforts. In describing the types of students that join OSV, James, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> Most active members in Oregon Student Voice they're active because they have passion….the type of student that puts themselves as a serious active member has put creating change as part of the forefront of their life and so they're doing it in any possible way they can.

James believed that commitment for creating change was an essential characteristic of an OSV member. Commitment for creating change kept OSV members engaged in the work, tackle new opportunities, and overcome challenges as they may arise.

Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members had a desire for their work to change the ways that Kentucky and Oregon's K-12 systems served students. They hold a deep commitment for ensuring that students were a part of future change efforts at the local and state level. With this commitment to make change and show the capabilities of students, Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members worked together in their built communities to lead education change efforts in Kentucky and Oregon, respectively.

Summary

Findings discussed in this chapter provide understandings into how student voice efforts use connections and how these connections influence student participation. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice build connections to support participation in student voice effort activities. I organized these connections into two themes: (a) adult supports and (b) student relationships. Adult supports were important to both student voice efforts as adults provided student with emotional and professional support to participate in activities. Both organizations relied on four key supports: (a) partner organization; (b) youth development opportunities; (c) relationship with adult champion, and (d) affirmation from outside adults.

Members believed that a partner organization was essential for allowing the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice to grow during their first years as they

provided stabilizing financial and political support. While SVT remained with their partner organization, which slightly influences students' ability to lead decision making, OSV decided to separate from their partner organization to have full authority over decision making. It is unclear how this will affect effort sustainability and growth in the future.

Youth development opportunities provided the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members with opportunities to grow. Both organizations approached these opportunities differently. OSV institutionalized opportunities through monthly youth development trainings directed at supporting members in their work. SVT encouraged members to learn while doing the work with support provided by their adult advisor.

Having a strong, caring mentorship relationship with the adult advisor also provided members of the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice with professional and emotional support to engage in the work. The advisors helped the members navigate an adult centric society and acted as a bridge between member and other adults. The advisors also supported the work by providing guidance and training to members. Finally, the advisors provided members with mentorship both inside and outside the organizations to ensure the members felt empowered in every aspect of their lives. The adult advisors encouraged increased participation as members saw them as friends and colleagues and viewed them as essential for moving the work forward.

Finally, how adults viewed the work of the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice greatly influenced the students' ability to participate in the work. Adults who viewed the work positively helped members navigate the challenges of engaging in

this work. Adults who viewed the work indifferently, negatively, or who tokenized the

students could cause members to lose confidence in their ability to lead change, which

could lead to disengagement. Both OSV and SVT relied on their adult advisor and

internal supports to help members navigate these positive and negative interactions.

Both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice also relied on student

relationships to help members stay engaged and connected to the work. Student

relationships were observed across three areas: (a) building relationships to facilitate

engagement, (b) strong internal mentorship network, and (c) commitment to the work.

Each of these helped members foster an inclusive community based in acceptance and

understanding where members felt comfortable to share their opinions and engage in

decision making. Without student relationships, many members within both organizations

may not continue to come back to the work.

Chapter Seven: Student Preparation for State-level Policymaking

In Chapters Seven and Eight, I discuss and analyze student participation, through student voice efforts, in the K-12 education policy process by comparing and contrasting practices of Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (SVT) and Oregon Student Voice (OSV). I utilize the theoretical framework for student voice efforts influencing policy reform outlined in Chapter Two and detailed in Figure 2 to organize the discussion and findings from the data. I specifically focus on themes identified from the data and arrange them into the following categories: (a) problem identification, (b) policy consideration, (c) coalition building, and (d) policy adoption. Each of these is a phase of the policy process identified from the literature. I strive to show how students navigate each of these identified phases to influence K-12 education change. I also highlight how effort focus, political environment, and access to social, economic, and political capital influence each effort's ability to engage with each state's legislative body. I divide the discrete identified phases listed above into two broad groups to facilitate analysis. These broad groups are (a) preparation and (b) advocacy.

It is important to note that themes in these discrete categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive as policy activities executed by student voice efforts were overlapping. That is, student voice efforts started some policy activities without finishing previous activities. Although this overlap exists, there is a specific rhythm used when discussing the data. I organize the data based on the order of activities the student voice efforts conducted when interacting with the policy process. For example, students first started problem identification activities before starting policy consideration activities;

therefore, I discuss problem identification before policy consideration. Therefore, throughout Chapters Seven and Eight, I present themes, such as policy activities, identified from the data in the order in which they were conducted by the students.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, I provide findings and analysis for two of my study's research questions:

1. How do students, through student voice efforts, participate in the K-12 education policy process?

2. How do students perceive their experience in the K-12 education policy process?

In this chapter, I discuss how members prepared for participating in the policy process through problem identification and policy consideration. In Chapter Eight, I explain the advocacy activities of the student voice efforts in the policy process through coalition building and policy adoption. These findings offer insight into how students navigate the policy process through student voice efforts. Findings also provide insights into how students perceive their experience.

Policy Overview

I begin by provide background on the policies Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice decided to pursue at the state legislature in Kentucky and Oregon, respectively. Before discussing and analyzing the findings, it is important to note that the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team led their policy effort, while Oregon Student Voice provided support as part of a coalition. Because Oregon Student Voice provided support rather than led, members did not engage as deeply in the policy process. Therefore, there is less data on how Oregon Student Voice

engaged in the policy process.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. For several decades, the Kentucky

State Legislature had been redirecting lottery proceedings originally designated to higher

education funding to other priorities when creating the state budget. The redirected

lottery proceedings were supposed to help fund the state's College Access Program for

low-income students at public colleges and the Kentucky Tuition Grant for low-income

students at private schools. In 2016, the legislature had reallocated $55 million from the

programs. This resulted in fewer low-income students being able to benefit from the

programs as they were solely funded by lottery revenues. In addition to this policy

problem, the Kentucky State Legislature was fully funding the scholarship program to

support high achieving students, the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship. The

discrepancy between funding for the programs supporting high achieving students and

those supporting low-income students caused some SVT members to feel frustrated by

the legislature. In discussing the policy issue, Patrick, a White male student from an

urban community, stated:

> The lottery money went to several scholarship funds. One of the scholarships,
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> which supported two programs, had a 10-percent deficit in it, while another
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> scholarship, the [Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship], was funded
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> fully. The [Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship] went to students for
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> their grades. So, if you had a 4.0, you got $200 for every A. Everybody knew that
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> money was there. Everybody expected that money. If they had taken that money
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> away, voters would've been unhappy about it. Whereas money for need-based

scholarships doesn't go to the kind of people who are going to know it's there and who are going to know to vote on that issue. They always had the option of taking [Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship] money. They just always took it from the [Kentucky Tuition Grant] and [Kentucky College Access Program]. It was very much an issue of just being able to get away with it pretty much.

Therefore, the Student Voice Team decided to address the issue and advocate for the programs supporting low-income students to be fully funded.

During the 2016 legislative session, the Student Voice Team advocated for the legislature to fully fund the programs by committing an additional $55 million to the programs over the following two years. They organized a coalition of education-focused organizations to support their efforts. They also wrote over 10 opinion and editorial pieces published in state and national newspapers, met with state legislators, and organized a rally on the Capitol steps. Ultimately, the legislature and the Kentucky Governor agreed to commit an additional $14 million over the following two years to the need-based college grant and scholarship programs.

Oregon Student Voice. In 2016, Oregon Student Voice joined the ethnic studies coalition, which consisted of over 20 education-focused organizations from across Oregon. The goal of the coalition was to pass a state law, House Bill 2845, that directed the Oregon Department of Education to convene an advisory group to develop ethnic studies standards and incorporate them into existing statewide social studies standards. House Bill 2845 was introduced in the 2017 legislative session. In discussing the policy in an opinion piece published in a statewide newspaper, James, a non-White member

from an urban community, shared:

> While the makeup of Oregon's population is diverse, current social studies
> standards don't reflect that. We believe that students in Oregon public schools are
> deprived of an education that represents the many histories and perspectives of
> individuals within the state. These new standards would mean that the histories
> and contributions of ethnic and social minorities are taught in schools. I believe
> that [House Bill] 2845 will help build understanding between people, diminish
> stereotypes and combat hatred caused by people's differences.

Due to the concerns highlighted by James, Oregon Student Voice decided to support the coalition and advocate for House Bill 2845. OSV members believed that the creation of ethnic studies standards in the social studies standards would encourage school districts and teachers to select and utilize materials that were more inclusive of the student populations.

Oregon Student Voice members participated in the final drafting of House Bill 2845 and successfully added two high school students or recent graduate to the advisory group. Student members also participated in the advocacy campaign to pass House Bill 2845 at the Oregon State Legislature by writing an opinion piece published in a state newspaper, meeting with state legislators, and testifying before both the House and Senate Education Committees. Students worked directly with the coalition to organize these activities. The bill successfully passed the House and Senate chambers in late June and was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown on June 30, 2017.

Problem Identification

Problem identification in this study occurred when student voice efforts identify a problem and policy solution that they want to advance in the policy process. Activities during this phase may include identifying a problem, establishing a policy solution, recognizing the priorities of the formal agenda, assessing the policy window for whether or not it is the right time to enact change, and understanding the local and historical context of their current environment to leverage opportunities and predict challenges (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993; Cobb and Elder, 1995; Kofod et al., 2012; Fowler, 2013). I discuss how Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice (a) identified a problem for policy reform, (b) decided to support the policy, and (c) examined the local and historical political context to understand the current environment.

Identify Problem. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both identified a problem for policy reform using their understanding of the education system and the supports from other education stakeholders. For both organizations, a policy issue and potential solution were presented by an outside stakeholder. While members were already aware of the policy issue, they did not necessarily plan to advocate for a particular solution until speaking with the outside stakeholder.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In 2015, the Kentucky Center for Education Policy, an education-focused research and policy organization, approached the Student Voice Team about the redirecting of lottery proceedings by the Kentucky State Legislature away from scholarships for low-income students. Dan, a researcher and

policy advocate, explained why they approached SVT:

> My initial goal was just to make them aware of it and see if they would be able to
> provide stories of kids who have had difficulty going to college or who may have
> been turned down for the scholarship because it ran out of money. Through that
> conversation, they basically said it would be something they would be interested
> in advocating for.

Members of the Student Voice Team were already aware of this issue and had discussed
it before meeting with Dan. They saw it as an issue that needed to be talked about,
organized around, and advocated for, but were also considering other policy issues to
advance in the 2016 legislative session.

Ultimately, after meeting with Dan, Student Voice Team members realized that
the policy issue regarding the lottery proceedings would be an ideal issue to move
forward because it was a "duh issue;" a term developed by the students. To SVT, a "duh
issue" was an issue that (a) did not easily fall along Democrat or Republican lines, (b)
concerned education equity for students, and (c) needed students to advocate for it. These
issues were considered "low hanging fruit" that the Student Voice Team could easily get
behind and make a big difference. In describing why they pursued the lottery issue, Jane,
a White female student from a rural community, described:

> There are a lot of very lofty idealistic things that we could pursue but the [lottery
> issue] was really a low-hanging fruit. And so, it's like this is wrong. We can say
> that this is wrong. There's no way that you can say that what we're saying isn't
> valid and so, we really took that and said, 'We've got this. We can publicize this.

We have the contacts. We have the students. We have all of that.'

Members believed that the lottery issue was an easy problem to fix if they just dedicated time and energy. They felt as though legislators would have a difficult time arguing against them as state law stipulated that lottery funds go to the specific scholarship funds. Further, they saw that the funds that were being diverted were those that benefited low income students, which they thought would look bad for legislators as it was inequitable. The issue was already on the formal agenda as the 2016 legislative session was a budget year, so it was the perfect time for the Student Voice Team to consider advancing the issue. They decided to name their policy effort the Powerball Promise Campaign; therefore, I will use this term to discuss the policy issue.

Oregon Student Voice. In fall 2016, Oregon Student Voice was discussing if and how they would participate in the 2017 legislative session. During this time, OSV received an invitation, through their connection with the Chalkboard Project, to attend a meeting with the ethnic studies coalition. The ethnic studies coalition consisted of over 20 education-focused organizations from across Oregon. Participants included state legislators, nonprofit organizations, community-based groups, labor unions, and education leaders, mainly district and school level administrators, and district-level student groups. At the meeting, OSV members learned about a legislative concept, which became known as House Bill 2845 that would create an advisory group to develop ethnic studies standards and incorporate them into existing statewide social-studies standards. After the coalition meeting, OSV members discussed the importance of the bill at their next monthly all-member meeting. In recollecting the conversation, Cayla, a White

female student from a suburban community, explained:

> I think it was something that was really important for us to be a part of and to go
> out and say as an organization, equity is our number one focus in education and
> we're really excited about the possibility of making it a more inclusive and
> representative place in our Oregon schools. And then I think all of the students in
> that room who decided that we wanted to join the coalition, I think we just had a
> similar mindset that in our curriculum there is a lot of history and a lot of
> experience that isn't representative…that isn't represented in that curriculum but it
> exists and it's important for us to learn about that. So yeah, I think that people just
> thought that it was an important issue.

Aa noted by Cayla, when discussing the bill, OSV members reflected on their educational
experiences and the lack of representation of their cultures and those of their peers. They
considered joining the ethnic studies coalition to help advocate for House Bill 2845 and
provide the student perspective on the importance of the bill. By the time OSV became
involved, the issue was already on the formal agenda as two legislators had already
decided to champion the bill and previously spoke with Senate and House leadership. The
bill became known as the Ethnic Studies Bill; therefore, I will use this term to discuss
House Bill 2845.

Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice
decided to look into their policy issues after being prompted by other education
stakeholders. However, student members used their educational experiences to determine
if the policy issues were important. Further, both student voice efforts recognized that

providing student voices could give necessary context and weight for raising awareness about the policy. Neither organization had to fight for the policy issue to be added to the formal state agenda, so the members saw the timing as an opportunity for their voices to make a big difference in ensuring the policy solution became law.

Collective Process to Support Policy. As discussed in Chapter Five, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice had different processes for decision making. The Student Voice Team's leadership team first decided to support the policy after conducting research and then brought it to the entire membership to evaluate their interest. Conversely, Oregon Student Voice's membership worked together through a policy analysis process and then voted as a group to support the policy. While these differences are present, it is not clear how they influenced student participation in the policy process as no students interviewed indicated that they did not want to support the policy or that their policy priority was not considered.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team's leadership team took the lead on deciding whether to pursue the Powerball Promise Campaign. After several of the members met with Dan, a researcher and policy advocate, they brought the policy idea back to the rest of the leadership team for a discussion. They conducted additional research on how they could address the policy issue, such as reading articles published about the issue, looking at past legislative budgets, and speaking with students. After determining the facts, the leadership team decided to bring it to the entire membership at a monthly all-member meeting to secure their support. In describing the process, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

The first meeting took place with about eight or nine [members] of our leadership team. There were some initial kind of research that was done and that was done largely amongst our committee chairs and our various leadership folks and then eventually we had a general meeting. At that meeting, we basically laid out the facts. We said, 'This is what's happening. This is why we think it's wrong…If you are as enraged by this as we are, here's what we're thinking we might be able to do.' I know at the time there were some other legislative issues that were kind of bubbling around the periphery that folks were interested in exploring more.

After listening to the leadership team, a majority of members voted to support the Powerball Promise Campaign. The members agreed with the leadership team that the policy needed student voice behind it to encourage legislatures to address the issue. Further, members agreed that the 2016 legislative session offered a key policy window as legislators would be creating a budget for the following two years. Finally, many of the members were juniors, seniors, or recent graduates in 2016 and access to funds for college was at the forefront of their minds and many of their peers. Members felt a strong connection to the policy issue and were passionate about ensuring that all students had access to funds to help them pay for college.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice's membership collaborated to determine which policy issues to pursue. All potential policy issues were brought to the group, and members went through a policy analysis process to determine which policies to support, remain neutral on, or advocate against. Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, discussed this process:

We have a [policy analysis process]. It's a list of steps for deciding on a policy

and if we want to pursue it as an organization. And it has us look through an

equity lens and evaluate how that policy will affect other people, how it will

affect our organization, how it will affect specific populations, and whether or not

the benefits will outweigh the cons and if we should put our energy into that as an

organization. So, [for the Ethnic Studies Bill], we went through and evaluated it

and decided that it was.

Members utilized this process to evaluate the Ethnic Studies Bill and voted unanimously

to support the bill. Members believed the bill would positively affect students, teachers,

and the Oregon community because students would learn more about different cultures,

ethnicities, and communities. Members also thought it would benefit the organization, as

students would have an opportunity to interact with the policy process alongside other

organizations. They saw this as a chance to learn how to advocate for policy reform from

individuals who have been working in the state legislature for multiple years. Finally,

many members belonged to the communities that this bill was meant to benefit, such as

women, individuals of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. They believed

student voices would be essential for ensuring the bill passed.

A couple weeks after Oregon Student Voice officially joined the ethnic studies

coalition, Chalkboard Project also decided to join the coalition, independent of OSV's

decision. Before Chalkboard Project joined the coalition, the organization had agreed not

to limit OSV's ability to engage in the policy process. However, Chalkboard Project

joining the ethnic studies coalition helped OSV feel more comfortable with their decision

as it was easy for members to contact Chalkboard Project's policy director and lobbyist to ask questions outside coalition meetings.

Although differences exist in how both efforts came to a decision to support their policies, the reasons why they decided to advocate for the policy issues did not differ greatly. Both efforts believed student voice was necessary to pass the policy priorities. Students wanted to advocate for policies because they supported them and because they believed their voice would increase the likelihood of their passage. Members in both efforts also felt that they had a vested interest in ensuring the policies passed as they influenced members' education and that of their peers. This suggests that need for student voice to pass the policy and student passion and connection to the policy may be necessary for members in a student voice effort to agree to collectively advocate for a bill. Additionally, neither organization was prevented from pursuing their policy priority by their partner organization. It is unclear how a lack of support from the partnership organization would have influenced members participation.

Local and Historical Context. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice considered the local and historical political context of the policies in which they were hoping to enact. Kentucky, where the Student Voice Team was located, and Oregon, where Oregon Student Voice originated, are often perceived as different policy environments. Kentucky was viewed as a conservative-leaning policy environment with a centralized education system where only a few actors participated in reform efforts (Clark, 2003; Kofod et al., 2012). Conversely, Oregon was seen as a progressive-leaning policy environment with a decentralized education system where

many actors could participate (Louis et al., 2008; Kofod et al., 2012).

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In assessing the local and historical political context, the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team members believed the 2016 legislative session was the ideal time to advocate for the Powerball Promise Campaign. They saw that advocates and local reporters had been pushing the issue for ten years, but the legislature was continuing to reallocate dollars from the scholarship funds. The members also recognized that they would be pushing their policy issue during a legislative session with a Democratic-majority House, a Republican-majority Senate, and a Republican Governor. The House and Senate had been Democratic and Republican, respectively, since 2000. The Republican Governor, Governor Bevin, however, was recently elected following eight years of a Democratic Governor. Due to the change in gubernatorial leadership, SVT members felt as though they had an open window to enact change as Governor Bevin may want to pass a budget different from previous years.

In addition, the Student Voice Team had just gained an understanding of how policies were enacted at the Kentucky State Legislature. In the 2015 legislative session, SVT had strived to pass a legislative policy regarding students serving on superintendent search committees. The policy was defeated, but the members gained an understanding of how the process worked and realized that students were rarely engaged. For the Powerball Promise Campaign, they decided to amplify the presence of student voice at the state legislature. In discussing the presence of student voice, Sara, the Student Voice Team's adult advisor, stated:

Before the Powerball Promise Campaign, aside from the lone student testifier on

an occasional adult panel, we rarely saw students other than ourselves [The

Student Voice Team] in advocacy or policy roles on the legislative scene. The

advantage of this was that this made it easier for our students, as unexpected

messengers, to essentially steal the show. The optics and audio of students

speaking passionately and knowledgably about education issues were difficult for

reporters to resist, and our team received more than our fair share of media

coverage throughout the session.

Because students are not traditionally engaged in the legislative session, SVT members

believed they could gain attention and notoriety from the press for the Powerball Promise

Campaign. They thought that this attention may sway legislators.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice peripherally looked into the

historical and local context to see whether the 2017 legislative session was an ideal time

to advocate for the Ethnic Studies Bill. This work was already completed by the ethnic

studies coalition. The coalition formed in Spring 2016, but Oregon Student Voice did not

become involved until fall 2016. By this point, the coalition had already assessed the

political landscape and determined that the 2017 legislative session provided a good

opportunity to pass the Ethnic Studies Bill. The Oregon House, Senate, and governorship

had been controlled by the Democrat Party since 2013. Additionally, the recent 2016

election led to an increase in the number of legislators identifying as people of color and

women (Achen, 2016). Therefore, the coalition believed that this increase benefited their

bill as more legislators may have personal experience in not seeing themselves reflected

in their school curriculum.

Oregon Student Voice assessed whether including student voices would be important for passing the Ethnic Studies Bill. Prior to the 2017 legislative session, legislators did not regularly hear from students at the state capitol. In describing how often students advocated at the legislature, Cayla, a White female student from a suburban community, stated:

> Before OSV, student participation in the Oregon education policy arena was minimal and tokenizing at best. There were few input avenues for student feedback, and most existing channels were only accessible to those of extreme privilege. OSV wanted to broaden access to education stakeholders at both the state and local levels.

OSV wanted to alter the way students participated in the process and believed that the Ethnic Studies Bill provided an opportunity. First, members knew their education lacked teachings around ethnic studies because they directly experienced it every day in the classroom. They believed that directly providing student experiences would incite legislators to pass the bill. They also wanted student voices represented to ensure that the policy actually met the needs of the students. By having students participate in the process, they felt that the Ethnic Studies Bill would more accurately reflect the needs of students. Finally, they felt that legislators may dismiss students, and OSV felt that being linked to the ethnic studies coalition could provide them with additional influence. Therefore, OSV believed that the Ethic Studies Bill provided an important opportunity for students to enter the policy-making process.

While Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice

advocated for policies in very different contexts, they capitalized on a similar set of circumstances. First, both organizations thought that a change in political context could result in their policy being passed. For the Student Voice Team, a change in the governorship offered an opportunity for reform. For Oregon Student Voice, an increase in the number of legislators identifying as people of color and women presented an opening for change. Second, both student voice efforts saw the inclusion of student voices in the policy-making process as necessary for passing the reforms as well as an opportunity to grow students' influence in the process. Both of these circumstances contributed to the student voice efforts deciding to advocate for their policies.

Policy Consideration

Policy consideration involves developing strategies to achieve policy adoption. This includes identifying available energy (such as time) and resources (such as economic, political, and social capital) to pass a policy, determining the appropriate arena to enact change, and securing visible champions to move the policy forward (Cohen et al., 1972; Mazzoni, 1991; Kingdon, 1995, 2003). In the following, I discuss how Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice (a) assesses their available energy and resources, (b) determined the arena, and (c) identified a legislative champion.

Available Energy and Resources. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice assessed their available energy (e.g. time) and resources (e.g. economic, political, and social capital) when deciding how to pursue their policy priorities. For both organizations, they decided that since they were high school students, they only had the bandwidth to focus on one policy priority due to school, extracurricular

activities, and family obligations. Both efforts also evaluated their access to resources. It is important to note that in the policy process, access to resources is a form of power as actors use these resources to influence the public and the legislature.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. After deciding to dedicate all of their effort to one policy due to the limited free time they had available as students, the Student Voice Team identified three resources they would need to advocate for the Powerball Promise Campaign: (a) knowledge, (b) public awareness, and (c) a coalition of education-focused organizations. Members decided they would need to know more information about the budget if they were going to convince legislators to change their practices. They utilized past approved budgets, news articles, information collected from partnering organizations, and statements from students, parents, and college administrators. In discussing why they conducted research, Rebecca, a non-White female student from an urban community, shared:

> We did our research beforehand. We wanted to make sure that we were not only student voice, but we're informed student voice, so you want to make sure that all of the assertions that we were making were true.

Members wanted to ensure that they weren't only using their personal experience, but also had concrete information to back up their experiences. They thought that additional research may persuade legislators and help them answer difficult questions if asked.

The Student Voice Team also accessed their social capital, which refers to the network of relationships among individuals and the benefits that arise from these relationships that can be leveraged to advance a cause (Bourdieu, 1986; 2005). They had

relationships with students, schools, districts, nonprofits, education associations, and

media outlets across Kentucky through their social media, particularly Twitter and

Facebook, and email listservs. They decided they could use these resources alongside

their personal email platforms to raise public awareness. They thought legislators would

have a harder time ignoring their request if they were receiving pressure from multiple

parties. This social capital gave them power in the public sphere.

In further accessing their resources, Student Voice Team realized they did not

have enough political or economic capital, which provided power in the legislature.

Political capital deals with the trust, goodwill, and influence individuals or communities

have with policy actors. Economic capital concerns the monetary value an individual or

community possess to advance a cause.

SVT had amassed some political capital during the 2015 legislative session when

they worked on a bill that was defeated; however, SVT still had difficulty scheduling

meetings with legislators. Further, SVT did not have access to lobbying, communication,

or research support, which all required economic resources. To ensure they would have

support in the 2016 session, members decided they would need to build a coalition and

access their resources. Sara, SVT's adult advisor, discussed why SVT decided to build a

coalition:

> We talked to [Prichard Committee's Executive Director] about it and her advice
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> was along the lines of: You're going to run into the same problem as last time
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> [which included difficulty in meeting with legislators and navigating the policy
>
> process] with House Bill 236, unless, can you consider putting together a coalition

of people on this issue? So, we thought that would be a way to support the work. Members believed these organizations could provide resources that they may not have access to due to lack of economic and political capital. Working with other organizations helped members feel more confident that the Powerball Promise Campaign would succeed before entering the 2016 legislative session.

Oregon Student Voice. The 2017 legislative session was the first year in which Oregon Student Voice considered advocating at the state legislature as the effort had formed in August 2016. Members identified two resources they would need to advocate for the Ethnic Studies Bill: (a) support from the coalition and (b) power in numbers. In deciding to support the policy, members assessed that the resources available through the coalition would be essential for participating in the process. The coalition had access to lobbyists, policy researchers, communication specialists, and grassroots organizers; all of which required economic resources. The coalition also had a deep understanding of the policy process as many members had been working in the legislature for years. OSV members saw they did not have the same political or economic capital as the coalition and knew they would need to join if they hoped to make an influence.

Oregon Student Voice members also assessed that they had resources to contribute. OSV had access to over 1,000 students across Oregon through their organizational and personal social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat. Members saw the power in the public sphere that they had in numbers and believed that they could encourage many of these students to support the policy. In discussing this resource, James, a non-White male student from an urban

community, stated:

> There's power in numbers…so like there are a lot of students that are pushing for
> change and if we have one specific way to create positive change…we become a
> cohesive group that is pushing towards that. So, we use social media to reach out
> to them to create essentially communication with our communities about what
> we're doing, what we're trying to do, what we believe in, and hopefully the
> communities hear us and join.

Members thought they could tap into their base to raise public awareness and support for
the policy. OSV also judged that they could use their connections to media outlets, such
as education reporters and radio producers, to reach more members of the public who
may be interested in the policy. Members saw their social capital as an essential resource
as they believed that legislators could dismiss the needs of one student, but it would be
difficult to ignore hundreds of students.

After deciding to put all of their available energy into one policy priority, Prichard
Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice assessed their resources and
came to similar conclusions. Both efforts realized that they possessed social capital to
raise public awareness through their access to students and relationships with the media.
However, both efforts also recognized that they would need to tap into the political and
economic capital (or power at the legislature) of partner organizations, who had
relationships in the legislature and resources for lobbyists, communication specialists,
and researchers. While the Student Voice Team built a coalition to tap into these
resources, Oregon Student Voice joined a coalition. This is a key difference between the

two efforts and influenced how they interacted in the policy process.

Grassroots versus Grasstops Arenas. Due to access to social capital, both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice decided to pursue their policies in an arena where they believed the public had more influence. Members felt that they would have more power at the state legislature if they raised public awareness about their issue and asked for support in advocating at the legislature. After raising public awareness and support, members would then bring their issue to the legislature to advocate for their policy.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team saw the policy process divided into two arenas: grassroots versus grasstops arenas. SVT members developed these terms based on their understanding. The grassroots arena was where members raised public awareness and galvanized the public to pressure the legislature. The grasstops arena was where members directly spoke with legislators behind closed doors to advocate for support of their policy. The main difference between the grassroots and grasstops arenas was that activities were happening outside of the public eye in the grasstops arena. In discussing grassroots versus grasstops, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> The majority of students in our group believed that it was better to appeal to the public [the grassroots], that you couldn't trust what happened behind closed doors, that the folks in the grasstops, either for nefarious reasons or just plain ignorance, weren't going to be able to be responsive to our needs or the issues that we cared about.

Members believed strongly in using social capital to influence change and that the more people advocating for the Powerball Promise Campaign would force legislators to listen. Therefore, members decided mainly to pursue the grassroots arena. Their strategy would involve using their social media platforms as well as newspaper reporters to reach out to multiple organizations and individuals to raise awareness.

The Student Voice Team also strategized to engage in the grasstops arena to ensure that legislators were hearing their messages. As mentioned in the previous section, the Student Voice Team decided to organize a coalition to leverage their political and economic capital to gain access to legislators in the grasstops arena. SVT reached out to organizations that already held power in the legislature. These organizations had access to lobbyists and researchers that could help SVT members reach legislators and form their arguments. In addition to the coalition members, SVT members also decided to find a legislative champion to encourage other legislators to support their policy by forming alliances. Although SVT members did not necessary trust legislators or other advocates behind closed doors, they hoped that engaging in the grasstops arena would increase the probability that their policy would be passed. They also believed that their work in the grassroots arena would help prevent legislators from dismissing them in the grasstops arena.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice also perceived the policy process as having two arenas: the arena open to the public and the arena happening behind closed doors. To simplify these phrases, I utilize the Student Voice Team's terminology of the grassroots versus grasstops arena. OSV followed a similar strategy as the Student Voice

Team; however, for slightly different reasons. OSV decided to focus on the grassroots arena because the ethnic studies coalition already had a plan for the grasstops arena.

As noted previously, the coalition consisted of organizations and individuals with experience in K-12 politics in Oregon. Many organizations already built longstanding relationships with legislators. Additionally, a state representative, Representative Diego Hernandez, and a state senator, Senator Lew Frederick, served on the coalition. OSV believed that other coalition members would mainly participate in the grasstops arena and, therefore, OSV could focus their energy on the grassroots arena. OSV planned to participate in the grasstops arena when asked by the coalition, such as providing verbal and written testimony to committees and meeting with legislators. However, they did not plan to engage in the grasstops arena every week as other coalition members were taking the lead.

Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice decided to use the grassroots arena to raise public awareness and encourage the public to support their policies. Members speculated that these awareness efforts would make it more difficult for legislators to dismiss them in the grasstops arena as they would have the public supporting their cause. Both efforts also found support from other education-focused organizations and key legislators to help them engage in the grasstops arena.

Legislative Champion. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice received support from legislative champions to move their policies forward. These legislative champions served as key proponents for the policy in the legislature and helped ensure the policies were considered. The Student Voice Team

actively participated in recruiting their legislative champion, while Oregon Student Voice

joined a coalition that already recruited two legislative champions.

    Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team actively

recruited one key legislator to support the Powerball Promise Campaign. Members

wanted to have someone inside the capitol to support for their policy issue behind closed

doors. They had in-person meetings with legislators prior to and at the beginning of the

2016 legislative session to explain the issue and asked for their support. They eventually

identified Representative James Kay to be their legislative champion. Representative

James Kay was a mid-30s democratic representative who was in his second term in the

Kentucky House of Representatives. He was the youngest legislator in Kentucky at the

time. In discussing the recruitment and role of the legislative champion, Dan, a researcher

and policy advocate, described:

> A couple of legislators were really working alongside [the Student Voice Team]
>
> to push for this issue….the most outspoken…the legislative champion…was one
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> of the youngest, if not the youngest, legislator. It's not clear to me whether or not
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> Representative Kay was already interested, whether he became interested because
>
> one or the other of us met with him, or if it was just [the Student Voice Team]. I
>
> would say, though, that having a large group of student advocates backing the
>
> issue gave him the political clout that he needed to be able to be an outspoken
>
> advocate for it.

It is not clear why Representative James Kay agreed to support the policy, and who

ultimately convinced him. However, it was clear to the Student Voice Team that their

voices provided Representative Kay with the necessary backing needed to advocate actively for the policy.

Oregon Student Voice. When Oregon Student Voice joined the ethnic studies coalition, Representative Diego Hernandez and Senator Lew Frederick had already been recruited to serve as the legislative champions. Representative Diego Hernandez was a Democrat recently elected to the Oregon House of Representatives. Senator Lew Frederick was a Democrat recently elected to the Oregon State Senate, but had served as a representative since 2009. These legislators may have had a vested interest in the policy as they were formally teachers. Additionally, both legislators identified as individuals of color and felt that the Oregon social studies standards did not allow them, or other teachers, space to provide instruction inclusive of the many histories and backgrounds represented in Oregon's population. In discussing the bill with *Oregon Public Broadcasting* in 2017, Representative Diego Hernandez stated: "The goal is to help students from those backgrounds 'see themselves as the fabric of this country—and not as separate from it'" (Lehman, 2017).

These legislators participated in the drafting the bill and met with Oregon's House and Senate leadership to ensure it was introduced. Both legislators were also assigned to K-12 education committees, in the House and Senate respectively. They worked with their colleagues to support the Ethnic Studies Bill. While OSV members interacted with the legislators and assisted in preparing information for activities, they did not participate in the recruitment of the legislators to support the bill.

The policies advocated for by Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and

Oregon Student Voice benefited from the backing of legislative champions. These legislators met with their colleagues in closed door advocacy efforts to raise support for the policies. However, it is not necessarily clear the role that students play in recruiting legislators to support their policy priorities. For the Student Voice Team, Representative James Kay recognized that the importance of student voices in advancing the Powerball Promise Campaign forward; however, he may have been convinced by other stakeholders to support the policy. Oregon Student Voice did not have an opportunity to recruit legislative champions for their policy.

Summary

Findings discussed in this chapter give a deeper understanding of how students, through student voice efforts, prepare to advocate for policy reform in the state-level K-12 education policy process. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice engaged in two phases of the policy process to prepare themselves to advocate: (a) problem identification and (b) policy consideration. In these activities, students strived to comprehend how they would influence the policy process.

During problem identification, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice prepared for advocacy by (a) identifying a problem for policy reform, (b) deciding to support the policy reform, and (c) examining the local and historical political context to understand the current environment. For this phase, both efforts relied on their educational experiences and their belief in the importance of student voice. While they were presented with a problem and policy solution by other education stakeholders, both student voice efforts decided to advocate for the policy solution based on two factors: (a)

they believed the policies would improve the educational experiences of themselves and their peers and (b) they felt that inclusion of student voices was necessary to pass the policy. Each effort saw their policy priority as providing an important opportunity for students to further engage with the policy-making process. Both efforts also wanted to capitalize on the policy window opened to them due to a change in political context. All of these aspects contributed to the student voice efforts deciding to advocate for their policies.

During policy consideration, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice prepared for advocacy by (a) assessing their available energy and resources, (b) determining the arena, and (c) identifying legislative champions. Both efforts assessed that they possessed social capital through their access to students and relationships with the media. They believed their social capital would enable them to raise public awareness about their policies in the grassroots arena. However, both efforts also recognized that they would need to tap into the political and economic capital of partner organizations to gain access to legislators in the grasstops arena. Many of the decisions made by both student voice efforts were rooted in the students' beliefs that they would have a difficult time influencing the grasstops arena because they lacked political and economic capital. The Student Voice Team decided to build a coalition of organizations to tap into these resources, while Oregon Student Voice joined a coalition to gain access. During this phase, the Student Voice Team also identified a legislative champion to assist them in passing their policy at the state legislature, while Oregon Student Voice relied on the efforts of their coalition who had previous secured legislative champions.

Chapter Eight: Student Advocacy in State-level Policymaking

In Chapter Eight, I analyze how members of the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice advocated for policy reform in the state-level K-12 policy process. I organize themes related to advocacy identified from the data, which included interviews with students and adults as well as document analysis of work performed, into the following categories: (a) coalition building and (b) policy adoption. These are two phases of the policy process outlined in Chapter Two and detailed in Figure 2. Coalition building provides an opportunity for student voice efforts to secure supporters and identify opponents for their policy issues. During policy adoption, student voice efforts advocate for their issue.

Coalition Building

Coalition building involves student voice effort securing support from stakeholders, forming social, economic, and political capital, and pinpointing opposition (Bourdieu, 2005; Tamir, 2010; Mitra, 2014). In the following, I discuss how Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice (a) secure support from other education-focused actors, (b) establish economic and political capital, and (c) identify potential opponents to their policy priorities. When Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice assessed their available energy and resources, both student voice efforts realized they would need to build or join a coalition to achieve their policy priorities.

Secure Support. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice sought support from other education-focused organizations. By constructing their

own coalition, the Student Voice Team partnered with organizations that understood and respected the importance of student voice and student agency in the policy process. These organizations allowed the Student Voice Team members to lead. Conversely, Oregon Student Voice members joined a coalition where they had to work to show that their voice was important. Due to this difference, OSV members had a more difficult time initially interacting with coalition members.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. When endeavoring to build their coalition, the Student Voice Team identified policy actors that they believed would be in support of the Powerball Promise Campaign. They reached out to a number of different organizations, including education-based nonprofits, education-focused research firms, school board association, superintendent association, teacher association, universities, parents, and government officials. In describing who they wanted as members of their coalition, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, stated:

> We wanted to target groups that, like us, shared a commitment to educational equity and so in addition to the group, [the Kentucky Center for Education Policy], that brought it to us originally, we started reaching out to folks like the school boards association, the teachers association. We started reaching out to groups that had an established record of community involvement with an eye towards equity. We spoke to policy folks from different sides of the aisle.

SVT members believed that they could secure support from organizations by showing how the Powerball Promise Campaign would resolve an equity issue.

In approaching organizations for support, Student Voice Team members had a

two-pronged approach: (a) make organizations aware of the issue and (b) ask for support. They understood that many of the organizations may not be aware that the state was underfunding scholarships for low-income students. Eric explained:

> We really just started trying to get both groups and individuals aware of the issue and we knew that if we made them aware of the issue and gave them an opportunity to do something about it, that they would at least lend their names and in many cases they lent some additional help.

SVT members found that once organizations knew about the issue, they wanted to support the Powerball Promise Campaign. In all, over 15 organizations worked with SVT on Powerball Promise Campaign in various capacities. Many organizations offered to lend their name to support flyers given to legislators. Additional organizations also provided resources that would help the SVT members craft their arguments and connect with legislators. These organizations often took direction from SVT and asked where they could best help.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice joined a coalition that was already working on the Ethnic Studies Bill, which created an advisory group to add ethnic studies standards to the Oregon social studies standards. Before OSV got involved, the ethnic studies coalition consisted of over 20 organizations from across Oregon. Actors included state legislators, nonprofit organizations, community-based groups, labor unions, education leaders, mainly district and school level administrators, and district-level student groups. Oregon Student Voice joined to help represent the student perspective.

However, because they joined the coalition later than other organizations, OSV

members struggled to feel like they belonged during meetings. In discussing her experience, Delaine, a White female student from an urban community, described:

> I would say in the beginning how they were very…indifferent towards OSV when we first met a lot of them…they were just like oh yeah, that's cute a little pat on the shoulder. Oregon Student Voice, what is that? And we had to explain it to them. And over time after we sat and [showed] we're passionate about these issues, we know a little bit about these issues, they eventually considered our perspective.

As Delaine outlines, it took time for the coalition members to begin to include OSV in their planning. After several months of continuously attending meetings and providing their perspectives, OSV members started to feel heard.

One of OSV's biggest victories during this time was convincing the coalition to add two high school students or recent graduates to the advisory group to develop ethnic studies standards. During a weekly meeting that I observed, the coalition leader asked if any organizations had any edits to the bill and OSV suggested adding two students to the advisory group. The coalition was initially hesitant, but OSV asserted that the group needed representation from students to accurately capture student needs. The next draft of the bill included the addition. After this victory, OSV members felt that the coalition saw their perspectives as valuable, leading the members to feel more comfortable participating in meetings.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice had different experiences in securing support during coalition building. While the Student

Voice Team strove to secure support for the Powerball Promise Campaign from other organizations, Oregon Student Voice worked towards securing support for their voices. These divergent experiences are largely attributed to the fact that the Student Voice Team built a coalition where organizations saw students as important, while Oregon Student Voice joined a pre-existing coalition. Ultimately, both student voice efforts secured support for their policy priority and their voice.

Acquire Economic and Political Capital. By securing support from a coalition, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice gained access to the economic and political capital to help move forward their policy priorities. As noted in the previous chapter, both student voice efforts already had access to social capital. However, they needed economic and political capital to ensure legislators considered their policies.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. After teaming up with the Student Voice Team, several coalition organizations actively provided support to members advocating for the Powerball Promise Campaign. Similar to SVT members' assessment, they saw the power SVT had to mobilize support across Kentucky, but also recognized that SVT may need assistance. The coalition organizations had political and financial resources that were unavailable to SVT. Political resources included lobbyists with access to legislators due to relationships built during previous legislative sessions. Economic resources included funding for lobbyists, communication specialists, and researchers. Therefore, the coalition organizations focused their energy on helping the Student Voice Team behind the scenes. Chris, a policy advocate, described how his organization

supported the students:

> We facilitated a lot of information with regard to the numbers behind the scenes,
> how the financial aid programs work and how the statutes work, [and] how the
> budget works to make sure that the students were well-grounded in that
> information. So, when they went and met with policymakers…they were
> empowered, really, with more information about how it works than the legislators
> actually would be because most legislators really didn't know the details about
> how that works or what had been happening. We would also help get meetings.
> They had access to our lobbyist to help schedule meetings and to provide other
> behind the scenes feedback.

Through behind-the-scenes support, the coalition organizations allowed SVT to lead the
Powerball Promise Campaign. Without political and economic capital, SVT members
may have found it difficult to understand the budgetary numbers and statutes as well as
schedule meetings with legislators. The preparation research provided by the coalition
organizations also helped SVT members feel more empowered when speaking to
legislators, which may have shifted the way legislators viewed their work. While the
coalition organizations greatly supported the members at the beginning of policy
adoption, SVT eventually developed political capital after they met with several
legislators. In the policy adoption section, I discuss in depth how SVT influenced the
legislature.

 Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice relied on the ethnic studies
coalition for political and economic capital. By leveraging these resources, the coalition

ensured that legislators were actively engaging OSV members. In discussing how she advocated for legislators to listen to OSV, Jackie, a policy advocate, shared an example conversation she would have with a legislator:

> Hey. Are you including students in this discussion? In this conversation? Have you talked to students about what they think about this policy idea? And oftentimes [the answer] would be 'No,' or, 'That would be great but who do we connect to?' I'd be like, 'There's Oregon Student Voice.' Then try to connect in that way.

By specifically asking legislators to meet with Oregon Student Voice, Jackie shows how the coalition strived to ensure that the voices of students were considered. Through the coalition, OSV was able to meet with legislatures. Further, OSV members may have felt more comfortable during these meetings because they had the support of the coalition.

By acquiring economic and political capital through coalition organizations, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice helped build support for their policy priorities. Coalition organizations provided the student voice efforts with access to researcher, communication specialists, lobbyists, policy trainings, and legislators. However, coalition organizations also took extra steps to ensure that the student voice efforts were able to amass political capital. The coalition organizations opened doors for the students at the legislature, but then also took a step back to allow the students to build separate relationships with legislators. This ensured that students' voices were heard and considered by legislators, which may have helped students feel more comfortable in the space as they had the support of other advocates.

Identify Opposition. While identifying potential coalition members, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team also engaged in activities to identify potential opponents. Conversely, Oregon Student Voice did not participate in these activities because the ethnic studies coalition had engaged in this work prior to them joining. Both student voice efforts saw Republicans as opponents for their policy priorities.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. In assessing groups that would support their policy, the Student Voice Team quickly came to the conclusion that the Republican Party in the legislature may not agree with their Powerball Promise Campaign. Several Student Voice Team members identified as Republican, but a majority of members identified as Democratic. While there were differences among party affiliation within the membership, SVT members believed that the Powerball Promise Campaign was a bipartisan issue because it revolved around providing low-income students with equitable access to scholarship funds. However, they were not sure that Republican legislators would see the issue the same way.

As Republicans were in charge of the Governor's mansion and the Kentucky State Senate, the Student Voice Team constructed a plan to focus on the legal issue instead of the equity issue when speaking with Republicans. In describing this tactic, George, a White male student from a suburban community, stated:

> We were just asking them to follow the law. That was exactly, just like, do what you said you were gonna do. And that part of the message was always not such a draw to our argument, but was one that we always took seriously when we were doing lobbying. Particularly with Republicans, because they tend to be more

legalistic with their ideologies, so that really helped is that we were just asking

them to follow the rules.

By focusing on the legality of diverting funds promised to education from the lottery

proceeds, the Student Voice Team members believed they could convince Republicans to

support the Powerball Promise Campaign. The Student Voice Team did not focus on any

other opponents as they believed everyone else would be in support or indifferent.

Policy Adoption

Policy adoption is the execution of strategies developed during the policy

consideration and coalition building phases to influence the legislature to adopt a policy.

Activities include, but are not limited to, advocating by utilizing built social, economic,

and political capital to influence state-level policymakers to adopt the desired policy

(Scott et al., 2009; Fowler, 2013). In the following sections, I discuss how Prichard

Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice (a) conduct grassroots

advocacy, (b) engage in grasstops advocacy, (c) deal with tokenization, and (d) make

concession. I utilize policy terminology used by the student voice efforts, mainly the

differentiation between grassroots and grasstops advocacy, to describe their participation.

As a reminder, the main difference between grassroots and grasstops advocacy is that

grasstops advocacy occurs publicly to raise awareness, while grasstops advocacy happens

behind closed doors in meetings with legislators.

The Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice use the social, economic, and

political capital assessed and acquired during policy consideration and coalition building

during policy adoption. Both organizations first began conducting grassroots advocacy

before engaging in grasstops advocacy. Students addressed tokenization and made concessions during grasstops advocacy efforts.

Grassroots Advocacy. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice used their social capital to conduct grassroots advocacy, or community-based advocacy, to raise public awareness and support about their policy. Through this work, both student voice efforts were able to galvanize the community to support their work. They were also able to gain the attention of the legislature and government officials, which helped them conduct grasstops advocacy.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. The Student Voice Team utilized four methods to conduct grassroots advocacy: (a) a social media campaign, (b) in-person outreach, (c) media outreach, and (d) a rally on the capitol steps. In executing each one of these activities, SVT relied on their social capital. They engaged in these activities to raise awareness about their policy before engaging legislators.

Social Media Campaign. The Student Voice Team wanted to use social media to reach their core base: students. Members decided that social media would be the best tool to inform their base about the policy issue; therefore, they planned a social media campaign. They tested many different slogans for the campaign by posting to their social media platforms and asking for reactions. Ultimately, "Powerball Promise" resonated the most with their base. In describing the effectiveness of the phrase Powerball Promise, Ben, a communication specialist that supported SVT during the campaign, stated:

> I think one thing that they did was bring a catchy communication
>
> device…something as simple as saying, 'Hey. This is a promise, a promise rooted

in Powerball, but a promise nonetheless and it's been violated in some ways over

the years that needs to be corrected.'

Using this slogan, the Student Voice Team designed posts that included graphics, student

testimony, data, and videos (all hashtagged with the #PowerballPromise slogan) to raise

awareness. These posts were published on the SVT's Twitter and Facebook as well as on

individual member's personal platforms before the 2016 legislative session began and

throughout the session. Figure 4 provides an example of a post created by SVT.

Figure 4: Social Media Post to Twitter by the Student Voice Team
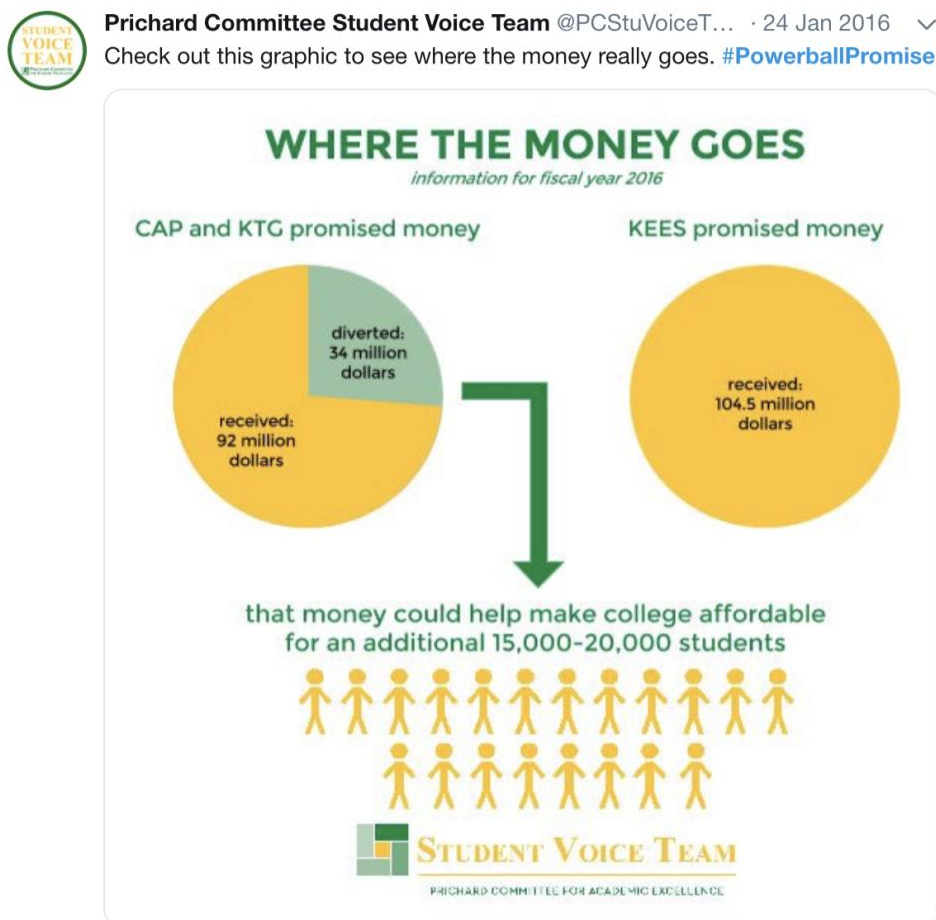
During the 2016 legislative session, the Student Voice Team collectively published over 500 posts regarding the Powerball Promise Campaign to their roughly 1,000 followers. These posts were liked and shared by students, educators, community members, and reporters across Kentucky. As the legislative session continued, government officials began sharing SVT posts as well as creating posts of their own using the Powerball Promise hashtag. Government officials included leaders in the Democratic Party, Governor Bevin (a Republican), the Secretary of State Alison L. Grimes, and state legislators, such as Representative James Kay (D-56), SVT's legislative champion. Each of these officials publicly declared that they would uphold the Powerball Promise. Figure 5 provides an example social media post created by Governor Bevin.

Figure 5: Social Media Post to Twitter by Governor Bevin

Through their social media campaign, the Student Voice Team was able to gather public support of their policy priority and pressure the legislature to consider it.

In-Person Outreach. The Student Voice Team also reached out to the media, individuals, and organizations to raise awareness. In discussing this grassroots approach, Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, shared:

> We began meeting and talking with members of our coalition organizations…we started writing letters to the editor and op-eds. We started hosting events, showing up at meetings to talk to community members. We began putting out press releases. We wrote up one-pagers and whitepapers….Ultimately, we did anything and everything that we could do to get our core arguments across to as wide a range of folks to try and make them aware of the situation and also to kind of bring them to our side of how we thought it should be resolved.

SVT members wanted to reach as many people as possible to ensure that there was awareness of and support for their policy issue. In meeting with individuals and organizations, SVT members provided one-pagers about the issue and shared their stories about how the issue effects their ability to attend college. They concluded meetings by providing information on how attendees could contact their legislators and get involved. They mainly reached out to individuals and organizations serving high school and college-aged youth as they felt these groups were most influenced by the reallocation of lottery funds.

Media Outreach. The Student Voice Team members also contacted local media outlets, mainly newspapers, to reach more community members and government officials. Several education reporters had covered the reallocation of lottery revenue in past budget cycles, but the issue received little attention. SVT felt that adding student

voice to the issue would potentially provide more context for readers and inspire more support. Through connections with Republican Party leadership, SVT members were also mindful that Governor Bevin followed media attention closely. Therefore, they wanted to use the media strategically to move the governor's attention toward the issue. They decided to publish their first opinion piece about their Powerball Promise Campaign right before the Governor's first budgetary address. Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community, discussed the aftermath of this choice:

> It was the case that this was a governor that pays particular attention to how things play out in the media, who saw what happened [the year before] when we were involved with a policy and he saw this as an opportunity to blame previous Democratic leadership on an issue that was really fundamentally an equity issue. He responded to an op-ed that we made sure to publish prior to this budget address, which called on the state government to fulfill the Powerball Promise.

Following the publication of the opinion piece, SVT members were invited to the governor's budgetary address where he promised to fulfill the Powerball Promise. The social media post noted in Figure 5 was published after this address. While receiving the support of the governor, SVT still had to advocate for support from legislators as they create, modify, and approve the budget. SVT continued strategically to publish over 10 opinion and editorial pieces in local newspapers to continue raising awareness about the Powerball Promise. These pieces focused on different aspects of the issue from the student perspective ranging from college affordability to why the lottery exists to equity concerns.

Rally at the Capitol. The Student Voice Team's final grassroots advocacy tactic was to hold a rally at the state capitol where students could share how the Powerball Promise influenced their ability to go to college. Members wanted to provide a space for students to share their stories. SVT invited legislators to attend the rally; however, they wanted it to be entirely student-centered, so only students spoke. Melanie, a White female student from an urban community, described the rally as follows:

> We had a rally at the State Capitol where low-income students came and spoke about how the Powerball Promise was necessary so they can go to college. We wanted to incorporate student stories with the facts and put faces to the information. A story was shared, then a fact was shared. Lots of legislators asked to speak, but we said no because we wanted it to be a student event.

By sharing stories along with facts, SVT felt that they could "humanize" the negative effects of not fully funding the Powerball Promise for legislators. They wanted to show that their decision directly influenced low-income students struggling to afford college. Over 50 students, parents, teachers, policy advocates, and researchers from across Kentucky attended the rally, which was held inside the Kentucky State Capitol. The rally was also covered in local newspapers the following day.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice also engaged in grassroots advocacy for the Ethnic Studies Bill; however, on a much smaller scale. OSV relied mainly on (a) social media and (b) media outreach. The ethnic studies coalition had a plan to raise support amongst different communities in Oregon, ranging from the business community to communities of color. OSV worked to compliment these efforts

by reaching out directly to students. In discussing their outreach efforts, Cayla, a White female from a suburban community, stated:

> We worked on spreading the information about the Ethnic Studies Bill to students, and also recruiting people to support it…we reached out to students who had experiences as underrepresented groups in Oregon and had them share a little bit about that experience and how they feel this bill could make them feel more included and more engaged in their schools. We talked specifically and asked for student testimony and then put together a piece that was full of all these students' stories to share.

A majority of their outreach efforts to students occurred through OSV's and member's personal social media platforms, mainly Instagram and Snapchat. They created over 20 posts with information about the Ethnic Studies Bill, how students can get involved, and calls to action to share their stories. They created an anonymized Google Form, which is a customizable survey tool designed by Google, for students to share their stories. I do not include an example social media post here as OSV members utilized pictures of themselves in the posts instead of graphics. They also utilized their email listserv and monthly newsletter to contact students.

Through these platforms, Oregon Student Voice reached over 1,000 students across the state. Roughly 30 students shared their personal testimony about how the Ethnic Studies Bill would influence their education. These stories were anonymized and shared by OSV over social media, in handouts presented to legislators, and in testimony presented to legislative committees.

In addition, Oregon Student Voice contacted local media outlets to raise awareness about the Ethnic Studies Bill. OSV members wrote and published an opinion piece in a state newspaper about why the issue was important to students and encouraged individuals to reach out to their legislators to support the policy. The opinion piece received over 50 shares and 100 comments, which led the media outlet to ask OSV to record an online video to discuss the issue further. The video received over 250 reactions and 100 comments. During grasstops advocacy efforts, several legislators indicated that they read the opinion piece when meeting with OSV.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice used their social capital to conduct grassroots advocacy to raise awareness and support from the public about their policy. As they were leading their policy effort, the Student Voice Team was more calculated with their grassroots advocacy than Oregon Student Voice was. However, both were able to sway the public to support their policy and influenced legislators to pay attention to their issue. Much of this success may be attributed to the fact that they were students advocating for policies that benefited students. The student voice efforts had direct access to students and could quickly collect and share their stories. Further, students may trust their peers more with their personal stories than adults. Finally, the novelty of students engaging in advocacy efforts could have helped both efforts gain attention from the media and public at large.

Grasstops Advocacy. By utilizing the political and economic resources offered by their coalition partners, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice were able to engage in grasstops advocacy. After raising awareness about

their policy through grassroots advocacy, both student voice efforts decided to advocate for their policies at the legislature behind closed doors through grasstops advocacy. The Student Voice Team engaged in more grasstops advocacy than Oregon Student Voice.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. After gaining attention for their Powerball Promise Campaign on social media, the Student Voice Team created a strategy to conduct grasstops advocacy at the legislature. They planned to advocate for their policy by meeting directly with legislators. Members relied on the political and economic capital of their coalition partners to schedule initial meetings. Lobbyists facilitated in setting up meetings, but the Student Voice Team led these meetings. SVT members decided to spend the first meeting making legislators aware of the issue and focus future meetings on convincing legislators to support their policy. Melanie, a White female student from an urban community, shared SVT's strategy:

> We used a lobbyist to get in the door, but we were able to make second meeting with legislators. The first meeting was more about establishing the issues. Second meeting was how we were going to address it…When [we] lobbied, [we] paired students based on location…someone in the legislative district and then we looked at age, gender, and race to ensure diversity. Anyone could lobby as long as they were interested and prepared for it.

SVT strove to ensure that at least one of the students was always in the legislator's district as members knew that legislators preferred talking to their constituents. They also rarely sent students in alone. SVT felt that putting members in pairs would help students feel more comfortable and members could rely on one another if legislators asked

challenging questions. Before meetings, SVT would provide an overview on how to conduct meetings with legislators and equip members with handouts and one-pagers to share with legislators. SVT wanted to ensure that all students felt empowered and prepared to answer any questions they may receive and convince legislators to support their cause. Members that participated often traveled to the Kentucky State Capitol for meetings on days off from school and sometimes missed classes during the school day.

During this time, the Student Voice Team was also relying on their legislative champion, Representative James Kay, to rally support around the Powerball Promise Campaign amongst other legislators. Representative Kay worked with colleagues from both parties to ensure that they considered adding $55 million in lottery funds to the College Access Program and the Kentucky Tuition Grant. SVT occasionally met with Representative Kay to check-in on progress. They also sometimes worked together to target legislators who were in opposition of adding more funds. In reflecting on the difficulties they faced in grasstops advocacy, George, a White male student from a suburban community, said:

> Republicans were just a little bit less okay, because first of all the conservative ideology of letting the market economy do its thing, blah blah blah, whatever, was there. Again, that's another reason our follow the rules argument was salient, because we were just asking for money. And Democrats were just gung ho about it, because it's part of Democratic platform to get this. The Republicans were a little bit more difficult. But we did get some major Republican support within the education committee.

Due to their assessment that Republicans were potentially in opposition, the Student Voice Team and Representative Kay focused much of their efforts on convincing Republicans to support their policy priority. As noted by George, they secured Republican support in a key committee drafting the budget. Ultimately, they achieved their goal of adding $55 million to the College Access Program and the Kentucky Tuition Grant program, which showed up in House Joint Resolution 100, and then House Bill 10 due to a budget error in House Joint Resolution 100. House Bill 10 was approved by Kentucky Senate and House on April 15, just three hours before the 2016 legislative session was scheduled to close. However, Governor Bevin line-item-vetoed this section of the budget several days later. This is discussed in the make concessions section below. While the Student Voice Team's grasstops advocacy was successful in the legislature, members did not fully win the governor's support.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice did not have a clear strategy for engaging in grasstops advocacy because the ethnic studies coalition was leading this effort. OSV only went to the Oregon State Capitol at key points in the legislative process when the coalition felt that student voice would influence legislators' decisions. These critical points were: (a) right before the House voted to pass the bill, (b) during the Senate Education Committee Hearing for the bill, and (c) right before the Senate voted to pass the bill. At each of these points, OSV members traveled to the capitol to meet with legislators. Meetings were scheduled by the ethnic studies coalition. OSV members missed school to attend these meetings. In describing the experience, Stephen, a White male student from an urban community, explained:

In the state capitol, we went around to different representatives and senators and

talked to them about if they would vote for the bill. We literally went almost room

to room and interviewed them and asked them if they were [going to] vote in

support of the bill.

During these meetings, OSV members shared the testimony they had collected from

students during their grassroots advocacy efforts and specifically asked legislators to

support the bill. Members prepared for these meetings by attending a training on how to

meet with legislators, organized by Oregon Student Voice's adult advisor, and reviewing

handouts and one-pagers provided by the ethnic studies coalition. Similar to the Student

Voice Team, members decided to meet with legislators in pairs in order to help them feel

more comfortable.

Each meeting was only 15-minutes, and sometimes less depending on the

legislator's schedule. OSV members approached each meeting in the same format: (a)

introduce themselves, (b) share the problem, (c) explain how their policy was a solution

to the problem, (d) provide stories from students living in the legislator's district, and (e)

ask the legislator if they had any questions. At the end of the meeting, members would

then request that the legislator vote in favor of their policy priority.

How these meetings went for Oregon Student Voice largely depended on the

legislator's response to having students in their office. Most of the time, legislators were

excited to meet with students, stating comments like "a welcome break from the

lobbyists" or "I love hearing directly from students," and listened to what the OSV

members had to share. Sometimes, legislators asked questions, such as "how will adding

these changes influence the budget" or "how will we ensure teachers are trained in the material." OSV members prepared answers ahead of time to questions they thought legislators might ask.

In some cases, legislators would be dismissive of Oregon Student Voice. They would use their power to undermine the students. These legislators sometimes became combative and began critiquing OSV members' delivery of information before members were able to finish their statements. Members then spent the rest of the meeting listening to the legislator talk about how they would have delivered the information. Delaine, a White female from an urban community, summarized her experience with these legislators as follows:

> It was very disheartening 'cause we put a lot of time into this and we see the problems…We definitely know what we're talking about because we're the ones experiencing the challenges. To not be recognized by adults is really frustrating and especially when I'm thinking about if I want to go into a career similar to this rethinking, 'Do I actually want to that or is it going to be barriers like this all the time where it feels senseless.'

Many members felt similarly as Delaine after negative interactions with legislators. These experiences caused students to feel less confident and more insecure about their ability to meet with legislators.

How legislators responded to Oregon Student Voice members greatly influenced student comfort in the meeting. However, as OSV members had more experiences, they learned how to gain confidence from the positive experiences and navigate the challenges

of the negative ones. Through trial and error, and several meetings with adult supporters offering encouragement, OSV members learned how to refocus legislators' attention when they were having a negative experience. They accomplished this goal in two ways: (a) redirecting legislators back to the policy issue or (b) reminding legislators that they are speaking with students who were learning and growing. These tactics helped OSV members to continue to stay engaged in the policy process, even when they felt less comfortable and confident.

Although grasstops advocacy was sometimes difficult, Oregon Student Voice members continued to remain engaged in the policy process. Outside of meeting with legislators, they also shared written testimony during the House and Senate Education Committee hearings for the Ethnic Studies Bill. Their testimony consisted of sharing the personal experiences of students from across Oregon that they had collected through their grassroots advocacy. These grasstops advocacy efforts supported those of the ethnic studies coalition and their legislative champions, Representative Diego Hernandez and Senator Lew Frederick. House Bill 2845, the Ethnic Studies Bill, was passed in the Oregon State Legislature on June 19, 2017; one of the last days of the 2017 legislative session. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown on June 30, 2017.

Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice used their grassroots efforts to support their grasstops advocacy. In meeting with legislators, they shared the experiences of students effected by current practices and asked for support for their policy reform. Both student voice efforts relied on the political and economic capital of their coalition partners to organize meetings with legislators. The

Student Voice Team spent more time in the Kentucky State Capitol advocating for their policy priority then Oregon Student Voice did in the Oregon State Capitol. This is due to the differing roles these organizations had in their coalitions. Because they were leading their coalition, SVT's role in the process potentially had a greater influence on the policy outcome than that of OSV.

Dealing with Tokenization. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice often felt as though they were being tokenized by legislators. In both student voice efforts, members described tokenization broadly as instances where decision makers, such as legislators, used their words out of context, utilized photos of them for public relations, or made them feel like their concerns were not being taken seriously. Both student voice efforts had to determine how they were going to handle tokenizing practices of legislators.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Student Voice Team members often experienced tokenization by legislators. The most blatant form of tokenization to the members was when legislators would ask SVT members for photos at meetings or events. These pictures would be used on the legislators' social media accounts and campaign materials. Melanie, a White female student from an urban community, shares: "It was really frustrating when legislators invited us to meetings or events as photo-ops and then used our pictures in their campaign materials."

Other forms of tokenization noted by the members included: (a) telling students how "smart," "eloquent," or "cute" they were during meetings and (b) dismissing students concerns. In describing his experiences with tokenization, Greg, a White male

from a rural community, stated:

> Legislators being condescending or patronizing, just kind of like: "Oh, it's cute
> that you want to get involved and that's nice," and whatever, "but leave the actual
> decision making up to the people who know what they're talking about."

Each of these experiences made members feel like they were only present to provide legislators with an opportunity to say they talked to students.

Members often found it very frustrating when legislators would tokenize them as they felt they were "not being taken seriously" and were being "treated like a kid." George, a White male student from a suburban community, summarized his experience with tokenization as follows:

> So the problem that we always had ... it's almost like a ... it's tokenization, I would
> say, is one of the worst things we had to always battle. Whenever we go into
> meetings, we had to always keep in the back of our mind that we were fighting for
> the specific project that we were doing. We had to constantly never let up on
> proving that students have the capacity to be engaged in these conversations. That
> students aren't inherently short-term decision makers, or kids are just trying to get
> more recess. We want to improve our experience and…we had to prove ourselves,
> all of the time.

SVT members felt like they constantly had to prove themselves to legislators in order to ensure they were being taken seriously and heard. This persistence took an emotional toll on members as they weighed speaking with legislators who may tokenize their experiences versus not taking an opportunity to share at all. Feelings of being "annoyed"

and "frustrated" were common after tokenizing experiences; however, members continuously engaged in order to ensure the Powerball Promise was passed.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice members experienced similar types of tokenization. As described in my observations of members' meetings with legislators in the previous section, legislators sometimes belittled or were dismissive towards OSV members, which made members feel like they were not being heard. Additionally, legislators often asked members to take pictures with them to post on their social media. These experiences caused members to feel like legislators were not taking their concerns about seriously and felt they were only there because legislators wanted to say they talked to students. In describing tokenization by legislators, Cayla, a White female student from an urban community, stated:

> They love to have the students there for the PR and to say we listen to students and we care what they think. And I think in some senses that's true, and I think the adults don't often realize that they are tokenizing students, and by giving them a small amount of voice that's almost worse than nothing at all.

Cayla references the idea that when legislators tokenize students, it can often be more harmful than not engaging students at all because it can cause the student to feel "unheard" or "that their opinions don't matter." These feelings cause students to feel frustrated and annoyed, which can lead to further disengagement from the policy process.

Oregon Student Voice members learned to handle these experiences by encouraging each other and reminding themselves that they were working toward improving the school system. Over time, members took avenues to mitigate tokenizing

experiences by either (a) directly interrupting a tokenizing action, (b) sidestepping actions by bringing up another topic, or (c) encouraging legislators to speak to more students. The tactic the student members took often depended on how they felt the legislator would take feedback. For example, if they thought the legislator would be upset that they pointed out a tokenizing action, members may instead sidestep it. These actions helped members feel more comfortable when encountering a tokenizing experience, but also made them feel frustrated. Delaine, a White female from an urban community, explained:

> It shows that it's going to be hard, every time it's going to be really hard and that's something that we know as an organization. It's never going to be easy to have authentic student engagement at least right now. It also makes me want to change it so it's not like that anymore because I think students should be able to have a voice in the decision-making process. I think it's going to take a lot of going back and being up front with what we want and not giving up for that to change.

Delaine shows how Oregon Student Voice persistently stayed engaged in the policy process, even after feeling frustrated by tokenizing experiences, in the hopes that legislators would eventually listen to them.

Although frustrated by tokenization, members from both student voice efforts continued to engage in the policy process to ensure their policy priority was passed. It is important to note that members benefited from their status as students in the grassroots arena; however, there student status may have made it more difficult for them to engage in the grasstops arena. Much of the success achieved in the grassroots arena came through the student voice effort's relationships with students and their ability to gain

attention in the media. Conversely, in the grasstops arena, members relied on lobbyists to get meetings with legislators and continuously felt as though they were being tokenized because they were students. These divergent experiences may be due to the fact that students are not common policy actors in state level politics and, therefore, legislators are unsure how to engage with them or what power they have to influence change. Jackie, a policy advocate working with OSV, echoed this theory in discussing why legislators may have a difficult time interacting with students:

> I think that it might be tough for legislators to actually finally get students across the table from them and to hear completely different ideas coming out of them that legislators had never even considered before, or to hear that the priority issues for students are very different from the issues that legislators have prioritized. I think it's hard for them. It throws them [legislators] off course, and they don't know what to do with that. So, at the end of the day, maybe legislators do think they're [students] capable; they just don't know how to incorporate that voice in a way that aligns with their agendas and with all of the other stakeholders at this time that they've historically worked with.

Ultimately, as more students engage in the policy process, how legislators engage students may evolve as they learn how to work with students, and it may become a less tokenizing experience for students.

Make Concessions. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team had to make concessions to ensure at least some of their policy priority came to fruition. Making a concession was difficult for the student members as they felt their policy priority was

being coopted by adults in leadership; however, they also recognized the importance of a small victory. Oregon Student Voice did not have to make concessions in order to achieve their policy priority.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team. Days after the Student Voice Team celebrated the passage of House Bill 10 in the legislature, Governor Bevin line item vetoed fully funding the College Access Program and the Kentucky Tuition Grant program. During the 2016 legislative session, Governor Bevin had been working with Democrat and Republican legislators to create a Work Ready Scholarship fund that would provide lottery funded scholarships to students who were pursuing an industry-recognized certificate or diploma. Patrick, a White male student from an urban community, explained what happened:

> That whole thing was about Work Ready Scholarship where the Democrats and the governor both said we want to do Work Ready Scholarships, and they wanted to fund it with the lottery funding. Then, there came this whole thing of well, we're fulfilling the Powerball Promise because the money is also going to education. It got very coopted by the end of it…it got muddied, and it became, well, make sure all the lottery funding goes to education. [The governor] started talking about it like that. The Democrats did, too, to some extent. There was some anger over the fact that it got coopted, but then at the same time, we mostly succeeded.

In the wake of Governor Bevin's decision to line item veto the $55 million, SVT members had to make a choice of whether to push back on the governor's choice or to

celebrate a smaller win. Although the full $55 million was vetoed, the governor did allow an additional $14 million to be added to the College Access Program and the Kentucky Tuition Grant from the lottery fund. SVT members were upset about the governor's decision, especially since he asserted that he upheld the Powerball Promise. However, they also recognized that they probably were not going to be able to fight the governor. Therefore, the Student Voice Team decided to concede and release a victory statement for securing $14 million additional fund from the lottery for low-income students. Although angry that their campaign was co-opted, they were still proud of the work they had done to secure more money for students.

Oregon Student Voice. Oregon Student Voice did not engage in concession activities. Their requested amendment, which was to add two students to the advisory group designing the ethnic studies standards, was incorporated into the legislation. There were several additional amendments also added to the bill during the 2017 legislative session. However, these amendments were small changes to clarify the bill's language to ease implementation.

Student Perceptions of the Policy Process

Although having some negative experiences interacting with legislators, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members overall feel like they had a positive experience in the policy process. Because members from both organizations provided similar statements, I combine the findings and analysis of their perceptions. Members positive experiences can be broken down into three categories: (a)

gaining trust in the policy process; (b) seeing the power of direct advocacy; and (c)

understanding the experiences of others.

Trust and Understanding. Members overall believed that their experience led

them gain trust and understanding of the policy process. Eric, a non-White member of the

Student Voice Team from an urban community, shared:

> I think honestly the big takeaways are really a bolstered trust in institutions, civic
>
> engagement, and political process, which I think really runs counter to a lot of the
>
> way that folks my age view the political system.

Eric discussed how students gained a better comprehension of how policies were made

when they interacted in the process through civic engagement. Because how to advocate

was not specifically taught in social studies courses, members found that this interaction

demystified what was happening when decision makers were creating policy. It led to

students being able to see a clearer picture of how and why policies were made. This

understanding could lead students to trust the process more and potentially get more

involved. Eric also shared how students were not often civically engaged and, therefore,

may not trust the political system, but that student voice efforts offered an opportunity for

them to learn and grow.

Power of Advocacy. Members also discussed how learning the power of direct

advocacy positively influenced them. Gary, a non-White member of Oregon Student

Voice from an urban community, expanded on this concept:

> It's good that as I have had more experience with the power that direct advocacy
>
> can wield, I feel like it's been a good experience to not have legislators walled off

from any outside influences, and to be able to actually sit down and talk to them

about what I feel is important.

Gary explained how learning how to conduct direct advocacy gave students the power to

meet with legislators and share their opinion. Many student voice effort members

believed that legislators needed to hear student experiences to make more informed

decisions about K-12 education policy. OSV and SVT members both saw the power that

direct advocacy gave them to share their experiences with legislators, even if legislators

did not always listen. Every student voice effort member planned to continue engaging in

direct advocacy in future legislative sessions as they believed it was important that

legislators made reforms based on students' experiences.

Understanding the Experiences of Others. Students believed that engaging in

the policy process gave them a deeper understanding of the issues that individuals from

backgrounds other than their own encounter. Amanda, a non-White member of Oregon

Student Voice from a suburban community, stated:

I think it was just helpful to understand the background, and the backstory of what

actually happens. I think it made me maybe a little bit more open minded about

some of these issues. I remember someone brought up [something] about students

with disabilities and…I never thought of it that way, because maybe I wasn't

personally affected by it…but it opened me up a little.

By meeting with different advocates, legislators, and people, student voice effort

members gained a better comprehension of the opportunities and challenges individuals

faced due to their diverse backgrounds and experiences. This resulted in students feeling

more empathetic toward others and created a desire to continue advocating for policy reforms that support more communities.

While they had some negative experiences, Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members said they would advocate in future legislative sessions to amplify more student voices. Much of their desire to continue advocating stemmed from their positive experiences. Members ultimately believed that their continued participation in the policy process was important to not only share the experiences of students, but also to encourage more students to get involved.

Summary

Findings discussed in this chapter provide insights on how students, through student voice efforts, advocate for policy reform in the state-level K-12 education policy process. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice engaged in two phases of the policy process to advocate: (a) coalition building and (b) policy adoption. During these phases, student voice efforts strove to influence the policy process and to have their policy priority enacted into law.

During coalition building, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice secured supporters, established economic and political capital, and identified opponents of their policies. While SVT set out to build a coalition of likeminded, education-focused organizations, OSV decided to join a coalition. This divergence resulted in differences in how students participated in the policy process. SVT actively engaged in finding organizations and individuals to support them and identifying opponents. Conversely, OSV joined a coalition that already engaged in these activities.

Despite differences, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice saw their coalitions as sources of economic and political capital that were necessary to pass their policy priorities. Coalition organizations provided the student voice efforts with access to researchers, communication specialists, lobbyists, policy trainings, and legislators. They also helped students feel more comfortable by actively supporting them at the legislature. These coalition organizations were essential for helping students participate in the policy process.

During policy adoption, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice (a) conducted grassroots advocacy to raise support for their policy, (b) engaged in grasstops advocacy to influence the legislature, (c) dealt with tokenization, and (d) made concession to help ensure their policy or a modified version of it was adopted. Similar to coalition building, SVT engaged in more of these activities than OSV. Both organizations utilized acquired social, economic, and political capital during policy adoption. They used their social capital to conduct grassroots advocacy and raised public awareness through their outreach in-person, on social media, and in newspaper publications. Much of their success in grassroots advocacy may be due to their status as students, which helped them gain access to student testimony and may have encouraged media attention.

Both student voice efforts relied on the economic and political acumen of their coalition organizations to help them prepare for and schedule meetings with legislators. During these meetings, members spoke with legislators behind closed doors about their policy priority and tried to gain their support. Unlike with grassroots advocacy, students may have had a more difficult time engaging in grasstops advocacy because they were

students. Besides their lack of political and economic capital, students also experienced tokenization from legislators, which resulted in members feelings frustration and annoyed. Legislators sometimes used their power to diminish the students' power. Much of this tokenization may have occurred because members were students and legislators may have been unsure how to interact with them since students are not a common or powerful policy actor. Overcoming this challenge, members from both student voice efforts continued to engage in the policy process in order to ensure their policy priority was passed.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

K-12 education systems are expected to prepare and equip students to participate in society but often neglect to ask students how policy decisions affect their learning (Goodlad & McMannon, 1997; Murphy, 2017). Students have been seen "almost entirely [seen] as objects of reform" and their voices have often been absent from education decision making (Levin, 2000, p. 155). Taking a more student-centered strategy for education reform, educators have begun to incorporate student voice into classroom, school, and district decision making in order to better meet student learning needs (Mitra, 2004, p. 651; Conner, 2015). Researchers provide a clear comprehension of how student voice manifests and influences classroom and school-level decision making (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Mitra, 2014; Quaglia & Corso, 2014; Murphy, 2017).

However, students are still a largely untapped resource in statewide K-12 education policy change. Historically, policymakers and practitioners have not fully viewed students as agents, or policy actors, in this arena and their voices are infrequently present (Crosnoe, 2011). One reason for student absence in state-level decision making may be that there is limited understanding of how students may organize for and participate in state-level decision making. Therefore, the motivation for this study was to develop an understanding of *how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making*.

Based on the literature outlined in Chapter Two, I developed a conceptual framework consisting of two models to guide my study: (a) how students participate in

statewide student voice efforts and (b) how students influence policy change through student voice efforts. The first model was rooted in my comprehension of how student voice efforts develop and support students in their activities. The second model was based on how students would strive to navigate the state-level policy-making processes to instigate policy change. Both models were necessary in order to provide a more complete picture for how students may use their voice in K-12 education policy making. I predicted that how students organize internally may influence their collective participation in the policy process.

I endeavored to build my understanding of how students collectively participate in and influence the K-12 state-level policy-making process by conducting a qualitative collective case study. As discussed in Chapter Three, I utilized document analysis, observations, and interviews with students and adults participating in two statewide student voice efforts: Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team in Kentucky and Oregon Student Voice in Oregon. Findings provided insights into the following research questions guiding my study:

1. How are statewide student voice efforts structured?

2. How do diverse factors influence student participation in student voice efforts?

3. How are differentials in power, particularly social order power dynamics, within an effort associated with student participation?

4. How do students, through student voice efforts, participate in the K-12 education policy process?

5. How do students perceive their experience in the K-12 education policy process?

It is important to note that data for each case was restricted to a specific period. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, the period was November 2015 to November 2017. For Oregon Student Voice, the period was August 2016 to December 2018. As organizations are constantly evolving, structures or activities of SVT or OSV have changed since data collection. This study does not account for these changes.

The reminder of this chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I summarize my main findings and conclusions identified for each research question. In the second section, I outline my contributions to the literature, which includes updating the conceptual framework based on my findings. In the third section, I provide implications for practice and areas for further research.

Conclusions Drawn from the Research Questions

The participants of this study unequivocally stated the importance of including students in K-12 education decision-making. They believed students should have a role in education decision-making because they spend roughly 35 hours a week in the classroom and decisions made by educators and policymakers directly affect student learning. Therefore, both students and adults supported the development of a statewide student voice effort and the participation of students in the K-12 policymaking process. The following conclusions for each research question provide insights into how students participated in both the student voice effort and the policymaking process. The conclusions identified slightly overlap between research questions; however, they are organized separately to ease analysis.

Research Question One: *How are statewide student voice efforts structured?*

Statewide student voice efforts are generally structured to include the following four phases: (a) power shifts, (b) shared practices, (c) adults supports, and (d) student relationships. Each of these phases provides students with structures and connections to collectively share their voice and work on activities, such as engaging in the policy process. Without these structures and connections, students may not receive the support they need to engage in the work. I summarize each phase below.

Power Shifts. Student voice efforts strive to shift power in three ways in structuring the effort to encourage student participation: (a) adults shift power where students hold equal or greater decision-making authority compared to adults, (b) all students have equal ability to share in decision making, and (c) students understand their voice is important and impactful. The first power shift requires adults to move from traditional adult roles where adults hold all of the power to providing students power. It is achieved by creating clear roles for adults and students to engage in effort activities. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice designed the roles of adults and students when creating the effort. Each student voice effort frequently re-examined these roles to ensure that students continued to hold equal or greater decision-making authority in comparison to adults.

The second power shift requires organizations to overturn social order power dynamics and provide all students with equal access to participate. This power shift has not yet been obtained by Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team or Oregon Student Voice. Therefore, it is unclear how to achieve it. It appears that students' background may influence their ability to participate as a majority of students actively engaged in the

decisions of these organizations were White, middle class or wealthy, from an urban community, and/or high achievers.

The third power shift is helping students shift from not seeing their voice as important in education decision-making to seeing it as important. This shift is achieved by providing youth development opportunities, such as trainings or mentorship, for students to grow in their understanding of the power of their voice. The Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice provided these training opportunities frequently to enable students to explore their identifies and become more confident to use their voice. Ultimately, by successfully shifting the first and third power dynamics, the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice were able to grow as students felt comfortable in the space and sharing their voice.

Shared Practices. Student voice efforts need to establish specific shared practices to provide structured ways for students to participate in activities. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice both created the following practices: (a) established meeting structures, (b) virtual and in-person meetings, (c) virtual work practices, (d) time commitment, (e) a recruitment pipeline, (f) a leadership team, and (g) clear decision-making structures. Each of these practices addressed a challenge that students faced when striving to participate. These challenges range from distance entailed in attending meetings in-person to inability to engage in work at the same time due to different schedules. Without these initial shared practices, student voice efforts may find it difficult to empower students to collectively work together and remain engaged in the work. Student voice efforts may also utilize other practices; however, these seven

practices are necessary to ensure the initial development and growth of an effort.

Adult Supports. Student voice efforts require the support of adults to help

students navigate the K-12 education system, complete their work, and develop their

skills. The Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice relied on four key adult

support structures: (a) partner organization, (b) relationship with an adult champion, (c)

youth development opportunities, and (d) affirmation from outside adults. A partner

organization, such as an education related nonprofit, provides stability for student voice

efforts to grow in their first years. The partner organization provides administrative and

financial oversight for the student voice effort so that the students can focus on their

vision, mission, and activities. Student voice efforts will need to negotiate a relationship

with the partner organization that provides students with at least some decision-making

authority over their activities in order to ensure that students are leading the effort.

Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team remained with their partner

organization and must receive approval before executing activities. Oregon Student

Voice separated from their organization to gain full decision-making authority over their

activities. It is unclear how this separation will affect OSV's sustainability and growth in

the future. Without a partner organization, student voice efforts will need to raise funds

and execute administrative activities, such as finding office space, managing human

resources, and securing insurance, which may be challenging for an organization led by

high school students who must be in school roughly 35 hours per week.

Additionally, student voice efforts need the support of at least one adult advisor,

or adult champion, to provide students with professional and emotional support to engage

in the work. The Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice had an adult advisor supporting the students. The advisor helps the members navigate an adult centric society and acts as a bridge between member and other adults. The advisor also supports the work by providing guidance and training to members on how to complete activities. Finally, the advisor provides members with mentorship both inside and outside the organizations to ensure the members feel empowered. Without an adult advisor, student voice efforts may find it difficult to complete activities. The Student Voice Teams advisor remained with the effort, while Oregon Student Voice's advisor left the effort soon after data collected ended. It is unclear how the departure of an advisor influences a student voice effort.

Student voice efforts must also provide youth development opportunities to enable students to learn and execute their work. These opportunities can be institutionalized training or happen more organically; however, students need an opportunity to learn how to conduct their work as much of the activities they are engaging in are not taught in school. For example, students do not often learn how to write opinion pieces, conduct focus groups, design surveys, or read policy in the classroom. Oregon Student Voice institutionalized these opportunities through monthly youth development trainings, while the Student Voice Team encouraged members to learn while doing with support provided by their adult advisor. Both structures support students in executing their work.

Finally, student voice efforts need support from outside adults, such as parents, teachers, principals, policymakers, and other members of the community, to complete

their work. The need for adult supports makes it difficult for student voice efforts to fully have control over their activities and decisions. Therefore, the power shift of overturning the traditional adult-student relationship where adults are in charge is extremely important for student voice efforts. By providing students with equal or greater decision-making authority in a majority of areas for the student voice effort, particularly decision making, students are able to be in charge of the activities executed by the effort and how their voices will be utilized.

Student Relationships. Student voice efforts need to be structured in ways that foster student relationships to develop and encourage the formation of an inclusive community based in acceptance and understanding. This community allows members to feel comfortable to share their opinions and engage in decision making. Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice relied on peer mentorship activities, such as one-on-one counseling, to support the development of this community. Through these activities, students connected with one another to learn and provide emotional support when challenges arose. However, student voice efforts may employ other tactics to build relationships and a community centered in inclusivity.

Research Question Two: *How do diverse factors influence student participation in student voice efforts?* Many factors influence student participation in statewide student voice efforts. The single largest factor to influence student participation may be the structure of the effort. If any of the four components (power shifts, shared practices, adult supports, and student relationships) are missing from research question one, a student may feel unable, unqualified, or uncomfortable participating in a student voice effort.

However, within this structure, there are also smaller factors that both positively and negatively influence student participation. In the following, I discuss the five most prevalent factors that influenced participation stated by students during interviews: (a) virtual structures, (b) time commitments, (c) a relationship with an adult advisor, (d) affirmation from outside adults, and (e) community connection.

Virtual Structures. Student voice efforts must employ virtual structures to ensure that students from across the state can participate in activities based on their schedule. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice utilized similar structures. They used Zoom to conduct online meetings and Google Drive and Slack to collaboratively complete work. These virtual work practices should be developed in collaboration with members in order to ensure they meet members' needs and desires. For example, Oregon Student Voice found that middle and high school students do not regularly use email and instead regularly message one another through cellphone applications. Therefore, OSV decided to utilize Slack to communicate because it provided a more user-friendly experience for students. While these virtual structures can increase student communication and participation by allowing for increased flexibility, they also can decrease student participation as members that only connect virtually find it difficult to feel engaged with the community. Students desire in-person connections to build community and overtime may loss interest if an in-person option is not available. Therefore, student voice efforts cannot rely entirely on virtual structures.

Time Commitment. Student voice efforts need to have open membership without time commitments to ensure that members can be as involved as they want. Flexible time

commitments allow students to gauge their ability and willingness to participate. However, continuous active engagement in student voice efforts takes a lot of time. For both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice, members that were actively participating in activities were spending between five to fifteen hours per week completing the work depending on deadlines and activities. This is a large time commitment for middle and high schoolers, who must also balance school, family, and other extracurricular activities, and may limit participation. It may limit the types of students who can actively be involved and, therefore, result in some students not having an opportunity to participate. For example, if you have to hold an afterschool job, it could be challenging to participate deeply in either organization. Student voice efforts should be aware of the amount of time students are spending on the work and strive to address limitations students face. For example, the student voice effort may need to offer stipends to students who need to hold an afterschool job.

Relationship with Adult Advisor. The relationship students have with the student voice effort's adult advisor influences their desire to participate. For Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice, members saw the adult advisor as essential to helping with participation. The adult advisors were often viewed as friends and colleagues by the student members, which helped students feel more comfortable at meetings and excited to engage in the work. A majority of the students interviewed mentioned how the adult advisor in some way positively influenced their ability to participate. Influencing activities ranged from encouraging members to attend meetings, providing support with work, or providing encouragement during a difficult

time. It is unclear how students who do not view the adult advisor in a positive light participate in the student voice efforts; however, it likely does not positively influence their ability to participate.

Affirmation from Outside Adults. Student voice efforts need to navigate the perceptions of adults outside the effort when conducting their work. How adults support and view the work appears to influence the students' ability to participate. Adults who view the work positively help members navigate the challenges of engaging in this work and completing their other responsibilities. These adults also support members in feeling empowered that their voice matters. Adults who view the work indifferently, negatively, or who tokenize students can cause the members to lose confidence in their ability to lead change, which can lead to disengagement. Both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice relied on their adult advisor and internal supports to help members navigate these positive and negative interactions. Student voice efforts must build strong connections internally to ensure that negative outside connections to not disrupt student participation.

Community Connection. Students rely on a community connection developed by the student voice effort to stay engaged in the work. Many Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members discussed the influence of the student community within each effort had on their desire to continue staying engaged. Students often viewed their fellow members as "lifelong friends" and "partners in crime." Even after encountering a bad experience or being pulled in another direction due to school or family, members continued to participate in activities to stay engaged with the

community. Student voice efforts should provide opportunities, such as peer mentorship or community building activities, to support students in fostering this community.

Research Question Three: *How are differentials in power, particularly social order power dynamics, within an effort associated with student participation?* Student voice efforts provide students with the power to participate in and influence decision making; however, power differentials also may be associated with how students participate in these efforts. Oregon Student Voice and Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team successfully overturned power dynamics related to the traditional hierarchical relationship between adults and students by lowering the adult advisors' positional power and enhancing the members' personal power. This alteration increased members' participation as they felt they could more tangibly participate in K-12 education decisions and have an influence; an activity not afforded to them in schools.

While successful in circumventing adult-student power dynamic, both Oregon Student Voice and the Student Voice Team failed to overturn social order power dynamics. Revisiting my assertions in Chapter One, I believe that student voice efforts often reproduce social order power relationships, which affects the ability for some students to participate in discussions and activities (Conner et al., 2016). Students enter these efforts with a set of dispositions that may influence their ability to participate in the group. Therefore, students and adults must be mindful to mitigate these social order power relationships in order to empower all students to participate. However, neither student voice effort accomplished this goal.

Both Oregon Student Voice and the Student Voice Team strove to reduce social order power relationships in order to create a space of all students to participate. Some strategies utilized by these efforts included allowing for open membership, having flexible time commitments, using virtual communication structures, and possessing a commitment to inclusivity. However, it is clear that these strategies were not effectively mitigating social order power dynamics as membership in these student voice efforts was largely homogeneous.

A majority of students participating in the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice were White, middle class or wealthy, able bodied, from an urban community, and/or high achievers. These social statuses typically hold power in situations, which may give these students increased ability to participate in comparison to other students (French & Raven, 1959; Conner, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2015). This increased influence may be due to these students having more access, opportunity, and comfort to participate. For example, participating students had access as they were able to learn about and join the organizations, opportunity because outside commitments were not preventing them from participating, and comfort since they felt welcome in the spaces. As membership was largely homogenous, it likely means that these efforts were not mitigating social order power relationships and students outside these backgrounds may not feel like they have the ability to participate.

Eric, a non-White male student from an urban community and members of the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team, captures these tensions when he noted:

If you come from a family of wealth or come from a family of privilege, and

especially if that means that you don't have a part-time job, you're going to be

able to participate more readily in the organization and be able to have more time

to devote to the organization and, therefore, you'll be able to take on leadership

opportunities faster within the organization. If you're in central Kentucky, if you

have a car, if you can drive, you'll be able to take part in more events. You'll be

able to do more things. If your parents agree with the mission, if your parents

have the ability to drive you somewhere, you're going to get more leniency from

them and you'll be able to participate more. If you're at a school that has a strong

speech and debate team or a school that has a strong Kentucky Youth Association

or some other type of incubating organization that we rely on for skill

development, you're going to have an easier time transitioning to the work

Student Voice Team does and there'll be lower barriers of entry for you there.

Eric summarizes the many barriers students face when striving to participate in a student

voice effort. Some additional barriers identified from the findings include: (a) access to a

computer or smartphone as well as an Internet or data connection, which limits ability to

participate in meetings and activities; (b) academic performance in school, which may

influence a students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities; and (c) student

comfort in a space not representative of their race/ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation,

which may influence their willingness to share their voice. These barriers to participation

were not different between the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice. These

barriers are associated with a student's perceived social, cultural, and economic capital,

which in turn are linked to the students' economic status, education, abilities, location,

race/ethnicity, gender, and sex. Each of these plays an important role in power relationships and may influence a student's ability to participate.

Therefore, student voice efforts need to address consistently these social order power dynamics in order to encourage student participation regardless of background (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012). One way to address these power dynamics may be to create clear and concise structures for recruiting and supporting student participants from populations outside the majority of current membership. Both of the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice may have attracted and retained a very specific demographic of students because they did not provide enough access, opportunity, and support to students outside this demographic. Another way to address these power dynamics may be to engage members of the community to determine ways that student voice efforts can better support student participation. Both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice regularly evaluated their practices; however, they did not consistently engage members of their community, such as students from different backgrounds, who could provide insights into how the effort could better support their participation.

To address power differentials directly, student voice efforts will need to continuously recognize how they are reinforcing social order power dynamics, change their practices to ensure they are overcoming these power dynamics, and, ultimately, foster a community where everyone feels welcome and able to participate. This will be an extremely difficult challenge. However, without striving to meet this challenge, student voice efforts will continue to reinforce social order power relationships and only be representative of students that typically hold power.

Research Question Four: *How do students, through student voice efforts, participate in the K-12 education policy process?* To me, the most important finding of this study is that students, through statewide student voice efforts, are able to participate collectively in and advocate for policy reforms adoption in the K-12 education policy process. Students are an unlikely and uncommon policy actor; however, they are still able to successfully navigate the process and advocate for their needs (Crosnoe, 2011). Students do not participate dissimilarly than other community-based or grassroots effort; however, they may rely on social capital more than other actors. Students do follow a similar policy process: (a) problem identification, (b) policy consideration, (c) coalition building, and (d) policy adoption. However, I also directly experienced how messy the policy process is, and it is difficult to break it into different phases as some activities happen concurrently. Below, I outline how I perceive students participate in each phase.

Problem Identification. Student voice efforts prepare to engage in the policy process by (a) identifying a problem for policy reform, (b) deciding to support the policy reform, and (c) examining the local and historical political context to understand the current environment. Both efforts identified a problem and a policy solution almost simultaneously; therefore, they looked at how the problem as well as the policy solution would fair in the process. In completing these activities, members of both Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice relied on their educational experiences and their belief in the importance of student voice. They decided to advocate for a policy solution because (a) they believed the policies would improve the educational experiences of themselves and their peers and (b) they felt that inclusion of student voices

was necessary to pass the policy solution. These two factors may need to be present for students to consider advocating for a policy through student voice efforts.

Policy Consideration. Student voice efforts build a plan to advocate in the policy process by (a) assessing their available energy and resources, (b) determining the arena, and (c) identifying legislative champions. During these activities, both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice realized that they possessed social capital through their access to students, social media platforms, and relationships with the media. They believed this social capital would enable them to raise public awareness about their policy priorities. However, both efforts also recognized that they would need to tap into the political and economic capital of other organizations to gain access and power to convince legislators to pass their policy priorities.

Due to their access to social capital and lack of political or economic capital, students in both efforts decided to pursue their policies in the grassroots arena and to rely on legislative champions and other organizations to help them influence the grasstops arena. Student voice efforts striving to influence the K-12 education policy process through a state legislature may need to follow this same pathway as it is unlikely that students will have access to political and economic capital due to their status as students. However, they will likely have social capital.

Coalition Building. Student voice efforts engage in coalition building to advance support for their policy by (a) securing supporters, (b) establishing economic and political capital, and (c) identifying opponents of their policies. Both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice utilized a coalition to access economic and political capital. These

resources provided the students with researchers, communication specialists, policy trainings, and lobbyists. SVT started their own coalition, while OSV joined a coalition, which resulted in differences in how students participated in the process as the coalition OSV joined had already completed many activities.

Resources provided by the coalitions were important for supporting both efforts in passing their policy priorities; therefore, student voice efforts hoping to pass their reforms may need to form a coalition. Forming a coalition provided SVT with more opportunities for the students to lead their engagement in the process, while joining a coalition gave OSV an opportunity to observe and learn as well as engage. A student voice effort hoping to more actively engage in the process may need to form their own coalition, while one looking to learn may want to join a coalition.

Policy Adoption. Student voice efforts conduct grassroots advocacy to raise support for their policy, engage in grasstops advocacy to influence the legislature, and deal with tokenization to help ensure their policy is adopted. Both the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice utilized the social, economic, and political capital assessed and acquired during policy consideration and coalition building during policy adoption. Social capital was important for grassroots advocacy, particularly social media and newspaper publications, while economic and political capital was imperative for grasstops advocacy. Much of their success in grassroots advocacy may be due to their status as students, which helped them gain access to student testimony and may have encouraged media attention. This student status gave them power in the public arena of the policy process.

However, their student status also may have decreased their power at the legislature as they experienced tokenization from legislators, who may not have taken their policy priority seriously. Legislators sometimes used their power to diminish the students' power. They relied on the power of their coalition partners to make up for this decrease. By continuing to push their policy priorities and raising support from the public, which resulted in key legislators paying attention to their priorities, both student voice efforts were able to ensure their policies passed.

Student voice efforts hoping to follow a similar path of utilizing their student status to advocate for policies will need to continuously note the duality of being a student and the role of that position for access to power. Students will have power in some spaces, such as in the public sphere due to social capital. However, they will likely not have power in other spaces, such as the legislature. This duality causes a conflict as students encounter both positive and negative outcomes. Student voice efforts will need to offer students support to help them navigate difficult stages of the process, such as tokenization by legislatures, as well as provide a space to celebrate victories.

Research Question Five: *How do students perceive their experience in the K-12 education policy process?* Members interacting with the policy process will have positive and negative experiences. Negative experiences often stem from how students are received by those in power. Positive experiences come from learning about the policy process, the power of advocacy, and other individuals. In the following, I summarize how student voice efforts and decision makers will need to support students in navigating the policy process.

Negative Experiences. Tokenization by legislators is a common occurrence when students interact with the policy process through grasstops advocacy. Tokenization is described as instances where decision makers, such as legislators, use students' words out of context, utilize photos of them for public relations, or make them feel like their concerns are not serious. Essentially it is any experience students have where they feel that they are only present because they are students. These experiences cause students to feel belittled, frustrated, annoyed, which makes it difficult for them to continue engaging. After experiencing tokenization, Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice members relied on their relationships with one another and adults to provide encouragement to continue staying engaged. They also constructed strategies for interrupting tokenizing experiences, such as sidestepping tokenizing requests from decision makers and directly interrupting tokenizing actions. Student voice efforts planning to engage in direct advocacy will need to prepare students for these negative experiences by offering support and training for how they can navigate them. Legislators need to consider how they interact with students as more students engage in the process.

Positive Experiences. In contrast to these negative experiences, students may also have positive experiences interacting with the policy process. Positive experiences can be broken down into three categories: (a) gaining trust in and understanding of the policy process; (b) seeing the power of direct advocacy; and (c) understanding the experiences of others. Members of the Student Voice Team and Oregon Student Voice believed that their experience led them to trust and understand the policy process better. Because the policy process is not taught in schools, members found that interaction with the policy

process demystified what was happening when decision makers were creating policy. It also enabled students to become civically engaged, which helped them learn the power of direct advocacy. SVT and OSV members both learned that they could breakdown the metaphorical wall between students and legislators and share their experiences to help legislators make more informed decisions. Finally, engaging in the policy process helped members deepen their understanding of the issues that individuals from backgrounds other than their own encounter. This resulted in students feeling more empathetic towards others and created a desire to continue advocating for policy reforms that support more communities. Student voice efforts will find that these positive experiences often happen organically as students learn and engage in the process.

For student voice effort participants, the positive experiences largely outweighed the negative experiences. SVT and OSV members ultimately believed that their continued participation in the policy process was important to not only share the experiences of students, but also to encourage more students to get involved. Student voice efforts will likely find the same as students learn to navigate the negative experiences and realize the benefits of the positive experiences. However, student voice efforts should also strive to mitigate the negative experiences as much as possible. Beyond educating students about the negative experiences, adults working with student voice efforts should also strive to educate decision makers, such as legislators, on the power of student voice and positive ways to interact with students. These positive ways could include: (a) treating students similarly to how they would treat an adult, (b) refraining from taking pictures with students, (c) avoiding complimenting students on

their skills, and (d) abstaining from discussing the students' educational futures. By focusing on the policy priority, instead of the students, legislators will help students feel more comfortable in the space and provide students with important feedback on their policy.

Contributions to the Literature

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, there is an incomplete body of work on the inclusion of student voice in state-level decision making where many education policy reforms emerge (Mitra, 2009; Conner et al., 2016). This is because there has been scant attention on how student voice is represented in state-level education policymaking (Mitra, 2015). My research extends the literature by showing how students, through student voice efforts, collectively participate in and influence the K-12 state-level education policy-making process.

In this section, I will show how my findings and conclusions extend the literature by updating the conceptual framework that I presented in Chapter Two. This conceptual framework consists of two models: (a) how students participate in statewide student voice efforts and (b) how students influence policy change through student voice efforts. The first model was rooted in my comprehensions from the literature of how student voice efforts develop and support students. The second model was based on how students would navigate the state-level policy-making processes to instigate policy change.

Updated Model for Student Participation in Statewide Student Voice Effort.
The first model I created, detailed in Figure 1, captures the four components necessary for statewide student voice efforts to ensure all students have opportunities to participate

in and influence effort activities. The four components were: (a) power shifts, (b) shared practices, (c) adult supports, and (d) student relationships. Figure 7 details the updated model for how students participate in statewide student voice efforts. Changes based on my findings are italicized.

Figure 6: Updated Model for Student Participation in Statewide Student Voice Effort
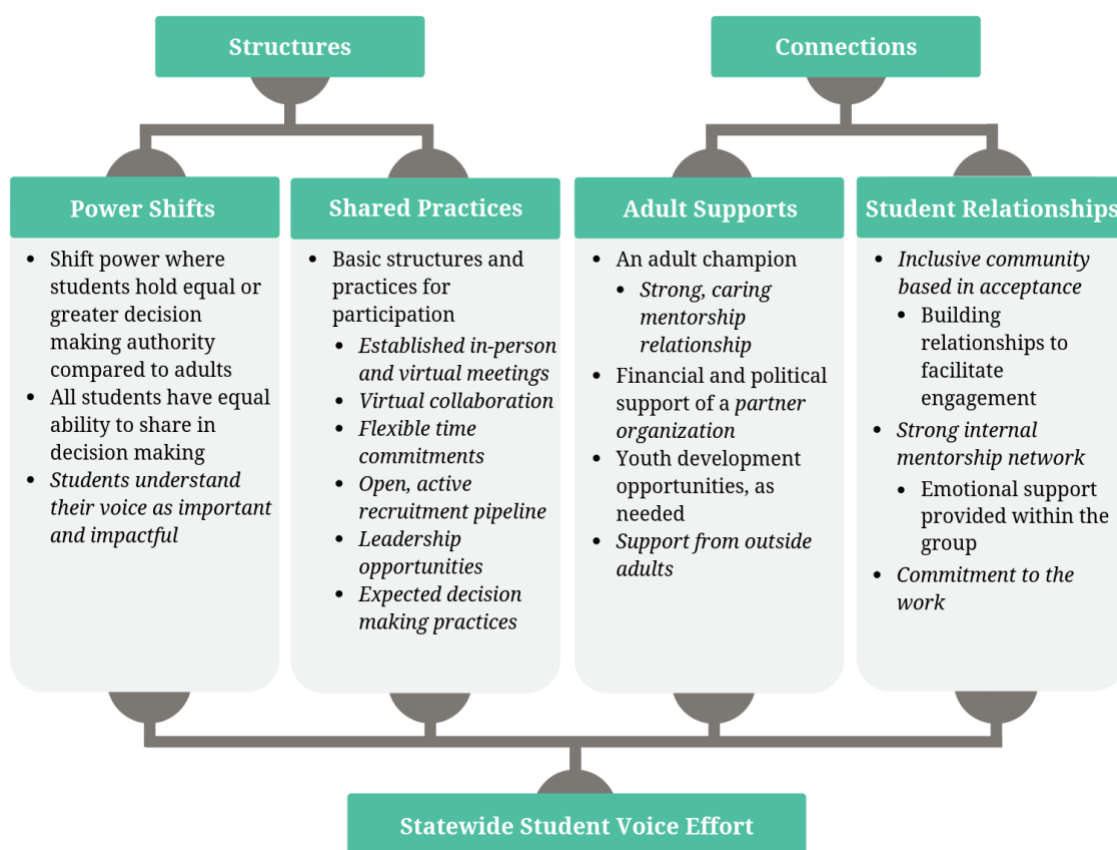
Power Shifts. My findings backed up the original model, where I described that power shifts were based on the belief that statewide student voice efforts must give students equal or inflated influence over decisions in comparison to adults (Murphy, 2004; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Additionally, efforts must strive to dismiss social order power dynamics and provide all students with equal voice (French & Raven, 1959;

Conner, 2015). Student voice efforts required these shifts in order for students to feel welcome and able to participate in activities.

In addition to these two shifts, my findings show that a third power shift was necessary to support student participation in statewide student voice efforts. Students must shift the way in which they view their voice to seeing it as important and impactful. Students are not necessarily told that their perspectives and experiences are important, which can limit how they perceive their own power. My findings also coincide with my original proposition that each of these power shifts would be difficult to achieve as adults and students may be uncomfortable with shifting these power dynamics (Mitra, 2014). However, these shifts are necessary to ensure all students can participate. My findings show that statewide student voice efforts can work toward shifting these dynamics by constantly evaluating their practices and making changes when necessary.

Shared Practices. In the original model, I stated that shared practices were required for statewide student voice efforts to have basic structures and practices that lay out roles and expectations (Mitra, 2014). If structures and practices were not clear, students may feel tokenized, manipulated, or exploited. Structures and practices must promote openness and trust between students and adults and create an inclusive, open, and authentic environment where all students can participate (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Conner, 2015).

My findings support these claims, but also provide insights into the types of shared practices that support student participation. At a minimum, statewide student voice efforts need to establish the following practices to ensure all students can

participate: (a) established meeting structures, (b) virtual and in-person meetings, (c) virtual work practices, (d) time commitment, (e) a recruitment pipeline, (f) a leadership team, and (g) clear decision-making structures. Each of these practices addresses a challenge that students face when trying to participate.

Adult Supports. In the original model, I stated that an effort needs at least one dedicated adult as well as the political, financial, and emotional support of those in power, such as funders, to ensure student participation (Beaudoin 2005; Mitra, 2014). Additionally, students needed development opportunities to enhance their ability to participate as not all students join with the same skillsets (Conner, 2015). Both of these concepts were supported by my findings; however, I believe my findings provided more details into how they play out.

My findings show that Mitra's (2014) adult champion is necessary to support student participation in statewide student voice efforts. However, my research also highlights that the adult will need to have a very specific type of relationship with students. This adult will need to have a strong, caring mentorship relationship with the students to sufficiently support their involvement as students need to feel safe and welcome in order to turn to an adult for help and encouragement.

Additionally, my findings advance the literature by showing that for statewide student voice efforts, students need to rely on a partner organization for financial and political. Without a partner organization, students may find it difficult to start a statewide student voice effort, as they will have limited access to financial and political resources. Negotiating the amount of decision-making authority students will have over their work

is key in developing a relationship with a partner organization as students need to be able to direct their activities.

Finally, my findings demonstrate that both inside and external supports are necessary for students to participate in student voice efforts. Students need outside adults to help them learn and feel more engaged in statewide student voice efforts. When an educator or policymaker provides students with an opportunity to learn, such as through a youth development training, or supports their involvement by providing positive feedback on their work, it is easier for students to engage.

Student Relationships. My findings expand upon my assertion in the original model that students needed to build relationships with one another to engage in statewide student voice effort activities (Mitra, 2004). My findings show that to build these relationships, efforts need to encourage the development of an inclusive community based in acceptance where all students feel welcome and able to participate. They also need to develop a strong internal peer-to-peer mentorship network to provide students with emotional support in navigating the work, celebrating achievements, and overcoming challenges. Finally, students need to have a commitment to the work, which helps them build relationships as they work together towards achieving their goals.

Updated Model for Student Voice Efforts Influencing Policy Reform. My assumption from the literature that students participating in student voice efforts will have an influence on policy change in a similar way to any organized community-based or grassroots effort was supported by my findings (Scott et al., 2009). In my original model, shown in Figure 2, I divided the policy process into four phases: (a) problem

identification, (b) policy consideration, (c) community building, and (d) policy adoption. In my original model, I asserted that these phases are not mutually exclusive and can occur simultaneously as the policy process is dynamic and ever changing; however, they will likely take place in the order listed. I found this to be true in my findings as students executed some policy activities without finishing previous activities. Although this overlap exists, there is a specific rhythm to how they navigated the policy process and it roughly followed the order listed. Figure 8 details the updated model for how student voice efforts influence policy reform in statewide student voice efforts. Updates based on findings are italicized.

Figure 7: Updated Model for Statewide Student Voice Efforts Influencing Policy Reform
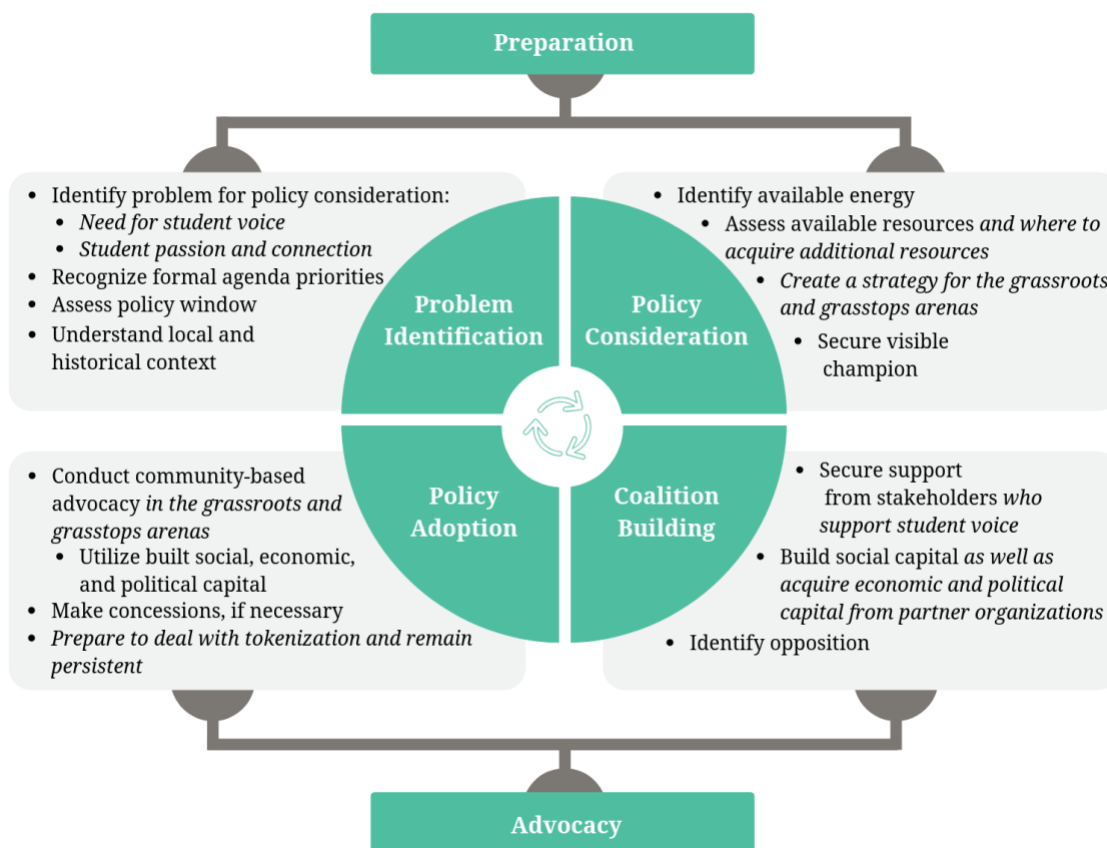
Before looking at each phase separately, it is important to note that in my original model I suspected that agenda setting activities would happen throughout the policy process. I made this prediction because I believed that community-based efforts would need to mobilize their support networks to get their policy on the formal agenda and will often need to continue to advocate to keep their policy on the agenda as policymakers may not necessarily see it as a priority. My findings did not fully support my prediction as some agenda setting activities occurred before the student voice efforts entered the policy process. The policies that the students decided to support were already on the formal agenda and, therefore, students did not have to work to get their priorities on the agenda. However, they did need to work to keep them on the agenda by raising awareness in the public and meeting with legislators. It is unclear in my model how students would move policies to the formal agenda.

Problem Identification. For problem identification, my assertions in the original model were supported by my findings. I originally expected that during problem identification students would identifying a problem, establishing a policy solution, recognizing the priorities of the formal agenda, assessing the policy window for whether it is the right time to enact change, and understanding the local and historical context of their current environment to leverage opportunities and predict challenges (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993; Cobb and Elder, 1995; Kofod et al., 2012; Fowler, 2013). However, there were places in this phase in which I extended the literature.

One advancement from the literature may be how students see their own voice as an opportunity in the policy process. I expected that students would assess whether it was

the right time to enact change during problem identification based on Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams model. The multiple streams models suggests that students, as policy actors, will need to understand (a) how their problem may be viewed by decision-makers, (b) where their problem may be on the agenda, and (c) the opportunities available to leverage policy adoption in order to have their issue considered for adoption. According to my findings, students identify a problem and a policy solution almost simultaneously when deciding to enter the policy process. Consequently, they look at how the problem as well as the policy solution would fair in the policy process. Further, in deciding to support a policy, students view their "student status" as an important opportunity available to them that they can leverage during policy adoption to ensure the policy is passed. Viewing their ability to use their voice to bring change as an opportunity may be different from other actors, who may place more importance on availability of resources, such as economic and political capital, or political timing, such as legislative interest.

It is also important to highlight how students may identify problems differently than other actors. Students align with Cobb and Elder's (1995) finding that actors will look for differences in distributions of position or resources in identifying a problem. Extending Cobb and Elder's (1995) work, my findings provide insights into how students identify problems and policy solutions. Students rely on their educational experiences as well as their belief in the importance of student voice when identifying an issue and finding a solution. They decide to advocate for a problem as well as a policy solution because they believe fixing the problem will improve the educational experiences of themselves and their peers. Additionally, students agree to support a solution when they

believe that inclusion of student voices is necessary to pass the policy solution. This belief may be divergent from other policy actors as the students are assessing how using their "student status" will help move a policy forward. Students may not want to enter the policy process if they think their voice will not help move a policy forward, or if they believe there is not enough opportunities for students to engage.

Policy Consideration. In the original model, I asserted that policy consideration involved developing strategies to achieve policy adoption. These activities included identifying available energy and resources to pass a policy, determining the appropriate arena to enact change, and securing visible champions to move the policy forward (Cohen et al., 1972; Mazzoni, 1991; Kingdon, 1995, 2003). My findings show that students conduct a majority of these activities during policy consideration.

I suggested in my original model that students would identify available energy and resources in accordance to Cohen et al.'s (1972) garbage can model. This model suggests that an actor's available energy, e.g. time, and resources, such as economic, social, or political capital, influences their ability to advance their issue. My findings align with this model as students assess their available energy and resources in determining how to pursue a policy. They also advance this model by showing that students not only assess their own resources, but also decide where and how to acquire additional resources. For example, students will likely have social capital in entering the policy process as they have access to students, social media, and potentially the media. However, they likely will not have political or economic capital collectively as a group and, therefore, will need to find other organizations to help them gain access to these

resources. Because of the need for additional resources, students will conduct policy consideration and coalition building activities simultaneously as they work to acquire resources. Student voice efforts may eventually gain more political and economic capital as they continuously engage in the policy process and raise funds over several years.

In the original model, I also stated that students would determine the arena in which to advance their policy during policy consideration. I stated that students would likely use the macro arena to advance their policy based on my understanding of Mazzoni's (1991) arena model. The arena model suggests that actors will need to shift the arena from the subsystem arena, where a typical coalition of education bureaucrats, legislators, and special interest groups are the decision makers, to the macro arena, where the public has more influence, to have their issues heard. I said that students may be unable to access the leadership arenas, where elites bargain to forge working alliances to accomplish issues important to them because they were students. While Mazzoni's arena model captures the dynamics of the political process, I do not believe that students perceive there to be three arenas.

Instead, students perceive two policy arenas: (a) the grasstops arena and (b) the grassroots arena. The grasstops arena consists of the leadership arena and the subsystem arena. I speculate that students combine Mazzoni's (1991) subsystem arena and leadership arena into the grasstops arena because students cannot currently gain access to either of these arenas. Therefore, the grasstops arena is where policy adoption occurs for students rather than the leadership arena and the subsystem arenas. In the grasstops arena, students perceive themselves as having limited power due to their status as students.

The grassroots arena is Mazzoni's (1991) macro arena. This arena is where public support for policies is raised. In this arena, students perceive themselves as having power and influence because they can convince the public to support their cause through their relationships, social media, and local media. Students strive to leverage their power in the grassroots arena in order to influence the grasstops arena.

Following Mazzoni's (1991) suggestion to shift the arena, students start their policy efforts in the grassroots arena. However, they shift the arena again to meet with legislators, which may not be predicated by Mazzoni. To achieve their goals, students shift the arena twice: (a) they shift attention to the grassroots arena to convince the public that their policy is important with the goal of showing legislators their power and (b) they then shift attention to the grasstops arena, once gaining notoriety, to privately convince legislators to vote for the policy. In addition to public attention, students leverage the connections of common actors in the grasstops arena, such as special interest groups, to gain access to the grasstops arena. These two shifts may be necessary as the grassroots arena helps students build their personal power before entering the grasstops arena where they use their gained power to convince legislators. Ultimately, the arena is which students intervene is shaped by their access to resources and power.

Coalition Building. In the original model, I predicted that student voice efforts would secure support from stakeholders, identify opposition, and build social, economic, and political capital during coalition building (Bourdieu, 2005; Tamir, 2010; Mitra, 2014). My findings support these expected outcomes as students relied on building a coalition in order to gain access to economic and political capital. Further, they reinforce

Tamir's (2010) assertion that economic and political capital is often privileged; however, social capital can be used strategically to outweigh this balance. Students found it difficult to access economic and political capital but used their social capital, which included their status as students, strategically to raise awareness about their policy issue and gain support. Through using their social capital, particularly their student status, students were able to secure support from partner organizations and gain access to economic and political capital.

Tamir (2010) also noted that there is an exchange rate for political and economic capital, which may vary depending on the political context and environment. My findings support this exchange rate as students give up some of their autonomy in order to secure the support from other stakeholders. Students are subject to the willingness of other organizations to schedule meetings with legislators, provide feedback on communication, or share their political platform without changes. This exchange rate can be difficult for students when organizations undermine their authority or the importance of their participation, which Oregon Student Voice members encountered when first joining the ethnic studies coalition. Therefore, it is imperative that students secure support from stakeholders who support student voice and students' autonomy in the policy process.

Policy Adoption. Finally, I stated in the original model that students, through student voice efforts, would conduct community-based or grassroots advocacy and utilize built social, economic, and political capital to influence state-level policymakers, such as legislators, to adopt the desired policy (Scott et al., 2009; Fowler, 2013). My findings align with the literature as students conduct grassroots advocacy by mobilizing their

supporter networks to then lobby policy actors to consider and adopt their policies. However, while they align with Scott and her colleagues (2009) description of a grassroots advocacy organization, students do not perceive their work in the same way.

Scott and her colleagues (2009) may describe the students' engagement as a sociopolitical movement where students are using their networks to advocate for a policy not consider in the formal agenda. However, students may not categorize themselves as a social movement, but may instead see themselves as policy actors striving to gain access to an arena not traditionally available to them. Students utilize their network through grassroots advocacy to gain power and connections to hopefully become an education interest group in the grasstops arena. As an education interest group, students strive to conduct grasstops advocacy by privately meeting with legislators to share research and information to help legislators make an informed decision. Therefore, student engagement in grassroots advocacy is part of their broader strategy not only to raise awareness, but also to gain access to those with decision-making authority. The ultimate goal for many students engaging in student voice efforts is to normalize their presence at decision-making tables so that students do not necessarily have to engage in grassroots advocacy in order to reach grasstops decisionmakers. Researchers may want to consider how different policy actors, such as students, utilize different advocacy techniques in order to gain power and access.

Finally, my findings help advance our understanding into how policy actors may utilize their identity in the process as well as how this identity may be tokenized by other actors. Much of students' social capital is derived from the fact that they are students.

They have access to students through relationships and social media platforms, which provides them with opportunities to share important stories and reach a wide audience. Further, the novelty of students interacting in the policy process catches the attention of the media and other individuals in power, which then helps raise awareness about their policy. Students strategically utilize their status in the grassroots arena to raise awareness about their policy. However, this status also hurts them in the grasstops arena where legislators may tokenize them because they are students. Legislators do not yet view students as policy actors and, therefore, legislators may not necessarily view the policy priorities being pushed by students as legitimate. They may instead be inclined to consider the priorities of school board associations or teacher unions, who are more likely to consistently engage in the process, over those of students. While the student status may be privileged in the grassroots arena, it is not considered an elite status in the grasstops arena where students are less likely to be heard, which aligns with Cobb & Elder (1995).

Summary. Together, these models provide a more detailed understanding of how students participate in the K-12 education policy-making process through a student voice effort. The first model provides insights into how an effort's internal dynamics can influence a student's ability to participate. The second model outlines how a student voice effort may engage in the policy-making process. My findings reinforce my belief that if a student voice effort does not have internal structures to promote authentic and inclusive student participation, then it will be challenging for students to engage in the policy-making process. This is because students will not have access to the supports needed, such as: (a) clear working and decision making structures, (b) development

opportunities to learn, (c) knowledge that student perspectives and experiences are valuable, or (d) the financial, political, and emotional support of peers and partnering adults. Without these supports, students involved in a student voice effort will find it difficult to organize collectively, enter the policy arena, and stay engaged following setbacks (Conner et al., 2016). Therefore, student voice efforts must consider how they are structured in order to support students collectively to participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making.

Implications for Practice and Areas for Further Research

There has been a growing movement for students to participate more actively in K-12 education decision-making processes. This movement flourished in the beginning of the 21st century as more educators strived to include students in classroom, school, and district level decision making (Murphy, 2017), but it has grown greatly since the 2018 March for Our Lives national protest. This student-led protest was organized by survivors of the February 14 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting to call on policymakers to increase gun control (Grinberg, 2018). Students from across the nation participated in the walkout and it sparked nationwide conversations about the students' role in the policymaking process. Organizations across the United States are beginning to wonder what it would look like to support a student voice effort in their state. In the past two years, efforts have begun taking shape in Colorado, Delaware, Hawaiʻi, Iowa, Washington, and Texas to support students collectively in organizing and participating in the policymaking process.

As statewide student voice efforts grow, students and adults will need to consider

how they structure their organizations and how they plan on engaging in the policymaking process. As shown throughout this study, my study provides initial understandings into each of these considerations. However, they may be limited to statewide efforts formed in Oregon and Kentucky as political environments may be different in other states. Further, it is unclear how a student voice effort that does not begin with the support of a partner organization will grow and become sustainable over time. A continued study of Oregon Student Voice, which recently separated from their partner organization, may provide insights into this topic.

In concluding my study, I provide insights for individuals engaging in this work. Individuals that choose to engage in student voice activities influence the ways in which a student voice effort evolves over time. Below, I provide insights for students, adult supporters, decision makers, and researchers in how they may actively support statewide student voice efforts.

Students. Students striving to form or join a statewide student voice effort will become part of a community of young people excited to reform the ways in which our system provides K-12 education. This community is constantly evolving as students bring in new ideas and experiences. Students will need to be inclusive of their peers and flexible in the ways in which they interact with one another in order to ensure that they provide a safe space for everyone to share their thoughts and ideas. Further, students will need to be courageous and resilient as they join decision-making conversations, which is typically a space reserved for adults. Finding a community, such as a student voice effort, will help students feel more comfortable in these spaces. This community of young

people helps students celebrate victories and overcome challenges. Without this community, students may feel isolated and overwhelmed in decision-making spaces.

Supporting Adults. Adults working to support statewide student voice efforts will need to work with students to determine adults' roles and responsibilities before becoming deeply involved. Clarifying roles and responsibilities helps both students and adults understand what decisions, activities, and supports will be provided by each party. Without this clarification, adults and students may fall into traditional patterns of adults making decisions for students. Additionally, adult roles and responsibilities may continuously evolve as students' needs change. Adults must remain flexible and open to embarking on new endeavors with students. Fostering a relationship based in respect, understanding, and mentorship is important for ensuring that students feel supported.

Policy Makers. As stated previously, policy makers, such as legislators, school board members, and district administrators, working with students must remain open minded to the ideas and experiences of students. As student voice efforts grow, students will strive to engage in decision-making spaces and become a more common policy actor. Decision makers should treat students as they would adults in these spaces, which includes considering their ideas and meaningful engaging in conversation. Decision makers should avoid taking pictures with students or commenting on students' diction or future plans as these can make students feel belittled and tokenized. Decision makers will want to strive to reconsider the ways in which they view students and work toward seeing them as policy actors if they desire to be inclusive of student voices in decision-making space.

Researchers. The greatest weakness of this study, as well as within the student voice literature, is that there is not a clear understanding of how power dynamics among students influence a students' ability to participate in student voice efforts. Throughout my study, I discussed how power differentials between adults and students were associated with student participation. I also showed different ways in which power differentials between students influenced a students' ability to join and participate in an effort. However, I have an incomplete understanding. Researchers, including myself, have paid close attention to how power between adults and students influences student voice efforts, but there is scant research on how power differentials among students influences student voice efforts. Further work on student voice should attend to how power dynamics between students affect participation. More research needs to be done on the types of students that participate in student voice efforts, particularly how they either are selected or opt-in. Additional focus also needs to be paid to how internal power dynamics influence students once they join an effort and whether these dynamics may cause students to choose to leave efforts. Ultimately, there needs to be a deeper understanding of how power dynamics between students influences the student voices shared.

Closing Thoughts

Students can and will collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. Students are interested in improving the K-12 education system and may feel as though adults are not making the changes necessary to help students succeed. Students will find and take opportunities

available to them to make a difference. Statewide student voice efforts provide one way for students to engage in the policy process. As a society, we should strive to lower the barriers for students to participate in the policy process. Further, we need to reconceptualize the ways in which we think about students' role in decision making as their experiences provide valuable insights into the K-12 system. Finally, we must collectively strive to provide students with increased access, opportunity, and resources to reach decision-making tables. This is particularly true for students, especially those from backgrounds who do not traditionally hold power in society, who may not necessarily see themselves at these tables. By increasing the ability for students to participate in decision making, we may be able to make improvements to our K-12 education system that better match student needs. Further, we may create a citizenry that understands the power of their voice and the importance of using it.

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Appendix A

Data Collection and Analysis Timeline

Month	Activity
August 2017	• Obtained IRB approval • Finalized interview protocol for Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team • Scheduled interviews with 10 purposively selected students from the Student Voice Team • Scheduled interviews with 4 adults that supported the Student Voice Teams navigation of the policy-making process
September 2017	• Conducted interviews with 5 students from the Student Voice Team • Conducted interview with 2 adults supporting the Student Voice Team • Began review of documents for the Student Voice Team related to organization structure and • Transcribed Student Voice Team interviews • Began coding Student Voice Team data
October 2017	• Conducted interviews with 5 students from the Student Voice Team • Conducted interview with 2 adults supporting the Student Voice Team • Visited monthly meeting for observation of the Student Voice Team activities • Attended Student Voice Team event for observation • Transcribed Student Voice Team interviews • Continued coding Student Voice Team data
November 2017	• Transcribed Student Voice Team interviews • Continued coding Student Voice Team data • Determined key themes based on findings • Reviewed documents related to Student Voice Team organization structures and activities. • Wrote up initial findings for Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team

Month	Activity
December 2017	• Determined policies studied for Oregon Student Voice • Finalized interview protocol for Oregon Student Voice • Began observation of Oregon Student Voice activities
January 2018	• Continued observation of Oregon Student Voice activities
February 2018	• Scheduled interviews with 10 students from Oregon Student Voice • Scheduled interviews with 2 adults that support Oregon Student Voice navigation of the policy-making process • Continued observation of Oregon Student Voice activities
March 2018	• Conducted interviews with 5 students from Oregon Student Voice • Conducted interview with 1 adult supporting Oregon Student Voice • Continued observation of Oregon Student Voice activities • Transcribed Oregon Student Voice interviews • Began coding Oregon Student Voice data
April 2018	• Conducted interviews with 5 students from Oregon Student Voice Conduct interview with 1 adult supporting Oregon Student Voice • Continued observation of Oregon Student Voice activities • Transcribed Oregon Student Voice interviews • Continued coding Oregon Student Voice data
May 2018	• Concluded observation of Oregon Student Voice activities • Transcribed Oregon Student Voice interviews • Continued coding Oregon Student Voice data
June 2018 - December 2018	• Reviewed documents related to Oregon Student Voice organization structures and activities. • Completed final coding of Oregon Student Voice and Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team Data • Compared and contrasted findings across the two case studies • Wrote up findings
January 2019 - May 2019	• Continued writing up findings

Appendix B

Adult Supporter Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Student Voice in Education Policy: Understanding student participation in state-level K-12 education policy decision making

Researcher: Samantha Holquist, a doctoral candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota

Supported By: Dr. Nicola Alexander, Associate Professor in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, is the University faculty member providing guidance on this project.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
I am asking you to take part in this research study because you support the efforts of a student voice organization.

What should I know about this research study?

● Someone will explain this research study to you.
● Whether or not you take part is up to you.
● You can choose not to take part.
● You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
● Your decision will not be held against you.
● You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?
For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Researcher Name: Samantha Holquist
Email Address: holqu001@umn.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or go to www.irb.umn.edu/report.html. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

● Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
● You cannot reach the research team.
● You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?
This purpose of this study is to understand how students collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. I will analyze case study findings from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's participation in the Powerball Promise Campaign and post-secondary work, and Oregon Student Voice's participation in a policy during the 2017 and upcoming 2018 Oregon legislative cycle. Findings will increase our comprehension of how students participate in the policy-making process. Additionally, they will inform our understanding of the role of policy makers and educators in facilitating student participation in decision making.

How long will the research last?
I expect that you will be in this research study until May 2018 when data collection concludes. Data collection for this study started in September 2017 and will be complete in May 2018 with findings being reported by May 2019.

How many people will be studied?
I expect that there will be 40 participants in the study. Ten college students (aged 17-22) and 5 high school students (aged 14-18) from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (STV) in Kentucky plus 5 adults supporting SVT's efforts, and 15 high school students (aged 14-18) from Oregon Student Voice (OSV) in Oregon plus 5 adults supporting OSV's efforts.

What happens if I say "Yes, I want to be in this research"?
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to:

- Meet with me two times for 60 minutes each time at your convenience. This will be a total of 2 hours over two visits.
- During these meetings, you will be asked questions about your experience with the student voice organization and how you supported them in the policy-making process.
  - Meetings will take place either in a public space at your convenience or over Zoom, a virtual web conferencing platform.
  - With your permission, discussions during these meetings will be recorded in order to create a transcript of what was said. Agreement to be recorded is required for participation.
- Review transcripts of your interview to ensure that your words and experiences were captured correctly.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. I will not ask you why you are withdrawing from the research. If you have already met with me once, I will use this data in my research unless you request me not to use your collected data.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?
The risks of participating in the proposed research are very low. If you had a negative experience interacting with students in the policy-making process, there is some risk that you will be uncomfortable discussing this experience. Please know that I will not pressure you to discuss negative experiences if it makes you uncomfortable. Additionally, you may feel uncomfortable sharing negative experiences because you may feel it will affect your role within and/or with the organization or relationships with other individuals. Please know that I am taking every possible precaution to ensure that your responses are not identifiable in the published findings.

Taking part in this research study may lead to added costs to you. You will need to transport yourself to and from the agreed upon meeting places, which will be at a location that you indicate is convenient for you.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information to people who have a need to review this information. I cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of the University of Minnesota.

When findings are published, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify you, such as your name or job title. In the published findings, I will only identify adults by pseudonyms and their relationship with the organization, which may roughly include what they do, such as legislative aide. Interview audio files will be destroyed once they are transcribed. Transcriptions will be password protected and only the researchers listed on this form will have access to them. Transcribed data will be stored for ten years.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?
If you would like to share feedback, please contact the researcher or the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). See the "Who Can I Talk To?" section of this form for study team and HRPP contact information.

Research Activities:
Please indicate your willingness to participate in these activities by placing your initials next to each activity.

I
I agree   disagree

_____   _____   The researcher may audio record me to aid with data analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the immediate study team.

_____   _____   The researcher may contact me in the future to see whether I am interested in participating in other research studies by the principal investigator of this study.

Signature Block for Capable Adult
Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

_____   _____
Signature of participant   Date

_____
Printed name of participant

_____   _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent

Appendix C

Parent Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Student Voice in Education Policy: Understanding student participation in state-level K-12 education policy decision making

Researcher: Samantha Holquist, a doctoral candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota

Supported By: Dr. Nicola Alexander, Associate Professor in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, is the University faculty member providing guidance on this project.

What is research?
Researchers are committed to your child's care and safety. The goal of research is to learn new things in order to help groups of people in the future. Researchers learn things by following the same plan with a number of participants, so they do not usually make changes to the plan for individual research participants. Your child, as an individual, may or may not be helped by volunteering for a research study.

Why is my child being asked to take part in this research study?
I am asking your consent for your child to take part in this research study because of your child's membership in a student voice organization.

What should I know about being in this research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not your child takes part is up to you and your child.
- You can choose not to have your child take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you or your child.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?
For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Researcher Name: Samantha Holquist
Email Address: holqu001@umn.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) at the University of Minnesota.

To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your or your child's research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or go to www.irb.umn.edu/report.html. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:
- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your or your child's rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?
This purpose of this study is to understand how students collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. I will analyze case study findings from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's participation in the Powerball Promise Campaign and post-secondary work, and Oregon Student Voice's participation in a policy during the 2017 and upcoming 2018 Oregon legislative cycle. Findings will increase our comprehension of how students participate in the policy-making process. Additionally, they may inform our understanding of the role of policy makers and educators in facilitating student participation in decision making.

How long will the research last?
We expect that your child's participation in this research study will last until May 2018 when data collection concludes. Data collection for this study started in September 2017 and will be complete in May 2018 with findings being reported by May 2019.

How many individuals will be studied?
I expect that there will be 40 participants in the study. Ten college students (aged 17-22) and 5 high school students (aged 14-18) from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (STV) in Kentucky plus 5 adults supporting SVT's efforts, and 15 high school students (aged 14-18) from Oregon Student Voice (OSV) in Oregon plus 5 adults supporting OSV's efforts.

What happens if I say, "Yes, I want to be in this research"?
If you agree for your child to be in this study, your child will be asked to:

- Meet with me two times for 60 minutes each time at your convenience. This will be a total of 2 hours over two visits.
- During these meetings, your child will be asked questions about his/her/their experience in the student voice organization and his/her/their participation in the policy-making process.
  - Meetings will take place either in a public space at your convenience or over Zoom, a virtual web conferencing platform.
  - With your permission, discussions during these meetings will be recorded in order to create a transcript of what was said. Agreement to be recorded

is required for participation.
- Review transcripts of the interview to ensure that your child's words and experiences were captured correctly.

You will not have access to attend the meeting or review transcripts in order to protect the privacy of your child's statements.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?
You and/or your child may decline to participate and it will not be held against you or your child.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You and/or your child can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you or your child. I will not ask why you and/or your child are withdrawing from the research. If your child has already met with me once, I will use this data in my research unless you request that I do not do so.

What are the risks? Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me or my child?
The risks of participating in the proposed research are very low for your child. If your child had a negative experience participating in the policy-making process, there is some risk that your child will be uncomfortable discussing this experience. Please know that I will not pressure your child to discuss negative experiences if it makes your child uncomfortable. Additionally, your child may feel uncomfortable sharing negative experiences because your child may feel it will affect his/her/their role within the organization or relationships with other individuals. Please know that I am taking every possible precaution to ensure that your child's responses are not identifiable in the published findings.

Taking part in this research study may lead to added costs to your child. Your child will need to transport his/her/themselves to and from the agreed upon meeting places, which will be at a location that your child indicate is convenient for him/her/themselves.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your child's personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of the University of Minnesota. The audio-recorded conversation is for data analysis purposes only. It will not be used in any presentations or publications and will be destroyed once the information is transcribed.

When findings are published, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify your child, such as name, grade, school, or city. In the published

findings, I will only identify students by pseudonyms, White or non-White, gender, whether they participated in-person or virtually, and/or whether they live in an urban or rural area. Interview audio files will be destroyed once they are transcribed. Transcriptions will be password protected and only the researchers listed on this form will have access to them. Transcribed data will be stored for ten years.

I will not ask about home life or child abuse, but if your child tells us about child abuse or neglect, I am legally obligated to report it to state authorities.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?
If you would like to share feedback, please contact the researcher or the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). See the "Who Can I Talk To?" section of this form for study team and HRPP contact information.

Research Activities:
Please indicate your willingness to allow your child to participate in these activities by placing your initials next to each activity.

	I	
I agree	**disagree**	
_____	_____	The researcher may audio record me to aid with data analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the immediate study team.
_____	_____	The researcher may contact me in the future to see whether I am interested in participating in other research studies by the principal investigator of this study.

Signature Block for Parent Consent
Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research.

_____
Printed name of child participant

_____   _____
Printed name of parent [ ] or individual legally authorized [ ]   Date
to consent for the child to participate

_____   _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent

Appendix D

Adult Student Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Student Voice in Education Policy: Understanding student participation in state-level K-12 education policy decision making

Researcher: Samantha Holquist, a doctoral candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota

Supported By: Dr. Nicola Alexander, Associate Professor in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, is the University faculty member providing guidance on this project.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
I am asking you to take part in this research study because you are a member of a student voice organization.

What should I know about this research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?
For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Researcher Name: Samantha Holquist
Email Address: holqu001@umn.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) at the University of Minnesota. To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or go to www.irb.umn.edu/report.html. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?
This purpose of this study is to understand how students collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. I will analyze case study findings from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's participation in the Powerball Promise Campaign and post-secondary work, and Oregon Student Voice's participation in a policy during the 2017 and upcoming 2018 Oregon legislative cycle. Findings will increase our comprehension of how students participate in the policy-making process. Additionally, they can inform our understanding of the role of policy makers and educators in facilitating student participation in decision making.

How long will the research last?
I expect that you will be in this research study until May 2018 when data collection concludes. Data collection for this study started in September 2017 and will be complete in May 2018 with findings being reported by May 2019.

How many people will be studied?
I expect that there will be 40 participants in the study. Ten college students (aged 17-22) and 5 high school students (aged 14-18) from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (STV) in Kentucky plus 5 adults supporting SVT's efforts, and 15 high school students (aged 14-18) from Oregon Student Voice (OSV) in Oregon plus 5 adults supporting OSV's efforts.

What happens if I say, "Yes, I want to be in this research"?
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to:

- Meet with me two times for 60 minutes each time at your convenience. This will be a total of 2 hours over two visits.
- During these meetings, you will be asked questions about your experience in the student voice organization and your participation in the policy-making process.
  - Meetings will take place either in a public space at your convenience or over Zoom, a virtual web conferencing platform.
  - With your permission, discussions during these meetings will be recorded in order to create a transcript of what was said. Agreement to be recorded is required for participation.
- Review transcripts of your interview to ensure that your words and experiences were captured correctly.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. I will not ask you why you are withdrawing from the research. If you have already met with me once, I will use this data in my research unless you request me not to use your collected data.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?
The risks of participating in the proposed research are very low. If you had a negative experience participating in the policy-making process, there is some risk that you will be uncomfortable discussing this experience. Please know that I will not pressure you to discuss negative experiences if it makes you uncomfortable. Additionally, you may feel uncomfortable sharing negative experiences because you may feel it will affect your role within the organization or relationships with other individuals. Please know that I am taking every possible precaution to ensure that your responses are not identifiable in the published findings.

Taking part in this research study may lead to added costs to you. You will need to transport yourself to and from the agreed upon meeting places, which will be at a location that you indicate is convenient for you.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information to people who have a need to review this information. I cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of the University of Minnesota.

When findings are published, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify you, such as your name, grade, school, or city. In the published findings, I will only identify you by a pseudonym, White or non-White, gender, whether you participated in-person or virtually, and/or whether you live in an urban or rural area. Interview audio files will be destroyed once they are transcribed. Transcriptions will be password protected and only the researchers listed on this form will have access to them. Transcribed data will be stored for ten years.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?
If you would like to share feedback, please contact the researcher or the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). See the "Who Can I Talk To?" section of this form for study team and HRPP contact information.

Research Activities:
Please indicate your willingness to participate in these activities by placing your initials next to each activity.

I		
I agree	**disagree**	
_____	_____	The researcher may audio record me to aid with data analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the immediate study team.
_____	_____	The researcher may contact me in the future to see whether I am interested in participating in other research studies by the principal investigator of this study.

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

_____

Printed name of participant

_____   _____

Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Appendix E

Student Assent Form

Title of Research Study: Student Voice in Education Policy: Understanding student participation in state-level K-12 education policy decision making

Researcher: Samantha Holquist, a doctoral candidate in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota

Supported By: Dr. Nicola Alexander, Associate Professor in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, is the University faculty member providing guidance on this project.

What is research?
Researchers are committed to your care and safety. The goal of research is to learn new things in order to help groups of people in the future. Researchers learn things by asking a question, making a plan, and testing it.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
A research study is usually done to find a better way to treat people or to understand how things work. I am asking you to take part in this research study because you are a member of a student voice organization.

What should I know about being in this research study?
You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to do so. It is up to you if you want to participate and if you want to, talk to your parents about any questions or concerns you have about the study. You can choose to take part now and change your mind later if you want. If you decide you do not want to be in this study, no one will be mad at you. You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?
This purpose of this study is to understand how students collectively participate in and influence the policy-making process for state-level K-12 education decision making. I will analyze case study findings from Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team's participation in the Powerball Promise Campaign and post-secondary work, and Oregon Student Voice's participation in a policy during the 2017 and upcoming 2018 Oregon legislative cycle. Findings will increase our comprehension of how students participate in the policy-making process. Additionally, they can inform our understanding of the role of policy makers and educators in facilitating student participation in decision making.

How long will the research last?

I expect that you will be in this research study until May 2018 when data collection concludes. Data collection for this study started in July 2017 and will be complete in May 2018 with findings being reported by May 2019.

What happens if I say, "Yes, I want to be in this research"?
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to:

- Meet with me two times for 60 minutes each time at your convenience. This will be a total of 2 hours over two visits.
    - During these meetings, you will be asked questions about your experience in the student voice organization and your participation in the policy-making process.
- Meetings will take place either in a public space at your convenience or over Zoom, a virtual web conferencing platform.
- With your permission, discussions during these meetings will be recorded in order to create a transcript of what was said. Agreement to be recorded is required for participation.
- Review transcripts of your interview to ensure that your words and experiences were captured correctly.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. I will not ask you why you are withdrawing from the research. If you have already met with me once, I will use this data in my research unless you request me not to use your collected data.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?
The risks of participating in the proposed research are very low. If you had a negative experience participating in the policy-making process, there is some risk that you will be uncomfortable discussing this experience. Please know that I will not pressure you to discuss negative experiences if it makes you uncomfortable. Additionally, you may feel uncomfortable sharing negative experiences because you may feel it will affect your role within the organization or relationships with other individuals. Please know that I am taking every possible precaution to ensure that your responses are not identifiable in the published findings.

Taking part in this research study may lead to added costs to you. You will need to transport yourself to and from the agreed upon meeting places, which will be at a location that you indicate is convenient for you.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information to people who have a need to review this information. I cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of the University of Minnesota.

When findings are published, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify you, such as your name, grade, school, or city. In the published findings, I will only identify you by a pseudonym, White or non-White, gender, whether you participated in-person or virtually, and/or whether you live in an urban or rural area. Interview audio files will be destroyed once they are transcribed. Transcriptions will be password protected and only the researchers listed on this form will have access. Transcribed data will be stored for ten years.

Who can I talk to?
For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Researcher Name: Samantha Holquist
Email Address: holqu001@umn.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group of people that look at the research before it starts. This group is part of the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). To share concerns privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 or go to www.irb.umn.edu/report.html. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team or your parents.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide feedback about this research.

Signature Block for Child Assent
Place your initials by each statement below to let us know your willingness to participate in these activities.

I agree	I disagree	
_____	_____	The researcher may audio record me to aid with data analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the immediate study team.

_____   _____   The researcher may contact me in the future to see whether I am interested in participating in other research studies by the principal investigator of this study.

_____   _____

Signature of child   Date

_____

Printed name of child

_____   _____

Printed name of person obtaining assent   Date

Appendix F

Interview Protocol for Students in Student Voice Effort

General questions about involvement with student voice effort

1. Tell me about your decision to join [insert student voice effort].

2. What made it easy to participate in [insert student voice effort]? What made it difficult?

3. What opportunities did [insert student voice effort] provide you, if any?
   a. [*If necessary*] What training and/or guidance did you receive?

4. How would you describe [insert student voice effort's adult advisor] role?
   a. [*If necessary*] Tell me about your relationship with [insert student voice effort's adult advisor].

5. How would you describe the role of student leaders in [insert student voice effort]?

6. How does [insert student voice effort] represent student voices from across [insert state]?
   a. [*If necessary*] Does membership reflect the student population of [insert state]?
   b. [*If necessary*] Are there inequalities present within the organization, if any? Please give an example.

Specific questions related to K-12 education policy making

1. What made [insert student voice effort] decide to address [insert policy]?
   a. [*If necessary*] Whose voices were included in this decision?
   b. [*If necessary*] How were other voices different from yours included? Please give an example.

2. What did [insert student voice effort] do to influence decision makers to consider [insert policy]?
   a. [*If necessary*] Who did you consider to be a decision-maker?
   b. [*If necessary*] How did you influence decision makers?
   c. [*If necessary*] How did you influence your community, such as fellow students, neighborhood, and parents?
   d. [*If necessary*] How did you view the political environment during this time period?

3. How did adults view students' participation in the decision-making process, as far as you could tell?
    a. [*If necessary*] Did you feel supported by adults?
    b. [*If necessary*] Did you feel supported by decision-makers?
    c. [*If necessary*] What challenges did you face, if any?
    d. [*If necessary*] What opportunities did you encounter, if any?
    e. [*If necessary*] How did these challenges and/or opportunities shape your ability to continue participating in the process?

4. How did you view your participation in the process?
    a. [*If necessary*] Did you ever feel like your voice was being tokenized?
    b. [*If necessary*] How did your participation influence your views on the K-12 education decision-making process, if at all?
    c. [*If necessary*] How did your participation influence your views on the decision-making process, if at all?

Appendix G

Interview Protocol for Adults Supporting Student Voice Effort

General questions about involvement with student voice effort

1. Tell me about your decision to support [insert student voice effort].

2. Tell me about your role and/or relationship with [insert student voice effort].
   a. [*If applicable*] How would you describe your leadership role?

3. How is your voice included in [insert student voice effort]'s decision-making, if at all?

Specific questions related to K-12 education policy making

4. What made students involved in [insert student voice effort] decide to address [insert policy]?
   a. [*If necessary*] How was your voice included in this decision?

5. What did [insert student voice effort] do to influence decision makers to consider [insert policy]?
   a. [*If necessary*] How did you participate in the process with or on behalf of the students?
   b. [*If necessary*] How did you view the political environment during this time period?

6. How did you view student participation in the decision-making process?
   a. [*If necessary*] How do you feel that decision makers viewed their participation?
   b. [*If necessary*] What challenges did they face, if any?
   c. [*If necessary*] What opportunities did they encounter, if any?
   d. [*If necessary*] How did these challenges and/or opportunities shape student ability to continue participating in the process?

7. What has it been like for you to support students in navigating the decision-making process?
   a. [*If necessary*] What challenges did you face, if any?
   b. [*If necessary*] What opportunities did you encounter, if any?
   c. [*If necessary*] How did these challenges and/or opportunities influence your views on student participation in the decision-making process, if at all?

Appendix H

Open Coding Codebook Frequency Table

57 codes or subcodes were coded at least 10 times and appear in at least two interviews, observation notes, or document analysis.

Name	Sources	Reference
Adult power shifts	9	29
Adult support view of students in policy	8	24
Coalition policy resources available	11	23
Commitment to the work	6	11
Community advocacy	9	22
Grassroots versus grasstops	6	10
Concessions	3	10
Finding voice	13	22
Historical context	4	11
Identify problem	9	22
Importance of student voice	10	27
Inequalities between students	7	14
Legislative advocacy	10	18
Legislative champion	4	10
Legislator view of students	12	28
Local context	5	10
Meeting structures	8	13
Need for coalition	5	14
Need for flexibility	10	25
Parent supports	5	14
Relationship to partner organization	8	31
Partner organization in policy	4	10
Policy issue description	7	12
Process to support policy	5	12
Recruitment	7	13
Relationship with adult advisor	12	24
Relationship with coalition	6	13
Relationship with peers	11	14
Representing diverse groups	6	16

Name	Sources	Reference
Role of adult advisor	9	49
Advisor connection to adults	5	12
Advisor oversight	6	16
Role of other adults	5	18
Student community	10	22
Student decision-making processes	5	11
Student experiences	13	44
Building trust in processes	7	16
Power of advocacy	5	12
Understanding others	6	15
Student policy resources available	13	43
Opinion pieces	9	10
Power in numbers	6	13
Social media	7	17
Student leadership team	9	22
Student leadership decision-making	7	17
Student mentorship	9	19
Student opportunities for growth	12	26
Student presentations	5	13
Student research	7	12
Student voices in policy	4	11
Support from outside adults	9	17
Time commitment	9	15
Tokenism	11	21
Views from adults	8	19
Virtual participation	9	22
Virtual practices	7	17
Youth development trainings	12	34